

New Tools for Growing Living Organisations and Communities

Rich lessons from the Whirinaki Rainforest.

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Abstract:

Any organisation that confines itself to linear analytical processes to define its vision and manage the portfolio of projects it needs to move towards its future, struggles in the real environment of complexity, apparent chaos, interconnectedness, intense competition, change, uncertainty and ambiguity. Too often we treat organisations as a machine and try to micro manage at levels of detail far below the ambient noise levels of our world. We tend to process complex environments as if they are simple or at best complicated, (refer Cynefin Framework²²)

In this paper we will look at organisations and life from a very different world view, questioning much conventional wisdom about culture, leadership, teamwork, collaboration, projects, visioning, strategy and, governance, alliances, managing change, program management and evaluation. We will introduce an organic leadership model that can help identify project, leadership, team and organizational behaviours that are detrimental to performance and replace them with much more proactive team empowering actions that encourage innovation, rapid learning and agility. It's collaborative visioning tools help get commitment to and lead a program of projects that will deliver real customer outcomes

Nature as our teacher.

There is a new approach to design that looks to nature to find out how it does its business.... For example scientists ask, "How does a paua (shellfish) at room temperature in salt water create a shell more beautiful and harder than the best ceramics that we can produce in high temperature kilns consuming lots of energy"?

But Biomimicry¹ can go far beyond just the science of product design; nature can point us to richer, healthier ways of working together to grow effective organisations, businesses, communities, cities and countries.

What is constraining innovation in our organisations?

Our current organisational models are rooted in the industrial age where everything is broken down into nice little boxes each operating independently like machines; with inputs, processes and outputs. These linear processes for planning and control offer important quality, repeatability and efficiency benefits in stable "Business as Usual" environments, but can be major roadblocks to innovation, particularly in times of change.

Our conventional structures concentrate strategic decision making at governance levels, largely by individuals most of whom are isolated from the management of day-to-day operational processes. The flow of valid information is too often constrained by complex performance measurement regimes (confused by contradictory and ambiguous KPIs), with reporting and reward paths that encourage self interest, risk minimisation and a culture of compliance, leading to disempowered and insular organisations that are blind to the fast-changing realities and opportunities of the real world they are a part of.

Rich lessons from a rainforest.



Nature is the ultimate teacher, so its lessons can help us grow organisms that are resilient; sustainable, fast learning and able to exploit the opportunities for real growth that exist in our interdependency with everything else we are connected with. The rainforest with all its complexity talks to us of a "systems thinking approach" that can breath new life into organisations living in our seemingly chaotic world:



- We see that all the species have an inherent drive towards outcomes; no one needs to tell a plant which direction to grow in. Can people and organisations grow in that self-directed way too?
- It is empowered by the sun. Can we absorb that external energy and experience that illuminates our blind spots, questions our assumptions and encourages us to grow?
- It tells us about the pests that block the growth of species; those negative behaviours that turn us downward and stunt development if we do not name and control them.
- It reminds us about the recyclers that turn dead material into compost, recovering waste; finding opportunity even in adversity and death.
- It warns us about the poisons that stop germination; those toxic enemies within our own minds that sap the courage we need to innovate and nurture the seeds of new life and ideas.
- It sings the praises of the birds; the entrepreneurs of the forest who pollinate, spread and plant seeds for the nursery nature has prepared under the nurturing forest canopy. That's incubating innovation!
- With the naked eye, we can't see the complex network of mycorrhizal fungi, a complex underground pipeline system that interconnects diverse species and the earth, swapping the nutrients of life. Could our organisations learn to connect and operate as part of such win-win network alliances?
- We are reminded about the importance of strong roots; where all new growth and resilience always starts, both in the forest and our communities. Organisational systems and evaluation processes above ground level seldom ever see, acknowledge or fund the growth of this root capability.
- When events like external storms hit a forest, the ecosystem adapts to grow new opportunity from the chaos created. There are always billions of seeds lying dormant waiting to grow. Organisations can do the same, letting nature dictate priorities; growing when the time and conditions are right.
- The rich rainforest ecosystem where all species are highly interdependent, demonstrates what happens when we collaborate and use all our diversity. Organisational monocultures are very vulnerable.

