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Akongoue: Pasifika Horticulture Programme

Pilot evaluation report

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Scarlatti.co.nz



Executive summary

The Akongoue: Pasifika Horticulture Programme

The Akongoue programme aimed to provide complete, all-rounded support for students enrolled in a primary industry related NZQA (New Zealand Qualifications Authority) registered programme. The programme considered the students' cultural, family, and individual situations and aimed to provide them with the skills, capability, and confidence to pursue meaningful careers within the horticultural industry. The programme was piloted in 2022.

This programme was the first of its kind for Pasifika youth, providing them with all-rounded support throughout their high school experience. It had the overarching objective of encouraging these students to go onto meaningful careers within the horticulture sector, providing them with a tailored learning experience and pastoral care. The Pasifika focus of this programme enabled this minority group to be reached whilst also providing them with a chance to connect further with their culture and community. The value of a programme that is by Pasifika, for Pasifika cannot be understated.

In parallel, this programme also recognised the broader circumstances for these students through their pastoral care element. Providing students with a role model and someone that believed in them – someone they could relate to – enabled these students to unlock their self-confidence and achieve. This programme has demonstrated the strength of this, particularly for disadvantaged individuals, with many students now on the trajectory for meaningful career pathways and set up to be leaders for their peers and future generations to come.

Evaluation objectives and approach

Scarlati undertook evaluation work at the end of the pilot with the goal of:

- Demonstrating that the programme has been effective and valuable and;
- Creating a mechanism that would allow the investment to occur and become sustainable over a medium time frame.

The approach included evaluating the progress made against programme objectives, and capturing learnings / recommendations that can support programme refinement and be applied to similar future programmes. The data sources used to do this were:

- **Qualitative interviews** (24 people in total). We note that we had some struggles to interview the desired number of students and family members involved in the programme (likely due to the timing of the evaluation).
- **Existing programme documents.** We also note some challenges accessing some core programme documents and records. In particular, we did not have access to funding splits between the collaborators or details on how that funding was utilised.
- **An economic model.** This places values on the productivity, recruitment, social and cultural outcomes of the programme.

Evaluation findings

Programme design

As noted above, this programme was one of the first of its kind for Pasifika youth. With that, there is a lot to learn about what worked well about the programme design, and what could be reviewed in future programmes. The consensus of people interviewed for this work was that:

- **Pastoral care and mentoring were critical to this programme's success.** This played a crucial role in the transformational changes observed in some students.
- **By Pasifika, for Pasifika, was integral.** Having TYT involved in the programme enabled a more empathetic approach to supporting Pasifika youth.
- **The practical component was valued by students.** Students enjoyed and were motivated by practical learning in comparison to classroom-based learning.
- **The programme team were the right people for the job.** Both TYT and NZSTI were suitable to deliver upon their respective roles.
- **Industry involvement was a win-win.** The industry supplied the students with practical experience, and they received increased connections to their prospective workforce as a result.
- **The entrance criteria could be reviewed.** There were different views of what the entrance criteria for this programme should be.
- **The appropriate resourcing for the programme remains unclear.** The current amount and allocation of funding was not perfect, highlighting some resource shortages in staff numbers and supplying basic needs. We are unclear on what the appropriate allocation would be.
- **The combination of objectives is challenging yet necessary.** Bringing together industry, education and cultural objectives presented some tensions for the programme. However, the synergies that existed between the objectives enabled more meaningful outcomes.
- **The logical next step is supporting the students post-programme.** Staying in touch and continuing to support students after the programme would enable larger long-term outcomes.

Programme execution

Through the interviews, it was clear that the programme team were all committed to the vision of this programme. However, this programme did experience some considerable challenges with programme execution. To varying degrees, people involved in the programme felt that:

- **The programme needed more effective governance.** In particular, the programme could have benefited from a programme governance group and/or programme manager independent of the two key providers.
- **The approach to address several issues within the programme were not fully resolved.** Examples cited in discussions included:
 - The entrance criteria for the programme.
 - The roles and responsibilities of the core on-the-ground facilitators.

- The communication channels used.
- The reporting timelines and requirements.
- The best way to handle student misconduct.

Programme outcomes

Drawing on the evaluation insights, we find that the programme has successfully:

- Provided students with the tools and skills to become life-givers.
- Expanded their vision beyond sowing and planting.
- Motivated students to pursue a career in horticulture or STEM.
- Had a large cultural impact.
- Connected students with the families and community.
- Improved connections between industry and its prospective workforce.

Whilst we acknowledge that the industry sees the value of this programme for the industry, the actual benefits are yet to be realised. We therefore have refrained from drawing conclusions about the scale of the benefits for the industry as a result of this programme.

Value of outcomes

Our modelling aimed to place an indicative economic value on the productivity, recruitment, cultural and social benefits arising from students' involvement within this programme. We found that for a single student, the benefits could range from \$4,000 - \$21,000 for the first year after they finish the programme. Over time, this is expected to equate to \$4,900,000 in present value for the one-year pilot, giving a benefit to cost ratio of 14 to 1.

The economic model suggests that the programme has **a sufficient benefit to cost ratio to make a case for the programme to continue**. However, the costs and benefits of the programme means that there is currently no clear pathway to make this case to funders – see the feasibility section below.

That said, the economic model is not sufficient on its own to capture the full-scale of the impact of this programme. We encourage combining this with the experiences and outcomes of the participants in their own words – highlighted in the programme outcomes section.

Lessons learned from the programme

The evaluation findings have illustrated a number of critical success factors for the programme, including:

- **Having pastoral care.** Particularly having mentors that were Pasifika, invested time in building strong, trusting relationships and were solid role models for their students.
- **Having a by Pasifika, for Pasifika approach.** Having mentors that shared similar backgrounds, using their language and reflecting and nourishing Pasifika values worked well.
- **Having practical components.**

- **Employing on-the-ground facilitators that provided the appropriate skills, experience and approaches to their respective responsibilities.**
- **Including industry employers in the delivery.**

They have also highlighted some considerations for the design of future programmes like this, which include:

- **Discuss the entrance criteria.** Having a mutual understanding and agreement on this to ensure seamless recruitment. While a document was in place it was not clear that the criteria set out in it were followed closely. COVID restrictions played some part in this.
- **Re-consider the resourcing for the programme.** This could include re-prioritising the spending to favour having one overarching programme manager independent from both TYT and NZSTI, having more staff / training for staff and providing the basic needs for some students.
- **Persist with the combination of objectives and addressing the challenges associated.** As noted in the programme design, bundling different objectives, and hence bringing together multiple stakeholders often comes with its challenges. These should be addressed.
- **Broaden the horizons of the programme.** There is an opportunity to look for how this programme can have a larger long-term impact. This could be observed through students taking on pastoral care roles within the industry and students role modelling to the wider community and their current and future families.

Recommendations for the programme (should it continue)

Recommendations for the programme, should it continue, include:

- **Review the programme design.** We recommend that the programme discusses the findings from this evaluation, and the lessons learned, and evolve the design.
- **Formalise the programme governance.** The design of this could include a single, overarching, independent programme manager, communication and reporting channels, and the formation of a programme steering group.
- **Continue to monitor and evaluate.** On-going monitoring and evaluation would enable better data collection outcomes and better insights. This could be done with the lens of the best way to scale this programme up.

Feasibility of the programme

Combining cultural, education and industry objectives has been central to the design of Akongoue. However, this bundled model is challenging to fund in a sustainable way. The ongoing feasibility of the programme requires both that:

1. The programme is an efficient and effective investment.
2. There is a viable pathway to attract ongoing funding.

We think that Akongoue meets the first of these conditions (see discussion on the value of outcomes above) but not the second. Funding from the education system is unlikely to be high enough to run the programme in the form tested in the pilot. And there are few, if any, sources of *ongoing* funding that

could top up investment made through the education system. Alternative options for the programme going forward could include:

1. **Narrow the scope of the programme to be able to run it using education system investment alone.** This could be based on, for example, the well-established trade academy model, with a Pasifika and horticultural focus, but without the 'by Pasifika, for Pasifika' pastoral care element that was, arguably, the defining feature of the Akongoue programme.
2. **Run further one-off projects.** It may be possible to attract investment to run a further instance, or instances, of the Akongoue programmes as one-off project(s). This could include all of the elements of the current programme or focus on particular elements such as the 'by Pasifika, for Pasifika' pastoral care element, or connecting Pasifika to horticulture career opportunities.

Valuing culturally appropriate pastoral care

Finally, we note that there is a medium-term opportunity to use the Akongoue programme as a case-study to make the case for culturally appropriate pastoral care. Our evaluation supports an argument that investment in pastoral care, at higher levels that is affordable today, can generate positive returns. While it is unlikely that investors would see the Akongoue programme, or our evaluation of it, as proof-enough to make this case, we think that it could form part of a broader analysis that tests this in more depth.

Contents

Introduction.....	7
Part A: Evaluation insights.....	11
Programme overview.....	12
Programme outcomes	16
Economic outcomes.....	26
Programme execution.....	30
Programme design.....	34
Part B: Lessons learnt and next steps.....	41
Lessons learned from the programme	42
Feasibility of the programme	46
Recommendations for the programme	48
Summary.....	50
Appendices	51
Appendix 1: Akongoue programme logic model.....	52
Appendix 2: Evaluation measures	53
Appendix 3: Interview questions.....	54
Appendix 4: Economic model assumptions	60

Introduction

Context

There is an opportunity for Aotearoa’s Pasifika community to become more involved within the horticulture industry. With support and upskilling, Pasifika can move into meaningful, suitable, and sustainable career pathways, away from primarily doing seasonal work. Additionally, the horticulture industry is in immediate need of reliable, skilled, and experienced workers. In the longer term, the industry needs a sustainable pipeline of skilled full-time employees. These skills need to fulfil the ambitions detailed in sector workforce transformation plans and the *Fit for a Better World* strategy.

The Akongoue: Pasifika Horticulture Programme was designed to address the needs of the industry and the Pasifika community – unlocking the potential within Pasifika now and into the future. The programme was piloted in 2022.

Overview of the programme

Objectives

The programme was designed as the **first of its kind for Pasifika youth**. It aimed to provide complete, all-rounded support for students enrolled in a primary industry related NZQA (New Zealand Qualifications Authority) registered programme. The programme considered the students’ cultural, family, and individual situations and aimed to provide them with the skills, capability, and confidence to pursue meaningful careers within the horticultural industry. For more information on the intervention logic that guides this evaluation please see Appendix 1: Akongoue programme logic model.

Pilot design

The pilot programme targeted year 12 and 13 students, introducing them to a range of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects, including:

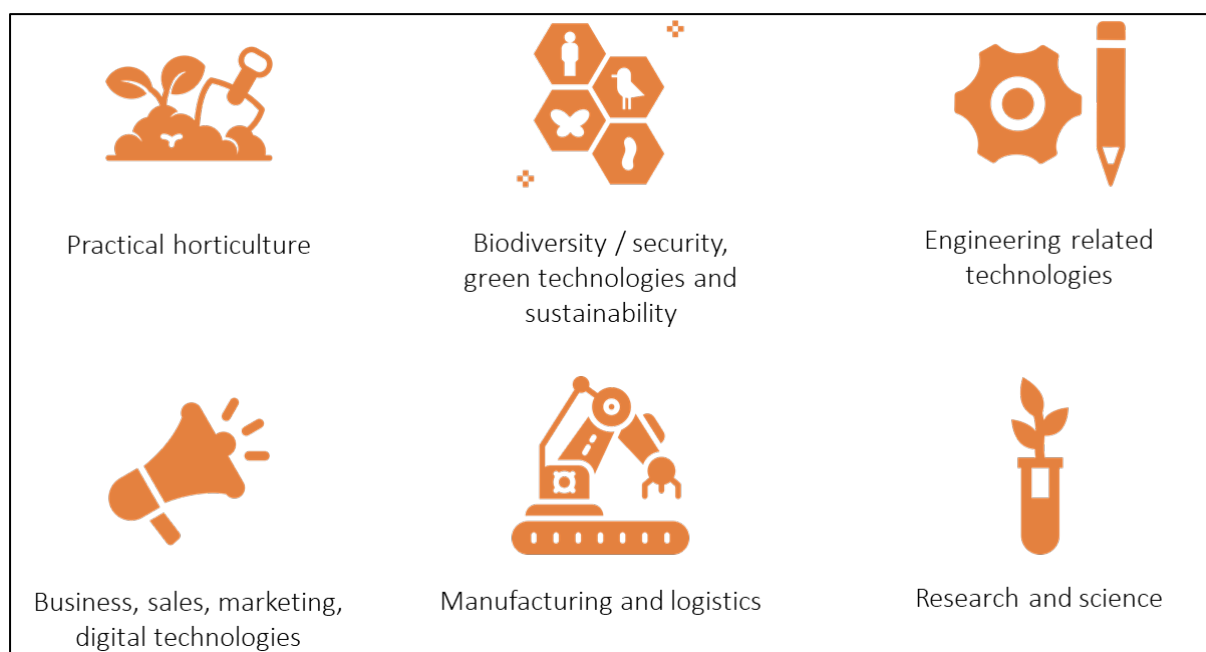


Figure 1: STEM subjects covered in the Akongoue Programme

These subjects aimed to provide foundational knowledge as a taster for different career pathways in horticulture. Through this, students could gain up to 52 NZQA credits contributing to NCEA level 2 and other additional industry credentials (such as Site Safe, Growsafe and First Aid). They would also get exposed to a network of industry employers.

Collaborators and funders

The programme is a collaboration between the Tongan Youth Trust (TYT), New Zealand Sports Turf Institute (NZSTI) and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). NZSTI is a nationally accredited Private Training Establishment (PTE). They designed the programme and led the delivery, providing the appropriate teaching staff for the programme. They were supported by TYT who provided the cultural pastoral care for this programme. MPI championed the project, with industry and Crown agencies¹.