The origins of the Tipu Ake Lifecycle – Radically different leadership

The Whirinaki Rainforest², on the boundary of the Te Urewera National Park, Aotearoa, New Zealand is treasured as one of the world's richest rainforest ecosystems. Here the small school and its community are rediscovering and sharing what it has to teach us.

In 1999 the presenter, other management lecturers and visitors from the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) discovered that the tiny Te Whaiti School in a rainforest in the backblocks of New Zealand had self transformed itself in a few short years from an educational disaster to the top of its class (read their oral history³). That sparked an active research project to find out how they did it and to see if their model could be applied in other mainstream organisations.



We benchmarked them using existing Capability Maturity Model thinking (CMM⁴) and found them operating off the scale - they seemed to add new levels above and below the process level thinking of conventional organisations. There is an oral culture, so in their organisation almost everything is told in stories. They knew little of conventional management tools, instead they told us "We just did things the best way we knew how". They recognise that life is a cyclic, organic and highly interconnected complex system and seem to have found some simple ways of working within it. They concentrate on behaviours; facing the issues, sharing leadership, exceptional teamwork, effective processes, sensing what is happening around them, exploiting their collective wisdom and growing their co-creative power. Most importantly all agreed on the outcomes they sought; "Giving our children the choice to be anything they want in life"



We asked them if we could help them document their secrets to share with others. They suggested we forget all the flowcharts, boxes and arrows and draw it as a tree growing from a seed in the rainforest, continually interacting with all the other species in its ecosystem. Together we documented their intuitive model in a form more understandable and applicable in mainstream organisations. Many Auckland University of Technology student teams and other volunteers joined our active-research learning journey. We applied evaluated and refined this on Project Management Workshops <http://www.projectmanagement.co.nz>

The Tipu Ake Lifecycle⁵ – an Organic Leadership Model for Innovative Organisations, Projects and Communities was launched in Nov 2001. It is shared in the public domain at www.tipuake.org.nz from where the full model can be downloaded.

The model's full name, Tipu Ake ki te Ora is simplistically translated as “Growing ever upwards towards wellbeing”. English words cannot adequately describe the richness of the concepts embodied in the interconnection of those three tiny three-letter words that describe our growth and journey towards an unconstrained destination. This explains why it is being embraced as a powerful tool by those looking to grow a sustainable future for our planet. That tiny word “Ora” embodies the wholistic Maori concept of Wellbeing; a high state of balance with the earth and all its richness that accounts for the past, present and the future. (Perhaps the balanced scorecard and triple/quad/integrated bottom line “business speak” is a first step in this direction with a long way to go)

One wise community philosopher interpreted Tipu Ake ki te Ora as “Growing an awareness and understanding of the world of outcomes; beyond the physical, beyond the spiritual, even beyond our imagination”

Tipu Ake is a leadership model that can help us see organisations, teams and individuals as living organisms growing as part of a complex ecosystem. It helps us learn to surf in the real world's turbulence and manage above its noise levels. It spans almost all the PMBOK⁶ / OPM3⁶ Project Management Body of knowledge areas, surrounding our conventional project processes with very proactive organisational, project team and individual leadership behaviours that promote communication, teamwork, growth and innovation. It helps extend our traditional project risk management thinking through zero into the positive area of opportunity.

Tipu Ake – An Organic Leadership Model for Innovative Organisations



The model is rooted in the natural metaphor of a tree growing in a rainforest, reinterpreted on the right side in a form that relates it to more conventional business thinking.

The ground level we call the undercurrents, that exciting place of turmoil and apparent chaos where energy abounds to sustain the germination of new ideas.