Within this evaluation, we experienced some challenges with gaining clarity and transparency on the funding split between the collaborators and how it was spent. Based on the documentation that we have, the programme was funded by:

- Ministry for Pacific Peoples (38%)
- Ministry for Primary Industries (32%)
- Ministry of Education (18%)
- Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (9%)
- Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence (4%)
- Parkland Products (irrigation equipment)
- Auckland Garden Society (in kind)
- Skills NZ (in kind)
- Leased community garden (in kind).

Total investment in the programme was approximately \$500,000.

Evaluation approach

Objectives

Scarlatti undertook evaluation work at the end of the pilot with the aspirations of:

- Demonstrating that the programme has been effective and valuable and;
- Creating a mechanism that would allow the investment to occur and become sustainable over a medium time frame.

To achieve this, we used a standard evaluation approach. This includes evaluating the progress made against programme objectives and capturing learnings / recommendations that can support programme refinement and be applied to similar future programmes. However, to recognise the unique aspects of this programme, we have also:

¹ Source: South Auckland Pacific Social Enterprise flyer

- Recognised the multiple objectives of the programmes (creating opportunities for the Pasifika community whilst contributing to the industry’s workforce) (see page 37).
- Placed indicative economic values on the variety of outcomes (see page 46).
- Conducted a ‘deep dive’ into the hypothesis that the pastoral care component of the programme is core to the success, and therefore that it should be built into the delivery of the model going forward (see page 34).

As part of this, we have also explored other components of the programme (e.g. practical learning) to assess the factors of this programme that contributed to its success– which we call the ‘critical success factors’. These support the programme in identifying what should be retained or re-configured in the programme design in the future.

Methodology

The evaluation drew from a range of data collection methodologies, informed by the programme’s logic intervention model, including:

- **Qualitative interviews** with students, their families, on-the-ground facilitators, and fundamental enablers.
 - 24 people were interviewed, with the number of people per group as follows:



- On-the-ground facilitators are defined as anyone who had delivered a component of the programme to students or coordinated their day-to-day logistics
 - Fundamental enablers are defined as anyone who funded the programme or shaped it based on industry knowledge.
- We were not able to interview the desired number of students and family members. This was in part due to the evaluation occurring after the school year had ended.
- **Existing programme documents.** We also experienced challenges accessing some core programme documents and records. What we did manage to review are:
 - Akongoue: Pasifika Horticulture Programme Project Brief
 - Akongoue: Pasifika Horticulture Programme flyer
 - NZSTI’s November 2022 Milestone Report
 - TYT’s February 2023 Evaluation Report
 - Final credits achieved by students

- Programme attendance records.
- **An economic model** that places values on the productivity, recruitment, social and cultural outcomes of the programme.

It is acknowledged that the sample size for the students interviewed is small. This is a result of challenges to engage with students and some programme participants during the time of this evaluation. We have attempted to triangulate the insights collected from the students with the on-the-ground facilitators and fundamental enablers to feel confident with the conclusions we make in this report.

About this document

This report is presented in two parts:

- **Part A: Evaluation insights.** This section presents the evaluation findings, including an overview of the programme, along with insights related to programme outcomes, economic outcomes, programme execution and programme design against the programme logic model.
- **Part B: Lessons learnt and recommendations.** This section contains the “so-what” from this evaluation, summarising the evaluation insights and discussing considerations for the programme moving forward.

Part A: Evaluation insights

This section presents an overview of the programme,
along with insights related to outcomes,
design and execution.



Programme overview

This section details the programme's objectives, how students and employers were engaged and programme activities.

Objectives

As noted in the introduction, the Akongoue: Pasifika Horticultural Programme aimed to provide students with complete, all-rounded support. The **programme's purpose and vision** were:

- For Pasifika youth and their Kainga (families) to prosper by identifying horticulture as a career that offers progression to tertiary studies, employment, diversity, mobility, and financial reward.
- To engage the Pasifika youth and their Kainga to appreciate and consider the land as a source of life, connecting them with the cultural and indigenous knowledge of previous generations.
- To bring family, youth, and schools together to share and journey in this industry.
- To provide the Pasifika youth with tools and skills to become life-givers for their families and expand their vision beyond sowing and planting to become future entrepreneurs².

Design of the programme

The programme was designed as the **first of its kind for Pasifika youth**. It brought together multiple government agencies to align the synergies between their individual interests. These interests included educational, cultural, social and workforce outcomes. The government agencies funded the design and delivery of an NZQA registered programme for Pasifika youth coupled with pastoral care and mentoring.

Participants

The programme involved a total of **30 students over the course of 2022**, although numbers at a given point in time fluctuated throughout the year as students entered and left the programme. The total number of participants was higher than the original aspiration of 20 students, due to a higher level of interest and retention than anticipated (this is discussed further on page 14). These students were all in year 12 and 13 and identified as Pasifika.

The distinct roles of the main parties involved, based on the original 'South Auckland Pacific Social Enterprise flyer', were:

- **New Zealand Sports Turf Institute (NZSTI)**. Their role was to design and deliver the course content. NZSTI are a nationally accredited Category 1 Private Training Establishment (PTE) who have the authority to design and deliver programmes across a range of sectors, including production horticulture. NZSTI also played a part in student selection.
- **Tongan Youth Trust (TYT)**. Their role was to select participants to participate in the programme and provide the pastoral care and mentoring, as well as support NZSTI with the delivery. Their Pasifika context placed them well to understand the students and provide appropriate support.

² Source: South Auckland Pacific Social Enterprise flyer

The aspirations were to provide students with mentors that would support them spiritually, mentally, and physically throughout the programme.

- **Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).** Their role was to be the “project champion with industry and Crown agencies”³.

Throughout the programme, the project team also engaged with two employers (Turners & Growers and A S Wilcox & Sons) to provide students with onsite learning opportunities in horticultural operations.

Programme activities

Course content

Students participated in a range of practical, on-the-ground and class-based activities. This took place every Wednesday and took the students out of school for the day. The programme offered a range of topics, as outlined in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2: Programme topics. *These are industry credentials.

In addition, students participated in the following industry learning activities:



All activities taught to the students in the programme will be beneficial to them if they choose to enter the horticulture industry. Specific activities that NZSTI covered with students were:

³ Source: South Auckland Pacific Social Enterprise flyer

- **Health and Safety:** each day prior to practical activities whether that be at the plantation, on a field trip, or at the Auckland Teaching Gardens, students were asked to identify hazards and discuss how they could be as safe as possible.
- **Seed sowing:** students sowed seeds in the classroom and the seedlings were planted out at the plantation.
- **Planting out:**
 - Students planted out a variety of seedlings at the plantation including cabbage, cauliflower, beans, broccoli.
 - Some students also planted large grade fruit trees at the Auckland Teaching Gardens.
 - Students also planted kumara at the TYT office gardens. The purpose of this was so that the kumara would sprout and the shoots would be used to replant the next crop at the plantation.
- **Harvesting:** students harvested a variety of crops including watermelons, kumara, silver beet and lettuce.
- **Pruning:** students truss pruned tomato plants at Turners & Growers Covered Crops in Tuakau.
- **Spraying:** students completed weed spraying practical activities at Auckland Teaching Gardens.

In addition to this, the students were also involved in several community events. This included a Polopolo (a celebration of harvesting), providing service at the Salvation Army, and putting together tsunami relief packages to send to Tonga.

Engagement

As noted above, enrolments within the programme fluctuated throughout the year. This is typical of education programmes, reflecting the different levels of engagement from the participants. It was noted by interviewees that the level of interest from students, and the level of retention within the programme was higher than expected. Reasons for this are discussed on page 17.

The expectation around retention was far exceeded in terms of the students actually remaining [enrolled]. (Fundamental enabler)

I was surprised that not many kids dropped off and they carried excess throughout the whole program. I just didn't anticipate that kids would take it up. I was also surprised at the number of kids on the waiting list. (Fundamental enabler)

Pastoral care and mentoring

Students had access to mentoring which provided guidance for the bookwork from the programme and support with staying on top of their other school subjects.

We would help them along and assessments and assignments and point in the right direction and explained if they were stuck, what the what the answer to the question was. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Students met with their mentor on a regular basis to ensure they had sufficient mental, physical, and spiritual support throughout the programme. A “buddy” system was established to develop stronger connections between the students and their mentor, allowing for support to be tailored to the learner.

We've got individual learning plans for each one of the students that we worked through. We would have one-on-one sit downs where we would try to connect with them on their level and understand who they are. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Where students fell behind in their course work, NZSTI and TYT would organise a visit to the school to assist them to catch up.

Programme outcomes

This section presents the key insights about the overall outcomes of the programme, as demonstrated through the various evaluation activities.

Summary

This section presents a summary of the outcomes of the cluster for those involved, more detail about each of these insights is presented below, using direct quotes from programme participants and the project team to highlight these changes⁴. Key insights were that the programme:

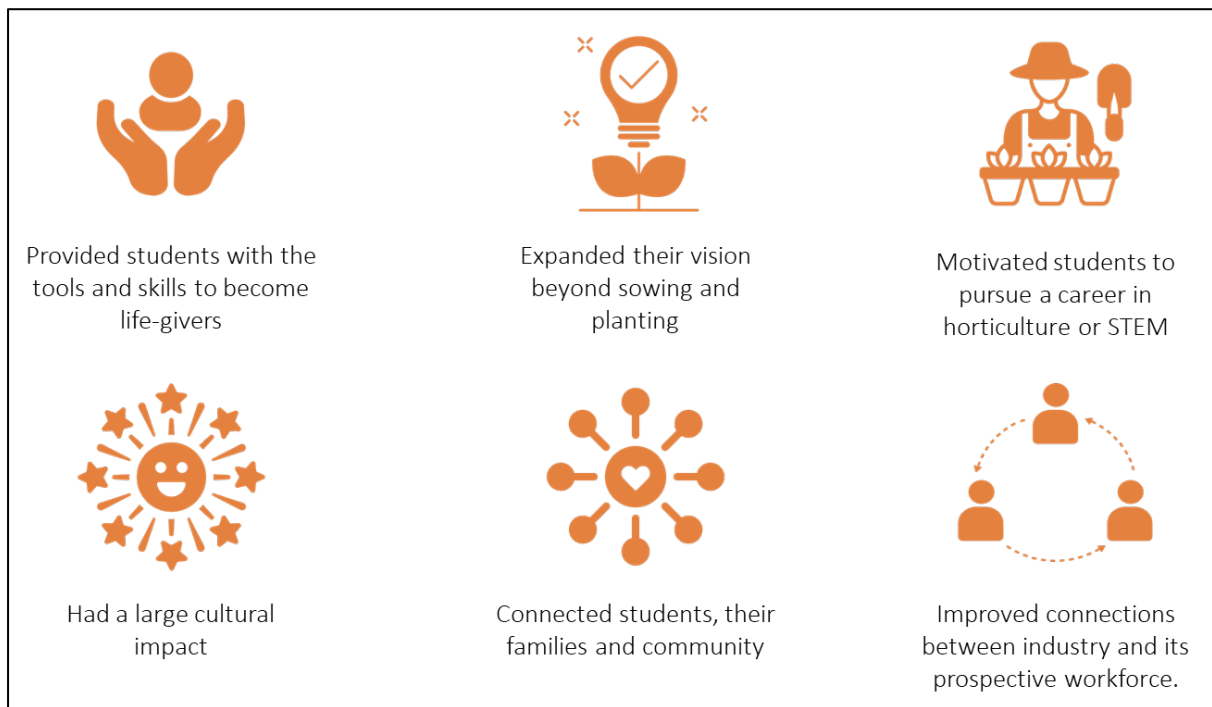


Figure 3: Programme outcomes key insights

These are exciting insights, as they clearly demonstrate that the programme has positively delivered against its desired outcomes (refer to Appendix 1: Akongoue programme logic model).

⁴ It is noted that this section draws heavily on the evaluation interviews (with students, the project team and fundamental enabler). These methodologies provided the opportunity for the participants to share their journey in their own words. All participants were invited to take part in these activities.

The programme provided participants with the tools and skills to become life-givers

One student was on track to leave school before this programme. They were not technically enrolled within the programme and would get on the bus without their school knowing. The **on-the-ground facilitators** noted that **this student was keen to come and learn and that this was something they were interested in**. The programme's mentors engaged with the student, levelling with them to respect the school's procedures and permitting them to join the programme. After they formally joined the programme, the on-the-ground facilitator noted that they were **"one of the best students that [they] had this year"**, reporting that they were engaged, present and willing to try anything. As a result, the on-the-ground facilitator explained that **this student turned their life around**.

Students were engaged in the programme

As noted in the programme overview, this programme had higher levels of engagement than anticipated (see page 14). This was attributed to the following factors:

- The students were **interested in the content**.

What [the programme has] done is focused them on actually where they want to be and they've all signed up again for next year. (On-the-ground facilitator)

- The **cultural foundation** to the programme. The mentors within the programme understood the students, therefore ensuring that the content and delivery of the programme was fit-for-purpose.

We were really fluid in finding what worked well for the students, they engaged more in small group activities, and we brought in a lot of art...you know trying to connect with things that they were familiar with but also excelled at. So, they could really see that they were making good progress. (On-the-ground facilitator)

- The **connections between the on-the-ground facilitators and the students**.

As the year went on their work ethic probably improved in the classroom, but I think that was ... [because] they got to know us more and we worked really, really hard to meet them where they were at. (On-the-ground facilitator)

- The programme delivery involved a **practical component**.

It's not boring, more practical than just sitting in class. (Student)

However, it was noted that this increased engagement did not necessarily translate to the students' other classes.

That's where they've got all of their credits from. So, it's not really made any effect outside of that. (On-the-ground facilitator)

They're thoroughly enjoyed and engaged and achieved in the Wednesdays. However, it didn't make them want to achieve better in the other things which has made it a bit difficult for this year. (On-the-ground facilitator)

The programme increased the confidence of students

All students interviewed (n=4) described an increase in self-confidence as a result of the programme. Students were brought together from different schools and connected through their Pasifika backgrounds and experiences within the programme. This resulted in many students describing an increased confidence in talking to other people.

Before I was really closed off...but when I met the kids at the course, I was able to gain more confidence and speak up and lead by example. (Student)

[I have an increased] confidence about myself and to socialise...[it gave] me confidence to do other things out of my comfort zone. (Student)

He was talking more, because he was really quiet, he was disconnected from everyone. Through the programme we saw him smile more in his face, he was talking a lot and he was telling me what they do. (Family member)

The increase in confidence has been reported by on-the-ground facilitators and fundamental enablers, illustrating that this outcome expands beyond the four students' interviewed.

The successes of the program that I have heard on the ground is young people seeing their potential to succeed. (Fundamental enabler)

[I am most proud of] the social impact, to see the students grow in themselves, confidence and self-esteem. (On-the-ground facilitator)

[I am most proud of] seeing the students leave their comfort zones, especially those who were vulnerable at the beginning of the program. It wasn't just about gaining credits, a lot of them did manage to find themselves throughout the programme. (On-the-ground facilitator)

The programme enabled students to get NCEA credits they some would not likely have otherwise got

Before involved with this programme, **one student was experiencing trouble at school**. The programme noticed their behaviour early on and engaged with the student and their school to create a **personalised care package**. The on-the-ground facilitators reported that as a result, the student **showed a lot more confidence, came to classes, has finished NCEA level 2 and is motivated to continue onto level 3**. The project team reported that this was a **"massive achievement"** for the student.

The programme offered students up to NCEA credits through a range of horticulture and health and safety-oriented standards. Students achieved 19 to 36 credits throughout the year, with the average student achieving 30 credits, according to NZSTI records.

One family member noted that this was integral to their family member achieving NCEA level 2, and that, to the best of their knowledge, they were the first member in their family to do so.

There was a couple that got all of the credits from Akongoue so they wouldn't have achieved anything without it. And one [student] I think [is] one of the only people in [their] family ever

to get level 2. [They] were excelling at school and so that was really cool. (On-the-ground facilitator)

These shorter-term outcomes from the programme are good indicators of longer-term positive change for the students, their current and future families, and communities. There was a shared optimism that these students would continue to be successful.

At the prize giving was the big learning around what it meant to the community and what it meant to the kids. [Especially]these kids...that would have otherwise have not ended up with any credits. It's given some sort of hope in terms of preparing them for success, be it in the sector or out of sector, but at least they've had the exposure. (Fundamental enabler)

For some students, this change was transformational

As highlighted within some of the case studies above, some students were significantly impacted by this programme. One fundamental enabler, that engaged with and oversaw all students involved in the programme, emphasised the strength in the programme in creating transformational change for less advantaged youth.

I see the change. I see the transformation. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Participants have expanded their vision beyond sowing and planting

Students have a more complete understanding of the career pathways in horticulture and STEM

Of the students that are continuing in horticulture or STEM (see below), they noted an array of pathways that they plan to take. The range described (such as working in a laboratory or a warehouse) illustrates that the programme was successful in showcasing the variety of career options available within horticulture and STEM.

Yeah, it has, from going on trips when we went to this bio-lab and I was interested in the way they test for bacteria and all that. (Student)

Yeah, like warehouses that are packaging vegetables and all that. (Student)

This was endorsed with fundamental enablers and on-the-ground facilitators, who also noted that they observed evidence of this outcome.

What I'm absolutely proud of with the Akongoue program is the opportunity for these young people to find different options of where they will be heading in the future. (Fundamental enabler)

[I am most proud that] It has enlightened those kids into other things that are out there. (On-the-ground facilitator)

What this program did, I believe, is gave young people a different feeling and a different perception of what it's really like to work in horticulture and put a bit more of a positive spin on it. (Fundamental enabler)

Further reinforcing this idea, is evidence from on-the-ground facilitators that the students were engaging in conversations about engaging in careers in the horticultural sector.

I think the people that came were really engaged. A couple of them before the end of the visit actually asked real questions about, OK, so how can I get a job and what do I need to do. So I think there hitting the mark. (On-the-ground facilitator)

The families' views of careers in the horticultural industry have changed

A focus of on-the-ground facilitators was to ensure students and their families could see the value in the programme and entering the horticulture industry, whilst fostering a sense of community and cultural identity. For many migrant Pasifika families, they want the younger generations to enter into traditionally well-paying, prestigious jobs such as medicine. Interview respondents revealed how the programme caused a shift in some families' perspectives on horticulture as a respectable pathway for younger generations to enter into.

We did have a few parents who were sceptical of what the program was about, they didn't expect the program to have such a good outcome for the child. It opened up a lot of their minds as well to just see that it's not just about farming, there's a whole lot more. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Yeah, I think it is a good career path, especially for us. Back in the islands that's what they did. I think most of them don't know that you get good money here in horticulture. (Family member)

Students are motivated to pursue a career in horticulture or STEM

Students have increased skills useful for a career in horticulture or STEM

Students' knowledge of horticultural practices increased, with two students noting that the biggest skills growth they experienced through the programme were specific horticultural skills and knowledge.

[I learned about] harvesting, growing and grading. (Student)

I learnt to plant lots of vegetables like kumara and spinach, all that type of stuff, and I didn't know that there were different ways and tools that you need for it. (Student)

These skills extended beyond horticulture, with students, fundamental enablers and on-the-ground facilitator noting the broad spectrum of skillsets students developed, including leadership, essential life skills and cultural skills.

They got some life skills from it too, which is good... [in particular] the teamwork was really important. (On-the-ground facilitator)

A skill that I learnt was leadership skills... when it came to the course, I felt confident that I could lead. (Student)

A lot of cultural skills, which helped me with my socialising skills and bonding with people. (Student)

Participants are encouraged to continue to work in horticulture or STEM

When asked if the programme has made students feel more motivated to work in horticulture or STEM jobs in the future, all interviewed students said yes. At the time of this evaluation, it was understood

that 17 students were planning to continue to be involved with horticulture in some way in the foreseeable future⁵. This includes:

- Five students working in horticulture roles over the 2022 – 2023 summer
- Eleven year 12 students (n=13) planning to return to the programme next year
- One student going to university next year, noting their interest in progressing their horticultural studies.

My major right now is music, but since I started the horticulture course, I have been really keen to learn more about different types of plants and how they grow. (Student)

The programme has had a large cultural impact

Students have reported feeling an increased connection to their culture

When asked about whether their cultural needs and values were accommodated, all students interviewed revealed that they learnt more about their culture. The programme brought together students from multiple schools, and as noted above, this enabled them to connect through their cultural heritage. Together, in partnership with the mentors and families, students learnt more about what it means to be Pasifika. As a result, many students felt more connected to their cultural identity.

Learning more about my culture, I just sort of had a different look at it my values and they just changed a little. (Student)

[The programme helped me connect with my culture] through the camp and the Pasifika history. (Student)

[The programme] was so motivational because I was able to speak my mother tongue and connect with my roots. (Student)

On-the-ground facilitators have verified this observation for the other students not interviewed, reporting that this programme has helped “a lot” of the students connect to their culture.

Bringing in the whole cultural perspective of things into the programme that has helped a lot of our students [connect to their culture]. Especially those who weren't confident in being a Tongan at the end of the program they now understand that it's OK to like to be a Tongan. We teach our students as well, just to remember our cultural identity because we wouldn't want that to be forgotten. (On-the-ground facilitator)

It was really cool to see the kids connect back to something that traditionally happens in the islands. When they go visit family, they will see exactly the same things. The students that had grown up in Tonga said to us “this is so great, I am connecting to what I know”. (On-the-ground facilitator)

One student expressed a desire to continue their cultural journey, looking to further celebrate and share their culture with other students.

⁵ Source: NZTI November 2022 Milestone Report

I found the leaders pretty motivational; they got me thinking about becoming one of the mentors. It has got me wanting to do that as a part time job because I would be able to connect with other students of our own culture. (Student)

A fundamental enabler also noted that the mentoring programme has been established in a way which allows students to become part of a community which supports them to continue to give back to their culture.

There's still that connection back to the mentors as they transition through working and so you know they belong. It's like a continuous pipeline embedded in them. You come through us [TYT], you go out, be successful, but then you come back, and you give back. (Fundamental enabler)

The cultural impact has begun to expand into families and the wider community

This programme and the students have begun to share their increased cultural connection with those around them. One family member explained how they have found an increased connection to their culture through their family member's involvement in the programme. They noted how they learned more about cooking traditional Tongan food after their family member shared what they had learnt through the programme.

Teaching them how to cook traditionally I don't even know how to do it myself and [they] know how to do it...I was just really happy because it made it easier for me, because I don't really know anything about my Tongan culture and [they were] learning it at the programme. (Family member)

The programme itself has also directly increased the cultural connection of those involved with the delivery of the programme.

I got embraced into the Tongan culture. I learned a whole heap, I had no idea about the food, family and friendliness. That brought me in, I felt quite engaged in the whole thing. (On-the-ground facilitator)

This was an opportunity for me to learn more about their culture. (On-the-ground facilitator)

The programme has further connected youth, their families and their community

One guardian described how the programme has **re-connected them with their family member**. The guardian described how the programme mentors made the effort to **really get to know their family member, and what they needed, often calling to ask how they were doing at home**. This supported the guardian to know how to have a better relationship with their family member and enabled the student to **stay on a positive pathway**.

*They were going through a lot of problems and Akongoue really helped a lot. To me, basically, **it saved their life**. (Family member)*

The programme united Pasifika youth

The students involved within this programme came from multiple schools. As a result, several students made connections that would have likely not have done otherwise.

There was a bit of camaraderie amongst them that they were all doing this thing together, those students that wouldn't necessarily have been hanging out together if it weren't for the programme. (On-the-ground facilitator)

One student interviewed (n=4) reported that making friends with the other students was what they were most proud of within the programme.

[I am most proud of] establishing a bond with people that I didn't know that were strangers to me, it was cool to step out of my comfort zone and make new friends with the other students. (Student)

On-the-ground facilitators have also reported the special connections that were formed between students within the programme.

[One of the things I am proud of is seeing] the growth in confidence, self-esteem and friendships. (On-the-ground facilitator)

One of the beautiful things was watching them over the year really connect and make friends. (On-the-ground facilitator)

The horticultural element of the programme brought the community together

The programme linked students into the broader Pasifika community through horticultural activities. One on-the-ground facilitator described a Polopolo (a community celebration centred around harvesting) held during the programme. This brought together the Akongoue students, wider church groups and community groups to celebrate the community and harvesting of kumara. Involving the students within this event elevated their connection with their community and understanding of traditional horticulture practices.

We did have up a Polopolo which is just harvesting crops. We had some of our Akongoue students who had participated in this event, and it was a community event as well. A lot of the Tongans from the churches came along and harvested kumara...[it] really helped them come

together and just reminding them that, you know, whatever they grew up back in the islands and really like, you know, it has like an outcome out of it. (On-the-ground facilitator)

The programme also encouraged the students to give back to their community. This included community relief / support efforts.

We picked a few students to come out and provide service at Salvation Army. We got them to pack parcels for some of the vulnerable students in our team and our programme. (On-the-ground facilitator)

We got them to come out for the tsunami relief. So, they came and helped out with the packing of the drums and then they were sent over to Tonga. (On-the-ground facilitator)

The programme has improved the connection between industry and their prospective workforce

Employers see value in the programme for Pasifika youth and the horticulture industry

When asked how valuable industry thinks the programme is for Pasifika youth, all industry stakeholders interviewed felt it was valuable for building interest in joining the industry workforce, and understanding what that could entail. Employers are facing a significant skill shortage and are particularly interested in initiatives that can attract new entrants into the workforce. They understand that this is a challenge that has to be addressed in partnership with industry, emphasising their commitment to supporting programmes like this.

We just try and support anything horticulture and anything to change the way people think of the industry and what they think jobs are in. I guess the massive thing for us is the skill shortage, so if we can create a bit of a pathway or an insight for students to know what work is out there and tap into that in terms of attracting employees then that's also another as well as just kind of social responsibility element. (On-the-ground facilitator)

When asked if they thought programmes like this could be doing anything else to help serve or connect Pasifika communities to the food and fibre industry, industry's response was that they would like more programmes like Akongoue to exist so prospective workers can be enticed into and understand the industry:

Just more of them. More of the programmes. Nothing different to what they're doing. I think they've nailed it. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Whilst we feel confident that employers see value in this programme, the realised benefit for employers will not be clear for a few years. This view was shared by an on-the-ground facilitator, who felt they needed more time to have a view on how this programme impacts the industry.

I need more time to observe. (On the ground facilitator)

Students have continued to work for the employers involved in this programme over summer

Employers involved in the programme have benefited immediately, attracting three students to work for them over the student's summer period. On-going, it is likely that students will return to work for

these employers on a permanent basis, looking to grow and advance their careers. One on-the-ground facilitator described how students were asking questions about career paths, demonstrating the growth in interest from students.

I think the people that came were really engaged. A couple of them before the end of the visit actually asked real questions about, OK, so how can I get a job and what do I need to do. So I think they are hitting the mark. (On-the-ground facilitator)

It is evident that this programme presents an effective solution to address the skill shortage in the medium term.

Everyone interviewed would like to see the programme continue

All 23 interview respondents said they want the programme to continue. Students described how they would like to see their peers benefit the same way that they did, further connecting Pasifika with these sorts of opportunities.

Yup cos my little brother's still in it, he's gonna come back next year. (Student)

Yeah, I would like to see it continued because I think it is gives great opportunities to students and gives more job opportunities. (Student)

Yes, cos it will help Pasifika kids who are struggling to learn and stuff. (Student)

One fundamental enabler highlighting the importance of programmes like this to ensure that traditional horticultural techniques are not lost.

[The horticultural techniques are] going to fade because there is no opportunity to pass on the knowledge to the next generation. (Fundamental enabler)

For on-the-ground facilitator and a fundamental enabler, they saw the benefit that this programme could have for an industry that heavily relies on seasonal workers. This programme presents an opportunity to the industry to change their current model.