It takes courage to go down into the undercurrents and sometimes even more to grow a new idea out of it. Courageous leadership that champions a change attracts a team around it like a magnet, provided they all can agree on the second phase – a common vision of the outcomes sought.

Tipu Ake encourages our team to grow to operate at the higher collective sensing and wisdom levels, above the process level with all its analytical and often contradictory Key Performance Indicators KPIs. Here we keep asking the common sense question, “Is our process effective? Is it taking us to where we really want to go? towards that state of ORA (Wellbeing)?”

Pest control is the process of naming and controlling those behaviours that would otherwise return our team to the undercurrents. For example; a project hero with a big ego who claims all the credit, keeps a team in the undercurrents; constantly in reactive mode, fighting fires. That becomes a drip feed poison that breeds dependency. No one bothers to try anything new, believing they will just get shot down.

By comparison a team that operates in the collective sensing and wisdom level, proactively identifies the issues and deliberately goes down to the undercurrents to resolve them, exploiting all the diversity and strengths of the team to test assumptions. Be a smart bird, get to love going there, go with the flow, harvest ideas in the turmoil and resist for a while the temptation to escape to the supposed comfort of our conventional linear process level thinking; to organise our way out of it. That will follow in it's own time.

- **Understanding how Tipu Ake is different:**

The Tipu Ake framework encompasses and adds new meaning to conventional management thinking and tools.

1. Most management thinking takes a Newtonian "machine like" view of organisations. The Tipu Ake view is that of a "Living Organisation" comprising living components all interdependent and striving together to grow a future in our real world living environment with all its complexity, ambiguity and apparent chaos.
2. Many improvement models take a process view of an organisation and describe how projects and teams fit in to it. Tipu Ake is a behavioural model that concentrates on the organisational, team and leadership behaviours that build capability and thus drive success. It therefore applies universally; wherever people need to work together.
3. Most management structures and processes revolve around "business as usual". The Tipu Ake undercurrent level is all about germinating innovation and initiating new growth in the widest sense; it's very much about project thinking.
4. Most current management thinking is highly analytical and fits within the Tipu Ake Process (middle) level. Tipu Ake surrounds this with other levels that rely on Leadership. The three levels below support innovation, leadership and teamwork, whilst the three above provide collective sensing and reflection(common sense), wisdom accumulation and the vision of wellbeing that is aimed for.
5. Whilst most models take a linear process path towards the objectives they seek, Tipu Ake's uniqueness is that it is organic. It is a cyclic model that recognises that it is often necessary to cycle back and reinforce in order to move further forward.
6. Many organisations are preoccupied with the concept of the "The Leader" who gives it a vision and structure. By comparison, Tipu Ake focuses on "Leadership" - This is what moves the organisation forward, and it works best when shared so anyone can contribute it at the right time.

- **Tipu Ake is supported by much "Living Organisation" thinking:**

Observers like Fritjof Capra⁷, Margaret Wheatley⁸, Maaori Marsden⁹ Elisabet Sahtouris¹⁰ Ken Thompson²¹ and others remind us of nature's lessons:

- ✓ When living systems want to get stronger they connect with more living things (e.g. to different living species that bring in diversity and resources – monocultures in plants and life are vulnerable)
- ✓ Nature makes its most important connections underground at the root level, these are very hard to see (let alone to make) from above.
- ✓ You can't change a living system, all you can do is disturb it, (then it in itself adapts in response to opportunities or threats seen in that disturbance)
- ✓ The disturbances that have the most immediate effect are those that change the equilibrium and assumed order of the system.
- ✓ Living systems focus on finding opportunities for growth in chaos. They are self organising and are not preoccupied with time or risks.
- ✓ Living things never do what they are told (participants always add in their own local ideas, knowledge and perspectives)
- ✓ If we think we can externally change, re-structure or re-engineer a living system then it is probably already dead!