Yeah, definitely, we have to stop relying on bringing in RSEs. The industry has to wake up and see you've got them all here. Invest in these people. Change your model to suit them. (On-the-ground facilitator)

One fundamental enabler also suggested that they would like to see the programme expand across the country, reaching more students.

I'd like to see it expanded. If we could do a version of something like this, involved in other things, that would be great. And obviously you'd take learnings and adapt things. (Fundamental enabler)

Turners & Growers and A S Wilcox & Sons would like to continue being involved in the programme, both wanting to provide the same experiences they did this year if not expanding on them to provide students with greater opportunities and perspectives.

Yes. Probably the same as this time, so we'll probably do tours and work experience again, potentially could go to some other sites and we only did two sites and so we could potentially open it up to some more. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Economic outcomes

Overview

The purpose of this economic model is to develop a view on whether there is a sufficient return on investment for this programme. This takes into consideration a:

- **Recruitment benefit** – employers save time and resources recruiting new talent into the industry (for qualitative evidence, see page 24).
- **Productivity benefit** – students entering into the horticultural industry have increased skills than they would have had otherwise, increasing their initial productivity (for qualitative evidence, see page 20).
- **Cultural benefit** – students are more connected to their culture (for qualitative evidence, see page 21).
- **Social benefit** – students are more connected to other students, their families and their community (for qualitative evidence, see page 23).

The process of quantifying these benefits is discussed briefly in the methodology section below, and in more detail within Appendix 4: Economic model assumptions.

The economic model suggests that the programme has **a sufficient benefit to cost ratio making the case for the programme to continue**. However, we argue that the economic model is not sufficient on its own to capture the full-scale of the impact of this programme. The best representation for the impact of this programme is captured in the words of the participants – highlighted within the section above.

Methodology

The process of developing the economic model was as follows:

1. **Characterise the core benefits arising from the programme.** This has been done by using the qualitative insights collected through the interviews and the business case for the programme (as highlighted in the Programme outcomes section). This confirmed the benefits outlined above.
2. **Identify the methodology to quantify these benefits for a single student.** Each student realises each benefit at various extents. We drew on existing literature and economic models to develop a value for each benefit should it be realised in full – placing it on a linear scale from 0 (no benefit) to 10 (full benefit).
3. **Conduct an analysis into the outcomes of this pilot to develop expected outcomes for the programme, should it continue.** The pilot resulted in a range of outcomes for students. From this we were able to understand the expected outcomes of future students within the programme, including the likelihood of them progressing into employment and their improved connection to their community. We then assumed that the same degree of benefits would be produced in future years.

To read more about the methodology and assumptions behind the model, please see Appendix 4: Economic model assumptions.

Benefit valuation

Benefit per student

Considering the contents of Appendix 4: Economic model assumptions, we deduce the assumption that **for a single year 13 student**, within the first year after finishing the programme, there is a **\$4,000 - \$21,000 benefit for that year**, with **an average of \$15,100 per student within the first year**. The benefit is expected to be made up of a 2% productivity benefit, 17% social benefit, 36% recruitment benefit and 45% cultural benefit (as shown in Figure 4).

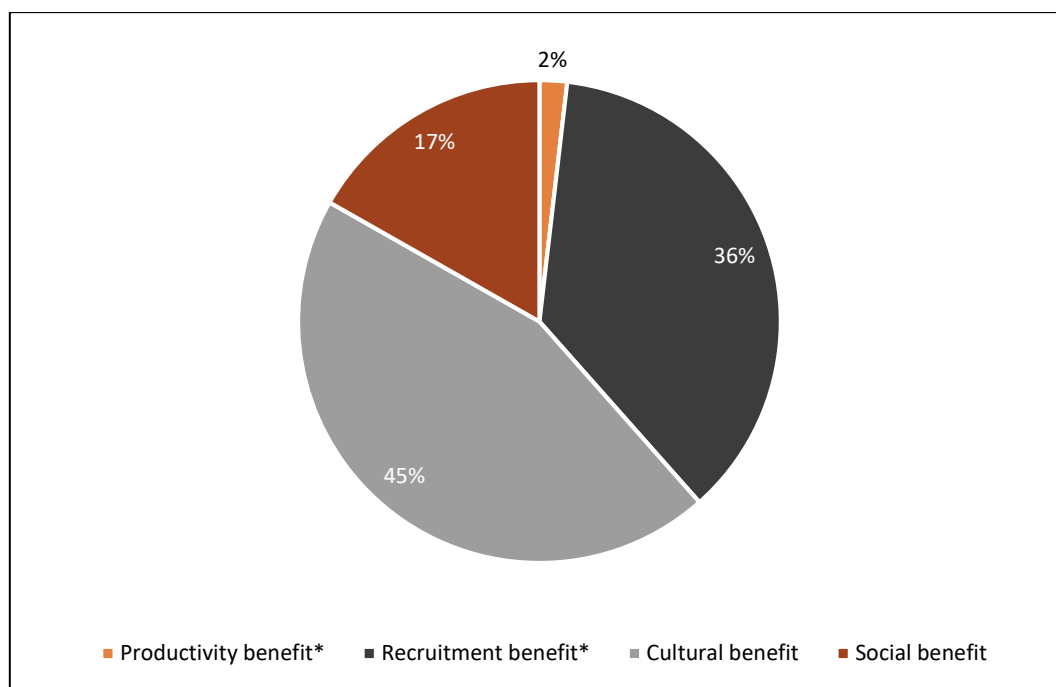


Figure 4: The expected split between the benefit types from this programme in the first year after a student leaves the programme. *These benefits factor in the likelihood of students progressing into employment after the programme.

Many of these benefits persist in future years. We assume that the increased connection to their culture, community and horticultural industry persists – whilst the productivity benefit diminishes their productivity converges with the wider workforce. **The overall benefit per year equalises at an expected \$14,800 per year per student.**

Benefit over time

For this one-year programme, we find that the benefit per year, after 2027, equalises at \$360,000 per annum (as shown in Figure 5). This has a present value of \$4,900,000, giving a **benefit to cost ratio for the programme of 14 to 1**. This assumes that the cost of the programme is the same in the second year as it was in the first year (~\$400,000 per annum).

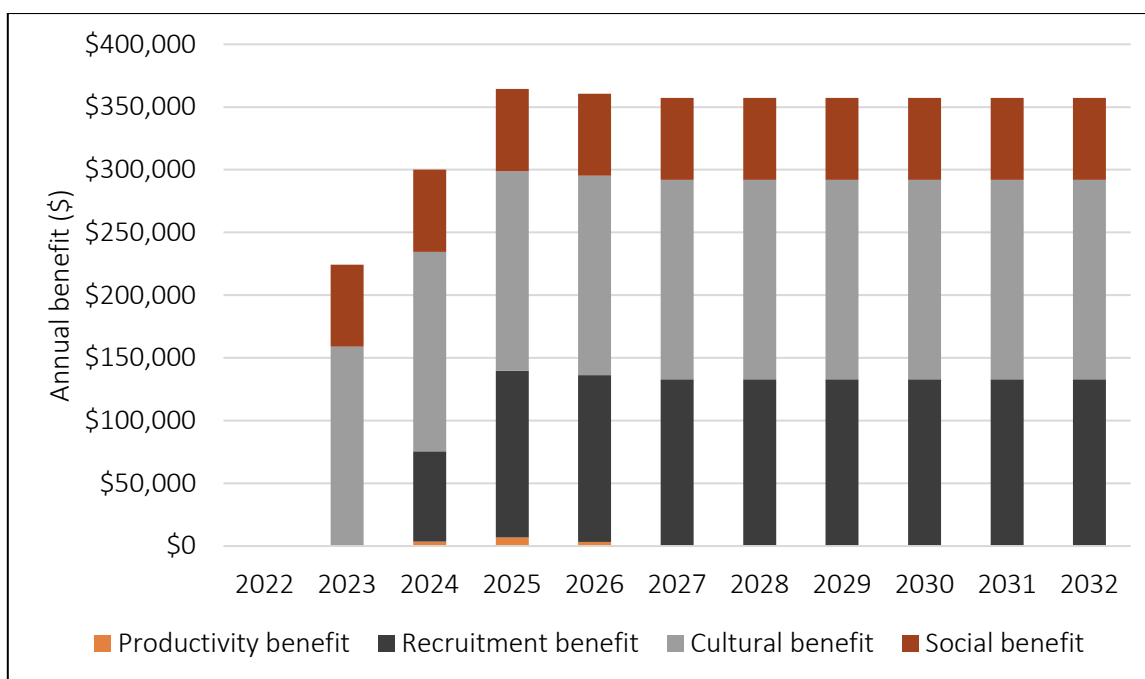


Figure 5: The benefit from the programme if it were to exist for two years in total over time, broken down by benefit type.

Limitations

Our approach to developing this economic model has drawn on a range of methodologies often utilised in cost benefit analyses. However, we acknowledge that there are limitations with this approach, particularly in the application of these methodologies to Pasifika subjects. As described by Ponton (2018), we accept that adopting a Pacific worldview is important when designing research methodologies for Pacific people – something that is absent from this approach.

Each framework highlights the importance of seeing research through the eyes of those who are recruited for research, as well as ensuring that specific Pacific worldviews are not ignored but upheld during formulation of a research design. (An extract taken from Ponton, 2018)⁶

Because of this, we strongly encourage the results of this economic model to illustrate an indicative value of this programme and should always be accompanied with the qualitative evidence outlined in the section above. The findings from the interviews, as outlined within the Programme overview, illustrates the value of this programme in the words of the participants – making the package a robust representation for the value of this programme.

Limitations that we have identified include:

- **This model does not capture the flow-on effects from this programme.** The value is defined for an individual and does not consider how this may influence their peers, community, current and future families.
- **The approach focuses on the individual, not the collective.** Building on the point above, the value was only defined for an individual. No value was placed on the collective benefit arising through this programme. This likely caused an underestimation of the social and cultural benefits.

⁶ Ponton, V. (2018). *Utilising Pacific methodologies as inclusive practice*. SAGE publications.

- **The valuation methodologies were taken from a range of sources, not designed specifically for this programme.** This approach was taken as an efficient technique to develop this economic model. The valuation methodologies are therefore not a perfect fit for the qualitative evidence supplied. For more discussion on this for each benefit, see Appendix 4: Economic model assumptions.
- **The sample of students interviewed was small.** We have made a number of assumptions about the outcomes of individual students as a result of this programme. This was based on interviews with a small sample of students, and the programme stakeholders.
- **Calibrating the extent to which the benefits were realised was challenging.** The quantitative value derived for each benefit was for a single student achieving a full benefit. Aligning the true extent to which each student achieved the full benefit with the research methodology was difficult. For example, this involved trying to quantify the extent to which a student improved their cultural connection on a scale that was used across cultures and age-groups.

Programme execution

This section presents key evaluation insights about the execution of the programme.

Summary

This section presents a summary of the insights learnt about the programme execution. More detail about each of these insights is presented below, using direct quotes from programme participants and the programme stakeholders to highlight these points⁷. Key insights were:

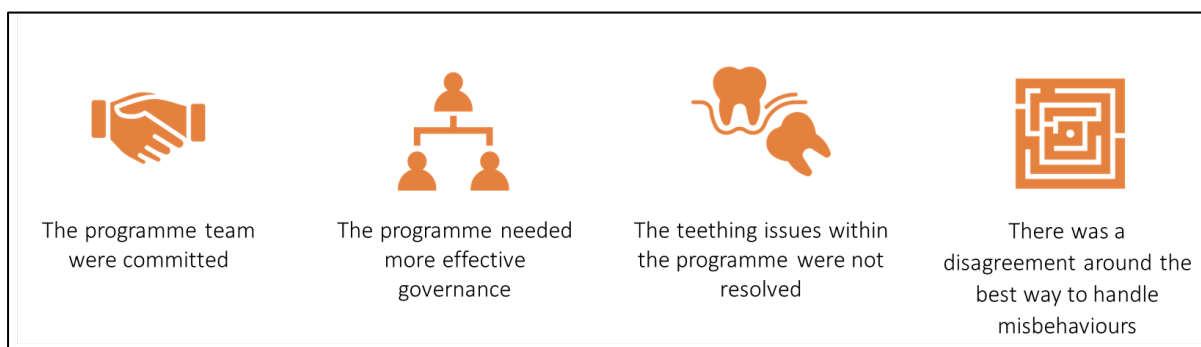


Figure 6: Programme execution key insights

The programme team were committed

All of those interviewed that were involved in programme design and delivery illustrated that their heart was in this programme. As noted above, they all want to see it continue given the potential they can see it having for Pasifika. It was evident that they had come together with this shared overarching vision, and remained committed to it and the students despite challenges that arose. Much of that has been attributed to the passion and determination of the on-the-ground facilitators.

I'm super proud we got there, it was a challenging year with lots of highs and lows, so the fact we made it through was awesome. (On-the-ground facilitator)

[One on-the-ground facilitator] was passionate and he was committed... he got his message through. (Fundamental enabler)

[The pilot] is quite ambitious and out-of-the-box, and it has got to come back to the [key] personnel that are driving it... [that we attribute the success to] (Fundamental enabler)

The programme needed more effective governance

As highlighted in the introduction, we faced challenges within this evaluation in regard to getting in contact with the key people involved in this programme and gaining access to programme documents and records. A core piece of information we struggled to gain was transparency on the funding structure for this programme and how it was spent. There was no one organisation, or individual that had access

⁷ It is noted that this section draws heavily on the evaluation interviews (with students, the project team and fundamental enabler). These methodologies provided the opportunity for the participants to share their experiences and perspective in their own words. All participants were invited to take part in these activities.

to all of the necessary documents, highlighting that there was no single entity overseeing the programme.

We also heard, within the interviews, about a number of conflicts between the on-the-ground facilitators. They described how they did not always see eye-to-eye throughout the programme.

[On-the-ground facilitator] provided some challenges because they saw things differently... There were challenges in making sure we understood each other. (On-the-ground facilitator)

[NZSTI] is a business. [TYT] is a community... I believe that although we have some differences, but we worked well in terms of trying to achieve the [overarching aspirations]. (On-the-ground facilitator)

There are challenges working with a different provider... we are two different cultures. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Whilst we anticipate that this is likely due to the nature of their different motivations for involvement and approaches (rather than the on-the-ground facilitators themselves), we highlight that these conflicts were not effectively managed. It was known to the fundamental enablers that there were challenges associated with bringing together a multi stakeholder group, however there was a lack of action surrounding effective programme governance.

The frustration of trying to work with a multi stakeholder group. We have a wide variety of stakeholders, and this has been the most challenging. (Fundamental enabler)

As noted on page 36, the on-the-ground facilitators were the right organisations for this programme. Therefore, should this programme continue, having effective governance in place is essential for overcoming these sources of conflicts and therefore becomes a necessary consideration for the programme design.

The teething issues within the programme were not resolved

New programmes usually have a number of teething issues as the project team forms. This programme was no exception, however, in this case these issues were not resolved over the course of the year. Below we note the areas where there were misalignments in perceptions between interviewees:

- **What the entrance criteria into the programme was.** When interviewed, the on-the-ground facilitators gave different perspectives on what the criteria was for including students within the programme. There was a document detailing what it should be, however it was not followed by all parties. Some thought that the students just had to be Pasifika, others Tongan, whilst some believed that students were selected based on their academic results or interest in horticulture.

From the very beginning is what I was told is that these students were hand selected at the very start because of their academic results and commitment to learn and wanted to move into horticulture. I quickly realized that that wasn't the truth at all. They were pulled out classes because they needed credits. (On-the-ground facilitator)

- **What the roles and responsibilities were for the core on-the-ground facilitators.** There were numerous points of conflict between the on-the-ground facilitators over the course of the pilot. This included frustration around who was responsible for the programme structure, the scope for mentoring and methodologies for disciplinary actions. Memorandum of Understandings

(MOUs) were established near the end of the programme to alleviate this; however, it was agreed that this should have been done at the start of the programme.

I think a lot more groundwork should have been done at the beginning...Tongan Youth Trust they kind of just go off and do their own thing. NZSTI have a very educational focus. So, it's just remembering that balance of what they're there in the role for. (Fundamental enabler)

- **What communication channels would be used.** There were no established communication channels for the on-the-ground facilitators to use. In particular, NZSTI and TYT had different preferences and communication styles that were not aligned throughout the pilot.

NZSTI have got a different way of doing things. They're really professional with the emails and stuff but TYT liked using messenger chat. (On-the-ground facilitator)

- **What reporting was required for whom.** Some fundamental enablers felt as though they were kept in the dark on the programme. They expressed that they found it difficult to get a grasp on what was happening on-the-ground. Other fundamental enablers, however, were kept informed through regular reporting and phone calls.

Everything's gone so quiet... I've seen two reports. It's very difficult to get hold of any of these reports. I just don't know what's happened... I just really wanted everyone to deliver on their promises, so not being able to the [reporting] was quite frustrating. (Fundamental enabler)

I was kept in the loop quite a bit. And regular reporting, and then even constant phone calls just to keep me up to date of what's happening. (Fundamental enabler)

As noted above, some of these challenges are to be expected with new programmes like this. Through the interviews, it was theorised that these unresolved challenges could be attributed to:

- Some on-the-ground facilitators operating within a government funded initiative for the first time.

I think it's because it's the first time. And the environment is new, [the on-the-ground facilitators] are just learning. (Fundamental enabler)

- The on-the-ground facilitators were stretched with resources so addressing some of these challenges were less of a priority compared to delivering the support to the students.

You know, our Pacific cultures, things like reporting and administration are secondary to actually just getting out there with the people on the ground and working with them. (Fundamental enabler)

However, it was also outlined that there was not always a clear programme manager. This could have enabled some of these teething issues to be identified and addressed – preventing them from becoming ongoing issues throughout the pilot.

I think the missing element has been a programme manager. (Fundamental enabler)

I think that the lack of a programme manager is probably the biggest thing for me... I think there is a gap there. (Fundamental enabler)

There needs to be a very clear program leader. [Some] thought that was NZSTI and [others thought it was [TYT]]. [We needed to get clear] who is the owner and what are the expectations right from the start, these are the behaviour expectations, these are the attendance

expectations, what each person or each organization brings to the programme... (On-the-ground facilitator)

This also further supports the idea that the programme needed more effective governance (see page 30).

There was a disagreement around the best way to handle misbehaviours.

There were reports from the on-the-ground facilitators and fundamental enablers of challenges with the behaviour of some of the students. Multiple interviewees described the challenges with the behaviour of the students on the bus, in particular. This heightened the misbehaviours to the lack of adult-supervision on-board.

Some of the kids misbehaved at times. There were some challenges around the bus, people had vapes and other sorts of young people issues. (Fundamental enabler)

There were a couple of incidents on the bus that I found quite frustrating... the kids could have been more respectful to the bus driver. (On-the-ground facilitator)

How the behavioural issues were best dealt with was a source of disagreement between the core on-the-ground facilitators (TYT and NZSTI).

The lack of consequences was really challenging from my perspective... if I was trying to enforce a consequence they were not on the same page. [We were at different extremes] and trying to find that middle ground was challenging. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Heightened behaviour issues within this group were not unexpected by one fundamental enabler noting that part of their motivation for investing in this programme was to prevent some students from disengaging with school.

There are a lot of kids where school might not be for them, so they become disengaged... so if we could trial something that could stop that from happening, that was what attracted us. (Fundamental enabler)

Though the programme can be beneficial for engaging the disengaged students described above, the affects this could have on other students in the programme should be considered, as highlighted by one on-the-ground facilitator.

Whilst acknowledging the programme could provide an avenue for re-engaging some learners with Education, there needs to be a careful consideration of the health and safety of all participants (learners, on ground staff, industry hosts, etc.) when bringing these groups together, especially if that behaviour puts others at risk. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Programme design

This section presents key evaluation insights about the design of the programme.

Summary

This section presents a summary of the insights learnt about the programme's execution, more detail about each of these insights is presented below, using direct quotes from programme participants and the programme team to highlight these points⁸. Key insights were:

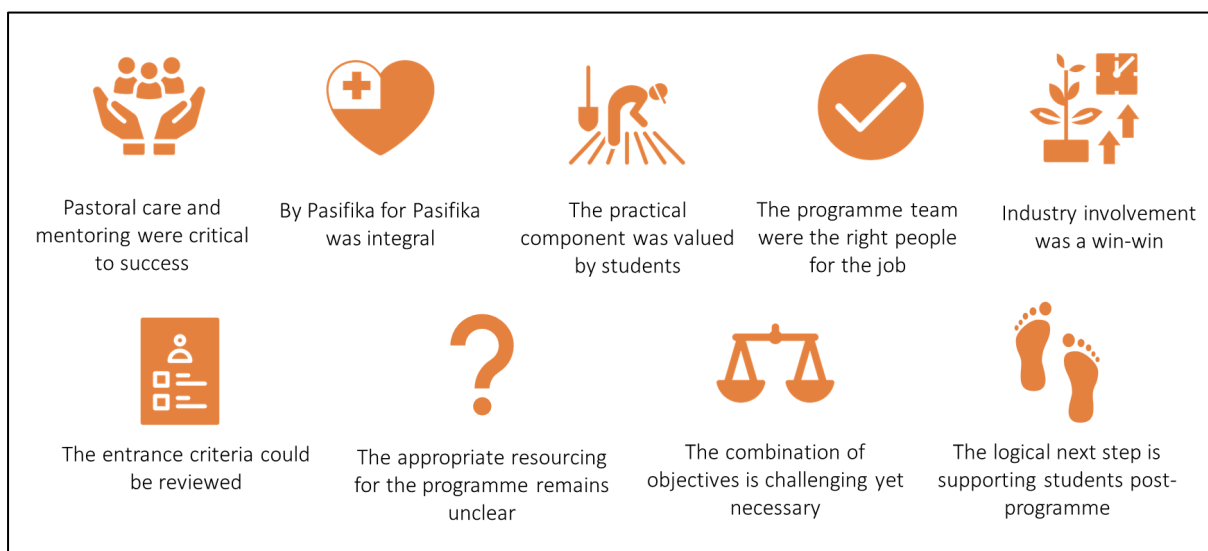


Figure 7: Programme design key insights

Pastoral care and mentoring were critical to this programme's success

The core on-the-ground facilitators (TYT and NZSTI) provided mentoring and pastoral care for the students. The pastoral care delivered was reported to be different to mainstream offerings. The mentors took the time to get to know the individual, their home situation, their learning styles, and other relevant aspects of their life to provide tailored support. A large part of the pastoral care also involved connecting with the individual, understanding who they are and what their interests are. In particular, the culturally appropriate element of the pastoral care, enabled deep and empathetic connections to be formed with the students.

Some of them come to us for support that they might not receive at school or even in their own households. (On-the-ground facilitator)

There have been some struggles – just reading some of the stories where some of the families, they don't have enough. (Fundamental enabler)

All students interviewed (n=4) expressed an appreciation for this, describing a range of benefits from support to complete their bookwork through to improving their connection with their culture.

⁸ It is noted that this section draws heavily on the evaluation interviews (with students, the project team and fundamental enablers). These methodologies provided the opportunity for the participants to share their experiences and perspective in their own words. All participants were invited to take part in these activities.

Whenever we had bookwork, they made the questions more understandable for us to do the work using a PowerPoint and read over the questions with us to guide us through it. (Student)

They made us feel comfortable the whole year. Everything was good. (Student)

This was particularly impactful for the more vulnerable students, illustrating the strength in having inspiring mentors that believe in the students. As highlighted in the outcome section, in some cases, this was transformational (see page 19).

We definitely saw outcomes that we didn't expect as well from some of our students who are vulnerable, and we didn't really think would really become a whole different person. They turned around everything and they didn't let anything back them down from what they believed in. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Key to the success of the pastoral care and mentoring was the connections formed between the **Pasifika on-the-ground facilitators and the Pasifika students**. From the interviews, it was clear that the students resonated with the **culturally appropriate pastoral care provided** – engaging mentors that were empathetic with the student's situations.

What worked well with [TYT] is that they were able to relate to us, we were all sort of bought up in similar households. (Student)

With Pasifika, being a role model [is key]. A lot of them do not necessarily have a parent at home [that can provide that]. (On-the-ground facilitator)

In addition to this, on-the-ground facilitators also attributed the success to **patience and listening**, taking their **home situation into consideration**, being a **strong role model**, and building **trust from the start**.

The two core on-the-ground facilitators (NZSTI and TYT) took different approaches with the support they provided. Both aspired to get to know the individual student and provide tailored advice and direction. NZSTI were well positioned, from their education background, to support the identification of learning difficulties, and support students with strategies to overcome them. On the other hand, TYT's approach was more aligned with the cultural identity of the students and their communities. Combined they delivered an effective pastoral care programme.

By Pasifika for Pasifika was integral

The programme's Pasifika design and approach helped motivate and nurture some students' cultural identities. Two students interviewed (n=4) reported that the ways in which the programme was tailored to their culture enabled and motivated them to finish the programme.

[Because of the Pasifika design], I just slowly started coming to class more and then I just ended up actually liking it the more I went to class. (Student)

It was so motivational because I was able to speak my mother tongue and connect with my roots. (Student)

In general, it appears that students found it easier to connect with the programme's content and other students because their cultural values were reflected.

Growing up in an Islander household we got taught respect right through, it was cool to see how much our values were considered. (Student)

Most of the people there were Tongan so it was pretty easy to get along with them. (Students)

It was commonly suggested that the connection with Pasifika culture could have further been implemented within the programme. For example, increasing the number of cultural activities and the use of Pasifika languages within the programme.

We need to celebrate culture more. Something we want to work on was to have our resources in multilanguage. Tongan Youth trust has been providing the lunches every week. To have a cultural lunch and for the individuals to be able to cook that and talk about where they're from that that gives them cultural feeling. It comes from their heart and their soul and that adds value then to the to the programme. (On-the-ground facilitator)

My honest view here is that there is room for improvement in terms of connection [to the cultural element]. (On-the-ground facilitator)

The practical component was valued by students

The programme's dual approach of classroom based learning and practical, in-the-field learning had a positive impact on students. Two students noted that the practical components of the programme worked well and were what engaged them (as noted on page 17).

This program was so different, the majority of the time we were outside and hands on, it was cool we got to step out onto the farm, where a period in school is just based in classrooms. (Student)

It's not boring, more practical than just sitting in class. (Student)

The programme team were the right people for the job

The core on-the-ground facilitators brought different skills, experience, and approaches to the programme. When asked whether the programme could have succeeded without TYT and NZSTI, the majority of fundamental enablers agreed that these organisations were key to the programme's success.

[NZSTI] just brought this resilience to it. (Fundamental enabler)

NZSTI is a really integral part of the programme. The way that they engage with the young people is absolutely stunning. You can tell that they really have the knowledge of the contents and are passionate about what they do. (Fundamental enabler)

I think TYT as a whole was key to this because they were they already had the relationships and they already had the people... (Fundamental enabler)

[TYT] are brilliant at the mentoring and the nourishment with them, with our students. (Fundamental enabler)

The difference in skills, experience, and approaches were also the source of some tension between the core on-the-ground facilitators. However, whilst this is challenging, overcoming this is important to deliver upon the combination of objectives. We discuss this more on page 37.

Industry involvement was a win-win

As noted above, employers and students connected through this programme (see page 24). This has supported students to get a better feel for a career in horticulture, and network with potential

employers. Employers have also benefited, supporting the talent attraction initiatives, as evident by students committing to working for the employers post-programme (see page 24).

I just think that it's a good opportunity for them and it is a win, win situation because even growers really like to work with them. (Fundamental enabler)

The entrance criteria could be reviewed

As noted above (see page 31), there was confusion around the entrance criteria for students into this programme. This sparked conversation within the interviews about what the right criterion should be. There was no one view that arose from the interviews – the conversation topics are presented below:

- **Diversity within Pasifika nations could be expanded.** The number of Pasifika nations represented by the students was disproportionately Tongan. This was described to have dissuaded other Pasifika students from participating.