For more of this thinking visit www.tipuake.org.nz/stories/supporting_stories.htm see also Fritjof Capra⁷ Creativity and Leadership in Living organisations www.ecoliteracy.org/publications and www.bioteams.com²¹

Some examples where Tipu Ake has been used.

Tipu Ake is a leadership model that concentrates on behaviours more so than on processes, so it is universally applicable to all situations where a group of people must work together to do new things.

- **Corporate:**
 - A NZ primary producer replacing its IT infrastructure – to describe the outcomes for all parties in its supply chain
 - A NZ software company – to facilitate growth in a global team to define and manage its new developments
 - Some of NZ’s most innovative companies - to strengthen their team leadership and collaborative project capability
 - Participants from Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) – gain new skills on public project management workshops
- **Government:**
 - Government Policy Advisors - to better scope new programs that can get leverage through cross agency collaboration
 - Local Government agencies – collaborative planning tools for Long Term Council and Community Planning (LTCCP)
 - Health sector organisations - to help them refocus on Ora (Wellbeing) for growing more effective organisations / partnerships
- **Community and environmental:**
 - Community groups in Raglan, Hokianga and elsewhere - sharing and supporting each other as part of the Kaitiakitanga network⁹
 - A valley in Mid Wales - to help address complex issues affecting the future of their rural communities.
 - A network to promote national sustainability through public forums - see "how we work" www.kaitiakitanga.net/hunterlovins
- **Education:**
 - Te Whaiti School was the example that inspired Tipu Ake ... they did this before the model existed.
 - Masters students at AUT – growing a strong self-organised team and tools for the challenges of collaborative work life.
 - A Training Company in California - Developing a Project Leadership Development module for corporate learning programmes.
 - On University of Auckland “Excelerator” Leadership Development Programs including the Kaipara Community initiative.

More information on Tipu Ake related applications see www.tipuake.org.nz/applications

Other related thinking and practical applications http://www.tipuake.org.nz/stories/supporting_stories.htm

• Learning - Nature’s Way – yet another view of Tipu Ake

As organisations embrace Tipu Ake ki te Ora’ - “Growing ever onwards and upwards towards Wellbeing” as a means to help stimulate organic learning and growth behaviours, it is fitting to reflect that it is but a spin-off from a school and a community whose passion was to stimulate learning and growth in their children. See video at www.tipuake.org.nz/videoclips.htm and oral history http://www.tipuake.org.nz/stories/school_oralhist.htm



Let’s think of the middle process level as being our formal education process that is defined in homes, early childhood centres, schools, university or business. That’s where we do all the analytical information storage and management. Tipu Ake suggests that the roots of real learning lie below this. We can identify pests that stop learning growth and bird behaviours that allow us to take responsibility for our own learning and life on a path towards a state of wellbeing (ORA) where continuous learning enhances life.

This new story at www.tipuake.org.nz/files/pdf/learning_organisations.htm was written by going back to the school to re-view their stories and re-use some of the Tipu Ake metaphors. This helps us cast some different (and hopefully challenging) natural light on the fundamental processes by which children and people learn.

Implications for Project Managers, Projects, Leadership, Organisations and Teams

- **With Tipu Ake decisions are made from a collective sensing and wisdom perspective:**

Imagine you are in a project meeting with all parties involved; all with widely different backgrounds and experiences, bringing information both (factual and assumed) from the area they represent. Everyone shares a common vision, openly shares their information whether it seems good or bad, treats each other person with respect, treasures alternative views, celebrates diversity, recognises opportunity, applies innovation, uses effective tools for collaborative decision-making and communicates clearly.

Now ask yourself, could such a team answer the following questions every time they met?

1. What is the probability (% chance) that we will deliver the specified project output (deliverable) on time and within budget?
2. What is the probability (% chance) that when and if we deliver this, that it will provides the customer outcomes expected? Will it satisfy the business or other case that justified it being started?