Originally it was only Pasifika students. When we got the information, it was in Tongan and in English, which may well have put off Pasifika kids that aren't Tongan. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Whereas if it was more diverse, I think that would encourage more active engagement On-the-ground facilitator as well as different ideas and different critical thinking. (On-the-ground facilitator)

- **The target age group could extend to year 11s.** It was discussed within the interviews about whether targeting year 12s and year 13s was the most effective approach. One interviewee believed that earlier intervention and spending more time with students over the course of their schooling would result in better outcomes.

If I had more time with these young ones, there would be so much more I could show them. Instead of just being on one task, they would be able to experience another task or two or three tasks. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Others, however, felt that the targeted age group was appropriate as they are set to leave school and directly apply what they have learnt.

I think the age group is good and the school leavers are probably at a good time to catch. (On-the-ground facilitator)

The appropriate resourcing for this programme remains unclear

This programme presents an effective intervention for Pasifika youth, providing them with the support, confidence, motivation, opportunities and material resources to enable them to continue into meaningful horticulture careers. Ultimately, this has meant that this programme design is relatively resource intensive. However, the on-the-ground facilitators expressed within the interviews a strong need for more resourcing.

From the outset, there were big ambitions, some of them were met, but some of them were definitely not met because they were either unachievable, ran out of time, didn't have enough budget, ran out of resources. (Fundamental enabler)

The on-the-ground facilitators are passionate about the programme and have trust that this programme is what is needed for these students – they just need more funding to execute this programme well. This includes:

- Funding for more staff and / or training for current staff.

We honestly need more funding and enough resources to pay for extra or training for our staff to be more skilled as well to notice those different things. (On-the-ground facilitator)

- Material supplies, such as food for the students.

Tongan Youth trust has been providing the lunches every week. (On-the-ground facilitator)

The combination of objectives is challenging yet necessary

Agencies wanted to invest in the programme because they saw importance in connecting their interests

Fundamental enablers from government agencies were asked why they wanted to invest in the programme. Understandably, they expressed variations of the same vision – aligning with the interests of their agency.

The absolute value was that connection of Pasifika to the primary industries. How do we connect them and not just leave Pasifika participants at the door of entry level career options, but how do we progress that into meaningful career opportunities for them. Also teach them things that they can take back to their Pacific Island heritage countries and work to get them on the global scale. (Fundamental enabler)

There's a lot of challenges for people in schools. Might not be for them, so they've become disengaged ... So, if we could trial something that could stop that from happening, that was what attracted us. (Fundamental enabler)

I think we need an education system that caters to the different diverse needs of learners and also how we can be part of this whole ecosystem... (Fundamental enabler)

The fundamental enablers accepted that not only could they have not done this programme alone, but the combination of agencies made for more effective outcomes.

There's no way we could have done this whole thing... Every stakeholder had their piece of the pie that they supported. (Fundamental enabler)

Education is not happening now only within just the four walls of the classroom. With having the connections to other agencies, it ensures we take a balcony view. The other agencies are part of the learning programme and provides an opportunity to get amongst the learners in the families on the ground and journey together. (Fundamental enabler)

The on-the-ground facilitators also feel that this programme, whilst unique, is important.

This programme is important for Pasifika students – the model here is unique. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Bringing together multiple objectives poses collaboration challenges

As noted above (see page 30 and 31), there were some challenges with co-ordinating the programme, both across agencies and between the on-the-ground facilitators. It was theorised by one fundamental enabler that some of these challenges could be attributed to the range of aspirations for this programme. Whilst the combination of objectives is important (as noted above), it could be the case that:

- Trade-offs exist at particular decision-making points – leading to conflicts between on-the-ground facilitators.
- There are difficulties bringing together the unique operations of the multiple funding agencies.

However, we are also of the view that some of these challenges could be overcome with more effective governance (see page 30 for more information).

Bringing in other objectives means this programme is not a natural fit within the education system

This programme was intended to take an innovative approach to education. In particular, it aimed to consider the context of the individual, their family and the community and take a more tailored approach. However, as noted by the on-the-ground facilitators, this presented challenges when aligning this approach with the mainstream.

These programs don't fit your standard model.... [In the standard model], everything's structured and has to follow a set plan. Whereas with these programmes, we need to break out of that – we want to have this learner focused. And that doesn't fit the current model. (On-the-ground facilitator)

More specifically, on-the-ground facilitators noted two practical challenges that they faced with slotting this programme into the current education system:

- It took students out of school for one day every week, disrupting their other classes.

The kids obviously missed other classes every single week [due to attending this programme]. But they had a study line which meant that they had the opportunity to catch up. I don't think they used it as they should have done. (On-the-ground facilitator)

- Students could not obtain University Entrance credits through this programme.

We have 3 students who especially want to go to university, and so they need to be in school getting achievement assessment standards to do this. (On-the-ground facilitator)

Cross-agency funding models are a new concept

Bringing together multiple agencies to fund a programme is not uncommon. However, cross-agencies funding an **on-going** initiative is a new concept. This was outlined by fundamental enablers as an continuing risk for the long-term viability of this programme. It was requested that a new approach to funding this type of programme be considered (one that, perhaps, is not cross-agency).

This programme does not fit in any funding buckets – it sits outside. (Fundamental enabler)

I still think a new funding model is required. But that doesn't necessarily mean a whole bunch of ministries having to work together. (Fundamental enabler)

However, despite this, all those interviewed wish to see this programme continue (see page 25). These challenges will need to be persisted with to achieve this.

The logical next step is supporting students post-programme

This programme has clearly proven to be impactful for the students involved. They are more confident, motivated, and capable of continuing on to meaningful employment within the horticultural industry and in other STEM careers. TYT and NZSTI support students to enter employment as best they can. However, the intervention stops after they leave school. It is hoped that the programme will provide enough of a boost for these students to continue. This remains a challenge for the programme to address.

I think the biggest challenge would be ensuring that we have the next steps in place for them rather than just opening their minds their eyes into other opportunities. (Fundamental enabler)

One fundamental enabler posed that the programme should look to transfer the pastoral care role over to the industry. However, this was also accepted to be a longer-term aspiration due to the industry not having the cultural competency required – yet.

You ultimately want [the pastoral carers] to shift that capability over to the industry that are receiving the kids. I realised that it is a longer-term goal. (Fundamental enabler)

Part B: Lessons learnt and next steps

This section summarises the implications for the programme, values the outcomes and provides recommendations for future implementation.



Lessons learned from the programme

This section presents a synthesis of the attributes of a successful programme, the challenges encountered and how they can be used in the future to improve the programme.

Overview

This programme is in its early stages, piloting for only one year at the time of this evaluation. This pilot has supported the vision of the programme, highlighting that it can achieve its intended outcomes. It has also teased out unforeseen challenges that can be more proactively addressed in future iterations of the programme. This section summarises Part A and draws out the critical success factors for this programme and things to consider for future implementations.

I think we are heading in the right direction, but we still need to do a bit of hand holding. It's a program that is in its early phase. (Fundamental enabler)

Things to continue doing next time

Summary of successes

As described in part A, this programme has successfully:

- **Provided participants with the tools and skills to become life-givers.** This has included increasing the confidence of students, engaging students within the programme, and providing them with NCEA credits they likely would have not got otherwise. For more information, see page 17.
- **Expanded the vision of programme participants beyond sowing and planting.** Participants (students and their families) now have a more complete understanding of the career pathways in horticulture and STEM. For more information, see page 19.
- **Motivated students to pursue a career in horticulture or STEM.** Students now have the skills, and understanding of what career paths exist for them, encouraging them to continue to work in horticulture or STEM. For more information, see page 20.
- **Created a large culture impact.** This is shown by the increased connections students feel towards their culture and community. For more information, see page 21.
- **Connected youth, their families and their community.** This programme has not only united Pasifika youth from across schools, but also connected the community through horticulture. For more information, see page 23.
- **Improved the connection between industry and their prospective workforce.** Employers see a value in this programme, with those engaging benefiting from the programme with students continuing to work for them over the summer. For more information, see page 24.

Critical success factors

Everyone interviewed would like to see the programme continue (as discussed on page 25). When considering the continuation, **the programme team should consider the following attributes of the programme that contributed to its success:**

- **The pastoral care and mentoring design elements were critical to this programme’s success.** Students responded well to this. It enabled a more effective, tailored approach to their education, taking **the broader context of the student into consideration** (for example, involving their families in the journey). In particular, the pastoral care was successful because:
 - **The mentors were Pasifika.**
 - **The mentors invested time in building strong, trusting relationships.**
 - **The mentors were solid role models for their students.**

For more information, see page 34.

- **By Pasifika for Pasifika was integral for the programme.** Students were more engaged and connected more with the programme content, other students, and mentors because their **language was used**, the **mentors shared similar backgrounds**, and **their cultural values were reflected and nourished**. For more information, see page 35.
- **The practical component was valued by students.** Having a **hands-on element** engaged students in the learning. For more information, see page 36.
- **The programme team were the right people for the job.** The combination of NZSTI and TYT provided the **appropriate skills, experience, and approaches to their respective responsibilities** for the programme. For more information, see page 36.
- **The inclusion of industry employers was a win-win.** Students were able to get a better feel for a career pathway in horticulture. Meanwhile, employers directly supported and benefited from talent attraction initiatives, as evident by students committing to working for the employers post-programme (see page 24). For more information, see page 36. The Aotearoa Horticulture Action Plan⁹, released in February 2023, details the industry’s ‘Sustainable Growth Pathway’ of which ‘Optimising productivity’ and having ‘Great committed people’ are two of the six key steps. Akongoue has the capacity to contribute to these desires if the programme is continued and more Akongoue students enter the horticultural workforce.

The above critical success factors are not specific to the horticulture industry – they are applicable to all industries. Therefore, we believe so long as the critical success factors are maintained, implementing a similar programme that attracts students to other food and fibre industries would be relatively easy.

Things to consider next time

Summary of execution challenges

Piloting programmes is an effective technique to tease out unforeseen challenges, enabling the programme team to adapt and evolve the programme design. This pilot has been no exception, with it containing a few challenges with programme execution. These included:

- **The programme needed more effective governance.** Throughout the evaluation, we faced challenges getting in contact with key people involved in the programme and getting access and transparency relating to programme documents and records. We suspect that it is unlikely

⁹ Source: https://www.hortnz.co.nz/assets/About-Us/Aotearoa-Horticulture-Action-Plan/HOR-4794-Action-Plan-One-Page-FA_web.pdf

that a single entity was overseeing the programme. Additionally, the programme contained conflicts between the on-the-ground facilitators that were not effectively managed.

- **Teething issues that were not resolved within the programme.** It is common for new initiatives and teams to experience challenges as the programme gets underway. This programme was no exception, however, in this case these issues were not resolved over the course of the year. We noted that there were misalignments in the perceptions between the interviewees in relation to:
 - **The entrance criteria for the programme.**
 - **The roles and responsibilities of the core on-the-ground facilitators.**
 - **The communication channels used.**
 - **The reporting timelines and requirements.**
 - **The best way to handle student misconduct**

These issues were discussed within the interviews, with some attributing their unresolved nature **to some core on-the-ground facilitators operating within a government funded initiative for the first time** and that the **on- core the-ground facilitators were stretched with their resourcing**. However, it was agreed that having **one overarching, independent programme manager could have supported the identification and resolution of these issues** within the pilot. For more information, see page 30 and page 31.

Considerations for future programmes

Through the pilot, the design of the programme was tested. This presented a few areas for future programmes to review and consider in their design. These include:

- **Discussing the entrance criteria.** There was confusion around this (as noted above), with respective interviewees presenting a case for different criteria. This included the scope for more Pasifika cultures to be represented and the age group to be expanded. Future programmes should discuss the entrance criteria at the beginning to get a mutually agreed upon scope. For more information, see page 37.
- **Re-considering the resourcing for the programme.** Often programmes have to operate within a budget – removing the possibility of employing more resources. This programme highlighted that they struggled to operate within the budget they were given. If expanding the funding is not an option, future programmes should consider re-considering how the funding is used. For example, they should consider prioritising:
 - **A single, overarching, independent programme manager.** This would address the teething issues that arose (as noted above) and enable future issues to be identified and resolved effectively. This includes resolving the confusion around reporting and communication expectations.
 - **More staff / training for staff.** It was expressed that the magnitude of the task for core on-the-ground facilitators was sometimes out of their capabilities, because of training and / or quantity of staff. This could also support addressing the behaviour issues of students (see page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**)

- **Basic needs for students.** Some students do not have access to basic necessities (such as food). However, alternative funding sources could be explored to provide this element.

For more information, see page 37.

- **Persisting with the combination of objectives, addressing the challenges associated.** Bringing together labour supply, education and Pasifika outcomes (among others) has proven to be effective. Fundamental enablers that are interested in these outcomes separately would not have been able to execute this programme alone. However, through combining objectives as such, this draws out some challenges, including:
 - **Collaboration challenges.** It is expected that there will be instances where there are difference in views on the best approach from people with different objectives – this was theorised to have been a source of conflict between the core on-the-ground facilitators.
 - **Alignment with the current education system.** This programme impacted the students other courses, due to it taking them out of school for one day a week. It also did not provide them with University Entrance credits – unfavourably impacting those wishing to go onto university.
 - **Attracting on-going funding.** This was discussed within the interviews and will be explored further below.

As will be discussed further below (see page 46), combining these objectives means that minorities, such as Pasifika, are reached with education and labour attraction initiatives. Therefore, persisting with this and overcoming some of these challenges is necessary for continuing to provide benefits to the target audience. For more information, see page 38.

- **Beginning to broaden the horizons for this programme.** Sustaining the change created within this programme **for students** is something the programme could consider. However, it was also discussed that this programme is likely to have significant intergenerational impacts, in particular from:
 - **The students beginning to take on pastoral care roles within the industry.** These students would have the cultural competency to do this effectively. Having them mentor new entrants would enable a smooth transition from school into the industry, providing new entrants with the support to grow their careers.
 - **The students role modelling to the wider community and their current and future families.** The students can demonstrate meaningful careers whilst providing direct mentoring and support to those around them.

Future programmes could look to expand the timeframe in their intervention logic to consider the post-programme outcomes for students. For more information, see page 40.

Feasibility of the programme

This section explores the feasibility of the programme moving forward, considering the financial investment and benefits it creates. This is achieved through the development of an economic model.

Overview

The feasibility of this programme depends on two things:

1. Whether funders are convinced that this programme is an efficient and effective investment **(economic valuation conclusions)**.
2. Its ability to attract ongoing funding (as opposed to a one-off investment) **(feasibility conclusions)**.

Within this section, we seek to discuss both of these conditions, concluding that the programme is likely to be feasible with some adaptations to the programme and / or the funding system.

Economic valuation conclusions

Our economic modelling (see page 26) suggests that the programme has delivered outcomes that justify the investment in it. However, potential funders should consider whether there are alternative investment options that deliver similar, or better, benefits. To justify the programme continuing, from an economic standpoint, funders should be satisfied that the approach of bundling cultural, educational and industry outcomes is synergistic.

That said, we do think that there is good evidence that some synergies are real. From the interviews, we developed a view that if the same programme existed without the Pasifika focus, the same industry and educational outcomes would not have been realised for these particular students. We therefore conclude that the cultural focus is necessary to ensure that all communities equitably benefit from investment in educational and / or industry outcomes. However, it remains unclear whether the combination of educational and industry objectives is best. It could be the case that a Pasifika labour attraction programme or solely a Pasifika educational-focused programme (i.e., culturally appropriate pastoral care) could provide larger benefits for the investment put in.

Feasibility conclusions

The programmes' ability to attract on-going funding is limited by both its resource-intensive nature and the current funding streams. Below we note some thoughts on some options for the programme to attract funding moving forward.

Narrow the scope of the programme to rely on education system investment alone.

The education system is an attractive funding avenue for this programme, given its ability to fund **ongoing** initiatives. However, in its current form, this programme is resource-intensive compared to other education system investments.

For this programme to thrive within this funding system, it would need to evolve into a new programme that provides some of the same benefits but be narrower in scope. This could be based on, for example, the well-established trade academy model, with a Pasifika and horticultural focus, but without the 'by Pasifika, for Pasifika' pastoral care element that was, arguably, the defining feature of the Akongoue programme.

Consider a revised one-off programme.

A one-off programme (rather than ongoing) unlocks the ability for more organisations to fund this programme outright. This could include all of the elements of the current programme in which case we think the programme warrants a redesign to incorporate the lessons learnt from the pilot and potentially, to make it more cost efficient. Alternatively, a one-off programme could focus on particular elements such as the 'by Pasifika, for Pasifika' pastoral care element, or connecting Pasifika to horticulture career opportunities.

Valuing culturally appropriate pastoral care

In the medium-term, there is an opportunity to use the Akongoue programme as a case-study to make the case for culturally appropriate pastoral care. Our evaluation supports an argument that investment in pastoral care, at higher levels that is affordable today, can generate positive returns. While it is unlikely that investors would see the Akongoue programme, or our evaluation of it, as proof-enough to make this case, we think that it could form part of a broader analysis that tests this in more depth.

Conclusions

We do not see a straightforward way for this programme achieving feasibility, given its bundling of objectives. Whilst we believe that the programmes cultural focus is integral to its success, we pose that bundling this along with educational and industry objectives will prevent it from succeeding within the current funding environment. This leaves the programme with two pathways, either they could look to challenge the current environment, or adapt the programme to suit it. The easiest pathway is likely to adapt the programme but this risks losing the 'by Pasifika, for Pasifika' approach.

Recommendations for the programme (should it continue)

As well as our recommendations for the feasibility of the programme (as noted above), below we outline recommendations for the programme moving forward. All of the recommendations below are for the programme, should it continue.

Review the programme design

This evaluation has illustrated that this programme is creating meaningful change for students, their families and the broader Pasifika community. Given this, there is scope for improvement within the programme to elevate these outcomes. Within the lessons learned from the programme on page 42, we outlined characteristics for the programme to continue and to consider. This highlighted a range of critical success factors (what we believe made this programme successful) and areas that could be refined moving forward. The considerations for future programmes included:

- Discussing the entrance criteria.
- Re-considering the resourcing for the programme.
- Persisting with the combination of objectives, addressing the challenges associated.
- Beginning to broaden the horizons for the programme.

We encourage the programme team to discuss these collectively, mutually agree on changes in programme design and document these changes.

Formalise the programme governance

Within the programme execution section on page 30 we argued that the programme's governance was ineffective and outlined a number of teething issues that this programme faced that were not resolved. Having formal governance would have removed the confusion associated with the programme and mitigated some of the conflicts. The design of the governance could be **in a manner that is suitable for the nature of the programme and for those involved**. Below are some examples of what this could include:

- A single overarching, independent programme manager that oversees and actively manages the entire operation (who is also responsible for all the programme documents and records).
- Communication and reporting channels that work for the core on-the-ground facilitators and are fit-for-purpose.
- The formation of a programme steering group made up from the range of funders, offering them all a chance to represent their interests in an active manner.

This would enable the programme to continue to evolve throughout the years, identifying issues and resolving them collectively.

Continue to monitor and evaluate

The next iteration of this programme is unlikely to be perfect. We encourage on-going monitoring and evaluation of this programme – not just at the end of a year, but throughout. This will enable more flexibility and opportunities to engage with the students involved in the programme and capture more

informative and complete evaluation insights. It would also support the programme manager with identifying any teething issues.

Additionally, this programme is on-track to be considered for wider implementation across Aotearoa New Zealand. We would therefore suggest that the ongoing monitoring and evaluation conduct the work with this in mind. This will ensure that more robust and practical insights are collected that would support the scaling up of this programme. In particular, insights relating to what to keep the same about the programme, what could be changed and where efficiencies lie.

Summary

This programme was the **first of its kind for Pasifika youth**, providing them with all-rounded support throughout their high school experience. It had the overarching objective of encouraging these students to go onto meaningful careers within the horticulture sector, providing them with a tailored learning experience and pastoral care. The Pasifika focus of this programme had countless benefits, such as enabling this minority group to be reached whilst also providing them with a chance to connect further with their culture and community. **The value of a programme that is by Pasifika, for Pasifika cannot be understated.**

In parallel, this programme also recognised the broader circumstances for these students through their pastoral care element. Providing students with a role model and someone that believed in them – someone they could relate to – **enabled these students to unlock their self-confidence and achieve.** This programme has demonstrated the strength of this, **particularly for disadvantaged individuals**, with many students now on the trajectory for **meaningful career pathways and set up to be leaders for their peers and future generations to come.**

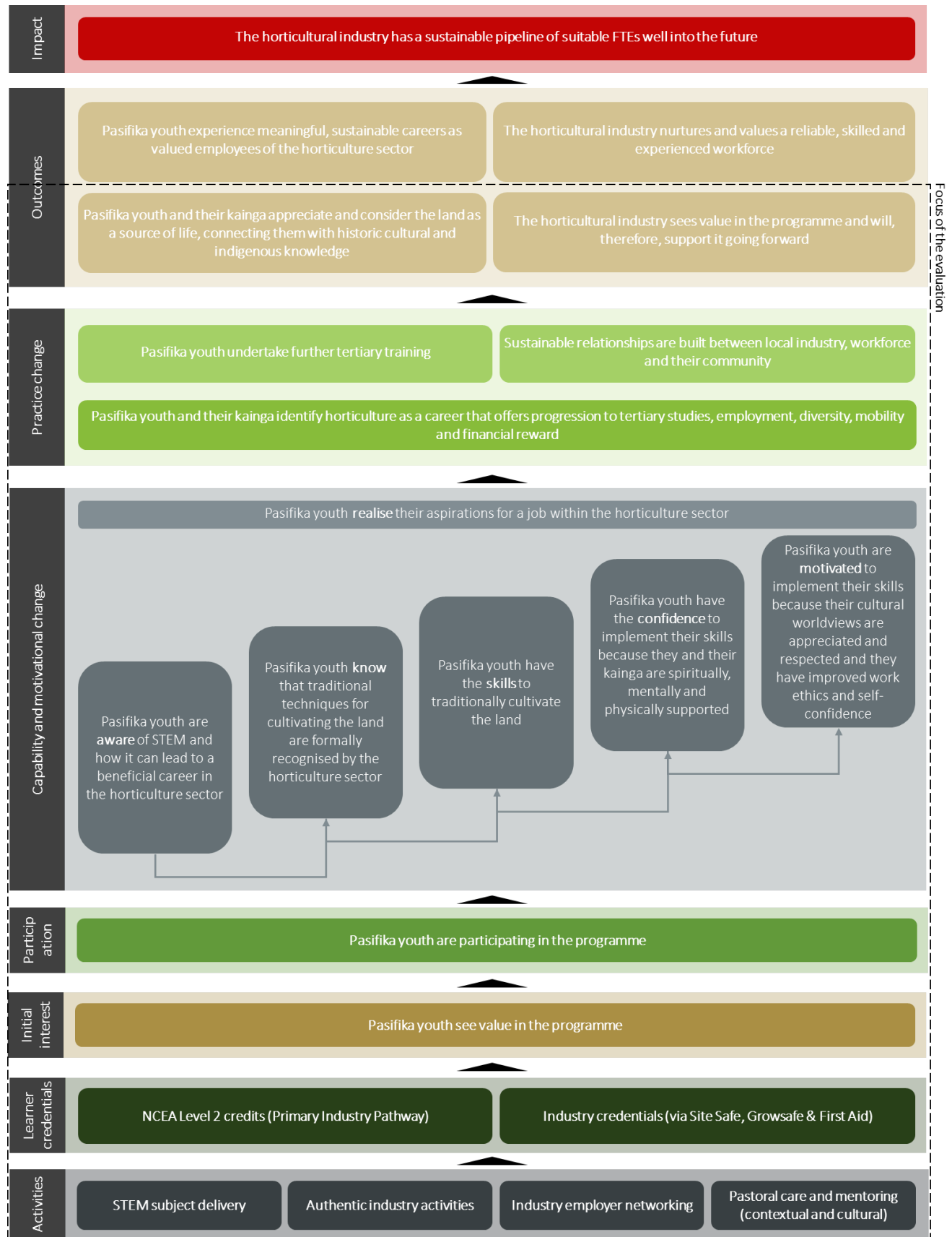
Combining these multiple objectives has proved necessary for Pasifika youth. However, it has also proved challenging – creating collaboration tensions and difficulties with attracting funding. We argue that the cultural objective is necessary (**in order to reach minority groups**), however, when considering the on-going feasibility of this programme, **we see that either the programme challenges the current funding environment or reviews the current bundling of objectives to improve the efficiency of the programme (ideally maintaining the by Pasifika for Pasifika focus).**

This evaluation has highlighted **a case for this programme continuing, given it can attract funding, albeit with some adaptations.** These were highlighted within the lessons learnt section, bringing forward the critical success factors for the programme and some points to consider when evolving the programme or implementing it into other industries. In conclusion, we recommended that **the programme design be re-considered, the programme governance be formalised** (in a manner that suits the programme) and that it **continues to have on-going monitoring and evaluation.**

Appendices



Appendix 1: Akongoue programme logic model



Appendix 2: Evaluation measures

	Intervention logic	Measures
Outcomes	The horticultural industry sees value in the programme and will, therefore, support it going forward	# of employers / stakeholders who see value in the programme # of employers / stakeholders who are willing to have continued involvement with the programme
	Pasifika youth and their kainga appreciate and consider the land as a source of life, connecting them with historic cultural and indigenous knowledge	# of students entering into employment in the horticulture sector # of students who indicate they would like to enter the horticulture sector # of students who report a greater connection to their culture
Practice change	Sustainable relationships are built between local industry and workforce	# of employers / stakeholders who see value in the programme # of employers / stakeholders who are willing to have continued involvement with the programme
	Pasifika youth undertake further tertiary training	# of students going into further tertiary training
	Pasifika youth and their kainga identify horticulture as a career that offers progression to tertiary studies, employment, diversity, mobility and financial reward	# of students confident about their future employment/study opportunities # of family members who think horticulture is a good career for their youth to enter into
Capability and motivational change	Pasifika youth realise their aspirations for a job within the horticulture sector	# of students who are going into or want to go into a horticulture job
	Pasifika youth are motivated to implement their skills because their cultural worldviews are appreciated and respected and they have improved work ethic and self-confidence	# who students felt motivated to completed the programme due to the programme's cultural relativism # of students whose attendance remained stable or increased # of students confident in the value of their skills
	Pasifika youth have the confidence to implement their skills because they and their kainga are spiritually, mentally and physically supported	# of students confident they can put their skills into practice # of students who report that the pastoral care and mentoring successfully supported their spiritual, mental and physical needs (positive impact on wellbeing) # of family members that describe how the pastoral care / mentoring successfully supported their and their youths' spiritual, mental and physical needs (positive impact on wellbeing)
	Pasifika youth have the skills to traditionally cultivate the land	# of students who engaged with programme activities (attendance records) # of students completed the programme (formal recognition from sector)
	Pasifika youth know that traditional techniques for cultivating the land are formally recognised by the horticulture sector	# of students who obtained the programme's NCEA credits
	Pasifika youth are aware of STEM and how it can lead to a beneficial career in the horticulture sector	# of students who can describe the benefit of the programme's STEM content # of students who can describe how the programme is leading them to a career in the horticulture sector
Participation	Pasifika youth are participating in the programme	# of students who completed the programme # of students who are coming back to the programme next year # on waiting list # of students who obtained the programme's NCEA credits # of students who obtained the programme's industry credentials

Appendix 3: Interview questions

	Students	Families	On-the-ground facilitators	Fundamental enablers
Why did you enrol in the programme?				
What do you think was the most beneficial part of the programme for your family member?				
Can you tell me a bit about your involvement in the programme?				
What is one thing you are most proud of in regard to the programme?				
What was the biggest challenge you think the programme experienced?				
Was there a particular reason why you were keen to be involved?				
How did you find the science, maths and technology parts of the programme?				
What type of skills did the programme provide you with?				
How confident are you that you could put these skills into practice in a real-life setting outside of the programme?				
Did you experience any employment opportunities because of the programme?				
Has the programme increased your self-confidence in any way?				
Has the programme made you feel more motivated to work in a horticulture or STEM job in the future?				
For students who participated in the programme, what type of changes did you notice in their work ethic?				