If the answer to both questions were agreed to be close to 100% (or better), everyone's eyes would be sparkling, the project would be going well so we could terminate the project meeting and have a drink!

If probability 1 was dropping, then people would tell us why, we would test this against the knowledge of others in the team and know what additional information we needed to collect and then what actions to take.

If Probability 2 was dropping, then the message is that we are wasting out time going down the current track and if we can't find a way to get back, our team (or its enthusiasm) will start disappearing onto other projects, so we may want to terminate or suspend it now.

The good thing about effective sensing is that it is immediate; we need not wait for reporting to drive action. Groups of people each connected closely to their own diverse environments, networks and knowledge, but with their heads tied together by good communication, create a multi-processing engine of immense power. The team can resolve the problems that our real world of complexity, apparent chaos, uncertainty and ambiguity throws at us. Some call this the ability to "surf on the edge of chaos".

Could we grow a team that knows how to control the pests and poisons that would otherwise prevent it reaching these high levels of performance, then to give them the tools to exploit opportunity.

- **Some Tipu Ake Team Groundrules:**

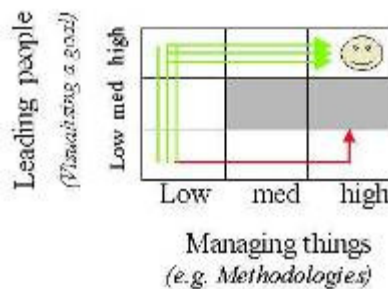
Here are some saying from the school. They are modelled on the values of their ancestor Toi, a renowned Pacific explorer, sharer and community builder. These are the same values that the school, Te Kura Toitu o Te Whaiti Nui-a-Toi, uses internally and what they aim to instil in their students. Try these with your team:

| | |
|--|--|
| Sunshine (Te Raa) | <i>Let the sunshine into our team</i> - connect with external energy - in networks and old wisdom to test assumptions |
| N. Well-being, Ora Ngahua (fruits) | <i>When we focus on outcomes, nothing becomes a barrier</i> - have a clear and agreed vision of why we all are all here |
| 5. Wisdom Puawaitana flowers | <i>We have no room here for matapiko (stingy) gatekeepers</i> - share all our knowledge freely, step across boundaries, respect others |
| 4. Sensing Pua (branches) | <i>Taringa whakaaro, keep our ears [and mind] open</i> - trust our senses and intuition, check out our own perceptions against others |
| 3. Process Tinana (Trunk) | <i>Own our own processes and keep them simple</i> - make sure we are in control of them, not them over us. |
| 2. Teamwork Putake (Roots) | <i>We leave all our hats at the door</i> - don't let external power or agendas destroy our teamwork, build trust , respect |
| 1. Leadership Kakano (Seed) | <i>A kumara (sweet potato) never calls itself sweet, that's for the eaters to say</i> - keep individual egos out of the way, share the leadership and credit |
| 0. Undercurrents Te Kore (Chaos) | <i>Love the undercurrents – surf in the turmoil of our diversity, be positive</i> - the courage to question self, face issues and grow strengths. Go with the flow |
| Poisons (whiro) | <i>The greatest enemy is the one within us, conquer that one and the rest are easy</i> - don't let personal baggage or past experiences poison our team relationships |

All this questions our conventional view of leadership

- **In Tipu Ake Leadership is not equal to “The Leader”**

Too often we equate Leadership (Leading people) with Management (Managing things). These are two separate dimensions and if we want real success, both need to be in balance.



Taking a managing things approach alone is a “no go” path to exceptional organisational performance. We are used to splitting the tasks up and allocating the “Managing Things” work to multiple people operating in parallel – that’s what Work Breakdown and responsibility matrixes in PMBOK are all about.

However, the when we talk about leadership, too often we look for only one leader to supply it. With Tipu Ake leadership is not an individual thing, anyone can display and contribute to it. How often have you been in a team, complete with a Project Manager (maybe you even), where everyone knew the real leadership was coming from others? Why not use this and see leadership as a parallel thing as well

An irony: The most powerful leaders are those who know how to give away their power and recognition!