	Students	Families	On-the-ground facilitators	Fundamental enablers
For students who participated in the programme, what type of changes did you notice in their attendance?				
For students who participated in the programme, what type of changes did you notice in their academic results?				
Was there anything specific about the programme that made you feel more connected to your Pasifika community?				
Was there anything specific about the programme that connected you to your culture?				
In what ways did the programme reach the wider Tongan community?				
Were there any specific social outcomes that created a greater sense of community for the Tongan community?				
Were there any specific cultural outcomes that created a greater sense of community and identity for the Tongan community?				
What type of entrance criterion was there for allowing students into the programme?				
Was there an exclusion criterion for allowing students into the programme?				
Did the pilot succeed in reaching its target audience?				
How was this programme different to your other classes in school?				

	Students	Families	On-the-ground facilitators	Fundamental enablers
How much do you feel the programme's Pasifika design and approach motivated you to finish the programme?				
What did you find most useful about the programme's Pasifika design and approach?				
Do you think your cultural needs and values were accommodated in this programme?				
How did you find the pastoral care and mentoring?				
What is one example where you found the mentoring or pastoral care particularly helpful?				
Do you think the programme would be better or worse if it did not include pastoral care / mentoring?				
Did you provide pastoral care / mentoring to anyone else other than students and their families?				
In what ways did you support families of students?				
Was the pastoral care / mentoring component delivered as expected?				
What do you think is the key to successful pastoral care / mentoring?				
How do you think the pastoral care / mentoring could be replicated in other programmes in the future?				
Do you think the pastoral care / mentoring component of the programme adequately supported students?				
In what ways was this support different to what students would usually receive?				
Did you receive any support from TYT?				
Have you noticed any changes in your family member since they joined the programme?				

	Students	Families	On-the-ground facilitators	Fundamental enablers
Did the programme have any impacts on the wider Tongan community?				
Do you think the programme achieved its goal of supporting cultural diversity in the horticulture sector?				
Do you think anything could have been done differently to better support cultural diversity?				
How well do you think the values of the programme align with industry values?				
Do you think families see value in their family members entering a career in horticulture?				
How easy was the programme to slot into the current education system?				
Are students in the programme of the correct age / year or would students of different ages be better suited?				
Did you need any support in delivering what you wanted to deliver to the programme?				
How valuable do you think the programme is for Pasifika youth?				
How valuable do you think the programme is for the horticulture sector?				
Could programmes like this be doing anything else to help serve or connect Pasifika communities to the food and fibre industry?				
Have any opportunities come out of the programme for you?				
Would you do anything differently if you delivered content to the programme's students again?				

	Students	Families	On-the-ground facilitators	Fundamental enablers
Has the programme caused you to shift how you do things in your organisation in any way?				
If the programme continued, would you like your organisation to continue to be involved?				
If yes, in what capacity would you like this involvement to be?				
How valuable do you think the programme is for Pasifika youth?				
How valuable do you think a programme like this is for the region?				
Could programmes like this be doing anything else to help serve or connect Pasifika communities to the food and fibre industry?				
In what ways did the programme reach the wider Tongan community?				
Did the programme have any impacts on the wider Tongan community?				
What type of gains can a programme like this that is targeted at Pasifika youth have for the wider community?				
Could programmes like this be doing anything else to help serve or connect communities to the food and fibre industry?				
What were your expectations about the programme at the start in terms of... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How it would operate • What it would produce 				
How does this compare to how things actually played out?				
Could the programme have succeeded without TYT's pastor?				
Could the programme have succeeded without NZSTI?				
How much do you attribute the programme's success to key personnel?				
What on-the-ground success or challenges did you hear about?				

	Students	Families	On-the-ground facilitators	Fundamental enablers
In what ways do you think the programme could have been affected if it was not an inter-agency collaboration?				
Do you think a programme like this could succeed without inter-agency collaboration?				
How did you want to contribute to the programme, and did you achieve this?				
Is there anything that you were unable to do that you could not?				
Do you feel as though you were involved and informed enough to the extent you wanted to be?				
What value did you see in the programme that caused your agency to invest in it?				
Were there any surprise learnings for you from the programme?				
What are your next steps?				
What type of pathways have you heard students talking about entering as a result of the programme?				
Do you think horticulture is a good career path for your family member?				
Do you think horticulture is a good career path for Pasifika youth in general?				
In hindsight, would you have done anything differently?				
What advice would you give to someone wanting to replicate this programme?				
Would you like to see the programme continued?				
Is there anything else you would like to mention?				

Appendix 4: Economic model assumptions

Below we describe two categories of assumptions:

- **The method of quantifying each benefit** – this includes the quantification technique and a discussion on its alignment with the qualitative evidence collected.
- **The impact of the programme on each benefit** – we describe the assumptions made around the extent to which each benefit is realised. This draws on evidence from the pilot programme.

The method of quantifying each benefit

From evidence in the qualitative interviews, and through discussions with the project team, we have identified the following four benefits as core to the programme:

- **Productivity benefit** – the benefit that employers receive from employing students from this programme.
- **Recruitment benefit** – the benefit employers receive from having an increased pool of people to employ from.
- **Cultural benefit** – the benefit the students receive from having an increased connection to their culture.
- **Social benefit** – the benefit the students receive from being apart of a group with similar interests.

For each of these benefits below, we discuss:

- The *qualitative foundation* for these benefits
- The *quantification methodology* (and assumptions made)
- The *alignment appropriateness* of the two (i.e. how appropriate is the use of this quantification methodology for the qualitative evidence provided for the benefit).

Productivity benefit

Qualitative foundation

We assume that in the first year of employment, students that complete this programme are more productive than those that do not complete the programme. This is based on the idea that the programme gives students a ‘leg up’ for their first job in the horticultural industry.

Quantification methodology

To quantify this benefit, we assume that:

- An employee in their second year of employment would earn \$2 more an hour than an employee in their first year.
- The additional level of skill the programme provides an employee is equivalent to 20% of the additional experience a second-year employee has over and above a first-year employee.

- After one year experience, the productivity of those that did and did not complete the programme equalises.
- Of the 1,920 hours the employee is expected to work in a given year (excludes annual leave), we then estimate that the productivity benefit equates to approximately \$770 per employee.

Alignment appropriateness

We have designed the quantification methodology to directly align with the qualitative foundation.

Recruitment benefit

Qualitative foundation

From the interviews, it was clear that this programme had influenced a few students to progress into employment within the horticultural industry that would have not otherwise (see page 20). For the employer, having access to a suitable candidate meant that they saved resources during their recruitment. For as long as the employees remain in the industry, it will continue to provide their employer that benefit.

Quantification methodology

Previous work undertaken by Scarlatti, shows that the value of improving the ease of finding staff is equivalent to an increase in annual profit of \$14,500 for employers. This was defined as the ease in finding more than one good candidate to fill a vacancy to a situation where there were three good candidates. This was derived through comparing the average part-worth utility that survey respondents attributed to various increases in profit with the utility they attributed to increased number of candidates to choose from when hiring¹⁰.

We determine that for a single employer that hires a student from the programme, they will have an increase in the ease of finding a suitable candidate, equivalent of the \$14,500. This benefit exists each year that the student is employed within the industry. We assume that the value of this benefit does not change with experience within the industry.

Alignment appropriateness

The estimate for the recruitment benefit is derived from the employer shifting from having access to one good candidate to three good candidates to fill their role. We want to model what the benefit is to an employer from having access to one more good candidate. This makes the estimate a good fit, but not perfect.

Cultural benefit

Qualitative foundation

From the interviews, it was clear that core to the programmes impact was the cultural outcomes. Students reported feeling increasingly connected to their Pasifika culture because of this programme (see page 21 **Error! Bookmark not defined.**).

Quantification methodology

¹⁰ More detail on this calculation is available from Scarlatti upon request.

To value this benefit, we will use the Treasury’s Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) value of “the ability to express cultural identity (0 – 4)”. A single point shift equates to an annual benefit of \$9,951 in 2020 dollars (~\$10,400 in 2022 dollars).

This value comes from the Wellbeing Valuation of Social Housing Provision by Housing New Zealand, Caitlin Davies, Housing NZ 2018. This uses data from the New Zealand General Social Survey (NZGSS) and calculates the compensating or equivalent surplus of wellbeing outcomes through calculating the portion of household income that would lead to the same impact on subjective wellbeing as the change in non-market outcome in question. The valuation is therefore the highest “price” that the respondent would be willing to pay in order to experience this higher level of outcome – a monetary equivalent.

Alignment appropriateness

We determine that this value is a fair *indication* of the benefit for an individual for cultural expression, however, we do note the following:

- The value is not a perfect match with the cultural benefit we describe here. The question in the survey asks, “People in New Zealand have different lifestyles, cultures, and beliefs, that expresses who they are. “How easy or hard is it for you to be yourself in New Zealand?” with responses:
 - Very easy
 - Easy
 - Sometimes easy, sometimes hard
 - Hard
 - Very hard

The resulting cultural outcomes, from the interviews, have indicated that the benefit has been more around feeling connected to their culture. This measure is therefore an indirect way of valuing this.

- The respondents in this survey were of multiple cultures. This value therefore does not capture the *specific* benefit of being more connected to Pasifika culture.
- The calibration of how this programme has shifted an individual’s cultural connection on the 0 – 4 scale used in the survey is imperfect.

Social benefit

Qualitative foundation

This programme was successful in bringing together students, their families and their community (see page 23).

Quantification methodology

To quantify the social benefit, we utilise the value from the Treasury’s CBA for being a member of a club. A club membership’s value arises from creating solidarity between people or groups who live in a community or have shared interests. This value comes from the Wellbeing Valuation of Social Housing Provision by Housing New Zealand, Caitlin Davies, Housing NZ 2018. This uses data from the New

Zealand General Social Survey (NZGSS) on club memberships. These clubs have encompassed sporting teams, religious affiliations, volunteering groups, political organisations, and trade unions.

For the **most engaged student**, we have determined that they benefit the full value from becoming a member of a club (\$2,639 in 2020 dollars, equating to ~\$2,800 in 2022 dollars).

Alignment appropriateness

The value of being a member of a club, from Davies (2018), encompasses a broad range of cultures and club types. This value is therefore not derived specifically for this age group, ethnicity, or purpose of their connection. However, we believe that it is a fair indication of the social benefit for the students based on the evidence from the interviews.

The impact of this programme on each benefit

We aspire to look forward at the impact of this programme moving forward. To inform the extent to which each student realises the benefits described above, we draw on the evidence we have from the pilot. In particular, we are interested in understanding the student's:

- Employment decisions
- Change in cultural connections
- Change in social connections.

To do this, we looked at each student that participated in their programme and determined:

- Whether they are in year 12 or year 13
- Whether (if they were in year 12) they were interested in returning to the programme in year 13
- The likelihood of them progressing into employment as a result of the programme
- The extent to which those that progressed into employment would provide their employer with the full productivity benefit (0 being they are equivalent to other employees when first employed and 10 being they provide the full productivity benefit as described above)
- The extent to which the programme increased their connection to their culture (0 being not at all, and 10 being a full point on the cultural expression scale from the NZGSS survey)
- The extent to which the programme provided an increased social connection (0 being not at all and 10 being the full benefit from being a member of a club).

These inputs then determined the impact we could expect the programme to have on students in the future. We note that we have only interviewed four of the 26 students in total, using programme documentation to make educated guesses about the outcomes of the other students. For those that we did interview, we also note that the inputs on their likely outcomes are still estimates. To view these inputs for the 26 students, please see below.

Table 1: Assumed student outcomes for each benefit for the purpose of the economic model.

Student	Year 12 or 13	If year 12, are they interested in returning in year 13?	Likelihood of progressing into employment	Productivity benefit (0=no benefit, 10=full benefit)	Cultural benefit (0=no benefit, 10=full benefit)	Social benefit (0=no benefit, 10=full benefit)
Student 1	12	Yes	0.7	7	8	7
Student 2	12	Yes	0.8	8	3	9
Student 3	13		0.3	4	8	9
Student 4	13		0	0	9	6
Student 5	13		0.2	2	7	8
Student 6	12	Yes	0.7	6	2	10
Student 7	12	Yes	0.4	4	3	8
Student 8	12	Yes	0.8	9	9	8
Student 9	12	Yes	0.2	2	8	7
Student 10	13		0	0	2	7
Student 11	13		1	9	7	8
Student 12	13		1	9	8	9
Student 13	13		0	0	2	7
Student 14	13		0	0	8	10
Student 15	13		0.7	8	10	9
Student 16	13		1	10	9	9
Student 17	13		1	9	3	10
Student 18	13		1	10	6	8

Student	Year 12 or 13	If year 12, are they interested in returning in year 13?	Likelihood of progressing into employment	Productivity benefit (0=no benefit, 10=full benefit)	Cultural benefit (0=no benefit, 10=full benefit)	Social benefit (0=no benefit, 10=full benefit)
Student 19	13		1	8	9	10
Student 20	12	Yes	0.8	8	1	8
Student 21	13		0	0	9	10
Student 22	13		0	0	8	8
Student 23	13		0	0	2	7
Student 24	13		1	8	1	8
Student 25	12	Yes	0.2	3	10	10
Student 26	12	Yes	0.4	4	7	8