At the PMI⁶ Global Forum in Anaheim Oct 2004, it was suggested that the Project Management Institute should change its name to PLI to reflect the new focus on Project and Organisational Leadership.

- **The Shared Leadership Tripod – lessons from the world’s greatest sailors and explorers**

Our chiefs held different kete (knowledge) working as one - three spars lashed in a triangle stand strongest against wave and wind - Perspectives from Polynesian canoes abridged from p70 www.songofwaitaha.co.nz¹⁷



EXPLORERS:
The Ariki – perched at the prow, their minds embracing the ocean and the skies to interpret the signals of nature, courageously fronting the first blast of the unforgiving waves. They held Kete Tu Atea filled with the wisdom of the hidden trails

PEACEMAKERS
The Tohunga – near the mast they carried Kete Tuauri which was heavy with Karakia. (prayers). Their strength was constantly challenged by Tawhiri Matea who sent the storm winds to buffet the waka .. and dark winds to pierce the mind and sow the seeds of jealousy and hate in the crew.

STEERERS
The Kaihoutu - At the stern, the vision and steadfast strength behind the steering oar. They held Aronui - the kete of knowledge which holds the songs that chart the tides.



On TV we watch these roles being played out as Team NZ sails for the Americas Cup.

We recognise them in the inspirational stories of the late Sir Peter Blake¹¹ ... “Thanks for the dreams that only you could give and thanks for the fun and the laughs Thank you for instilling in us a healthy respect for the ocean and showing us the all consuming beauty it has ... Thank you for the trust and the loyalty you showed in us” - *Simon Gundry, Fellow Sailor.*

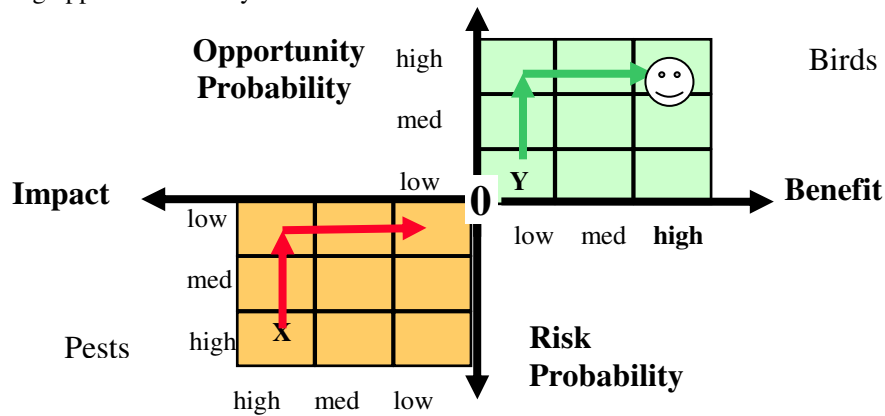
We also heard from the school ... “Yes, we each had our own roles to play and areas to be responsible for, but because we worked closely as a team it was quite OK to step into someone else’s patch and help. At first some of us found that hard to accept, but soon found that by loosening the boundaries and sharing information we all became more effective”. Earl Rewi – Previous Chairman

The Belbin Team Role model¹² helps highlight **Explorers** – Shaper, Plant, Resource Investigator **Peacemakers** - Coordinator, Teamworker. **Steerers** - Implementer, Monitor Evaluator, Completer Finisher, Specialist.

Much of our organisational activity and the preoccupation of those who claim to manage it are tied up with managing risk and compliance. Perhaps we could consider a more positive and proactive approach.

- **Tipu Ake takes us beyond our preoccupation with Risk Management:**

Traditional Project Management focuses on identifying risks (Pests) in the execution phase of a project then reducing their probability and impact. Tipu Ake turns the conventional Risk matrix upside down and encourages us to think beyond the origin into the positive sector of opportunity (Birds), particularly during the initiation phase - opening opportunities early.



Tipu Ake recognises that the real opportunities for innovation and growth start underground at the root level, in the undercurrents where creative energy abounds. By the time an idea has been defined as a sapling project above the ground the outcomes it can deliver are already largely determined and thus constrained.

Could we now assess our organisations from this opportunist perspective, starting underground?

- **The Tipu Ake Organisational Self Assessment Tool.**

Tipu Ake is a cyclic model full of loops. We can and should be operating at all levels simultaneously. Don't for one moment confuse this organic cyclic behavioural model with the linear process based approach of conventional Capability Maturity Development Models.

We do the Tipu Ake Organisational Self Assessment using our collective sensing and wisdom. The scale is course (0, 1 or 2) and our own opinion does not count, instead we try to assess how the organisation collectively would respond to the statements (by pretending we are a fly on the wall of the cafeteria). The self assessment tool tells us for each of the levels whether we are operating reactively; always responding and fire fighting on the "pest" side, or proactively; seeking out opportunities on the "bird" side. Here is an example of the undercurrent level assessment statements: You can download the rest in the model at www.tipuake.org.nz

Answer these questions in sensing mode: put aside your own opinion and sense what the collective wisdom of your organisation would say. (Be a fly on the wall in the cafeteria) In cases of wide disagreement, try to find out what different experiences the other person has that makes their answer to the same question so different.

| Model Levels | Behaviours that characterise our organisation's culture (0 = disagree, 1 = agree, 2 = strongly agree) | pests | birds |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------|-------|
| Poisons | Our growth is blocked: eg by greed, exploitation, aggression, abuse, retribution, dishonesty, put downs, fear | | |
| Level 0 | pests We tend to exclude those people who challenge the established point of view and thus cause conflict | | |
| Undercurrents: Kore (unfruitful) | We always like to be ordered and in control with firm targets and a clearly defined path ahead of us | | |
| | Our new directions mostly come from those who manage the organisation and it's funding | | |
| | birds We face issues; often looking outside the square to question our assumptions and gather in new ideas | | |
| | We appreciate our people's diversity, and use all our talent and ideas to address the issues we face | | |
| | We learn from our mistakes or experiences and have the courage to try new things again | | |
| | 0. Undercurrent Totals: | | |

When you do the full self assessment you will find that it forces us to ask some somewhat difficult questions about our organisations vision, so a few tools to help us define this may be useful.

Tipu Ake Organisational Visioning Tools

An Organisation that applies Tipu Ake ki te Ora must start by defining its vision of Ora, the destination state of wellness it aspires to, which in reality will never reach as it changes as we learn more. It then works backwards to breaks this down into outcomes, indicators and projects. This adds some practical tools that support The Natural Step¹³ process of backcasting <http://au.naturalstep.org/framework/framback.html>

Here is an example that was used to initially scope the Whirinaki Community Kaitiakitanga Program and Network¹⁴ that was used to pilot and develop Tipu Ake visioning processes and tools. You will see how this has since organically expanded as the program proceeds at <http://www.kaitiakitanga.net/projects/index.htm>

| WELLBEING (ORA): <i>Where do we want to be?</i> | OUTCOMES: <i>What would need to be in place there?</i> | INDICATORS: <i>How will we know we are close?</i> | PROJECTS: <i>How could we make it happen?</i> |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>"Our grandchildren will cherish Whirinaki Forest and the culture of its people; thanking us for preserving its richness and diversity for them to share with their grandchildren and all future peoples"</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p><i>Note that this Nth state of wellbeing is a timeless one, not just the output of our generation's projects.</i></p> </div> <p><i>For more information on this program including how it is being managed using Tipu Ake principles see www.kaitiakitanga.net</i></p> <p><i>Another powerful vision of Ora from the Waitaha people:</i></p> <p><i>When we raise our children with the wairua [spirit] to hear the plants grow and open their minds to touch the stars; that is Waitaha. When our gardens cover the nakedness of Papatuanuku [the earth] with the peace of Rongo Marae Roa [God of Peace] and the Kumura [sweet potato] are abundant; that is Waitaha. When the waters are shaped to nurture fish, and birds are plentiful; that is Waitaha. When Arai Te Uru [sharing / trading canoe] sails again and again with Kumura for the Nation; that is Waitaha.. from Song of Waitaha, p133</i></p> <p><i>(It seems they understood the triple bottom line and more)</i></p> | <p>Kaitiakitanga - responsibility for guardianship is accepted and in place</p> <p>(GUARDIANSHIP)</p> | <p>Others will see Ngati Whare the tangata whenua (local people) caring for the forest and sharing its taonga (treasure/wealth/knowledge)</p> | <p>Re-establish indigenous Maori conservation values and processes</p> <p>Have local people be responsible for local activity in partnership with the Department of Conservation.</p> |
| | <p>High public awareness of the richness uniqueness and fragility of the forest.</p> <p>(AWARENESS)</p> | <p>Sacred historical places will be identified and respected.</p> <p>Visitors will treat the area as sacred and relish the rich experience of visiting it.</p> <p>Many will put their time and resources behind the projects that preserve and restore it.</p> | <p>Create much richer interpretation, signage, protocols and experiences</p> <p>Establish its status as a international natural heritage area</p> <p>Establish a website that will allow people anywhere to visit and experience its richness – with no environmental impact</p> <p>Grow a "Friends of Whirinaki" support network, and run volunteer projects for river restoration, re vegetation etc.</p> |
| | <p>The love of Whirinaki and the privilege / responsibility to care for and share it, will be passed by each generation to its (and all) mokopuna (grandchildren's)</p> <p>(LEARNING)</p> | <p>The forest and things related to it will again become a vocation and lifeforce for people living in the valley</p> | <p>Establish Whirinaki as a place of learning - for people seeking to better understand indigenous Maori values in relation to nature and community</p> <p>Start more student projects at / with Te Whaiti Nui-a-Toi School to help them share their knowledge with other schools, young people and the public</p> |
| | <p>The destructive pests will be under control</p> <p>(PEST CONTROL)</p> | <p>Bird, plant and diverse species populations will again be plentiful</p> <p>Whirinaki will become renowned for the innovative methods of environmental protection developed here.</p> | <p>Establish an ever widening pest control buffer zone around the Whirinaki river basin</p> <p>Develop new pest control methods</p> <p>Combine control of stoats, cats and other pests</p> <p>Establish monitoring and incursion response plans for all pests.</p> |
| | <p>New, sustainable and very appropriate business opportunities will be exploited to help support this programme</p> <p>(ENTERPRISES)</p> | <p>Other knowledge economy income streams will be feeding the valley</p> <p>People will receive a holistic learning experience and a meeting of minds rather than just day walks</p> <p>Intellectual property will be protected under the UN draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples</p> | <p>Develop new environmental protection processes and expertise for our world</p> <p>Establish a possum fur industry / brand</p> <p>Promote and grow Tipu Ake thinking</p> <p>Run marae learning experience retreats</p> <p>Provide outdoor education opportunities</p> <p>Provide accommodation, tourism, arts</p> |

Tipu Ake – New tools for program management in “Living Organisations”

- **Organic program management:**



The Tipu Ake ki te Ora visioning process, because it is driven from the destination state of Wellbeing (ORA) that we seek, results in many individual project paths that could lead towards this. (Compare with backcasting¹⁴ at www.naturalstep.org) We make no attempt to limit or prioritise our projects at the start. Instead we emulate nature in the rainforest, which allows all manner of seeds to germinate under, in and even above the canopy, all of which are highly interdependent on all other species in the ecosystem and just waiting for the particular conditions (opportunity) that allow them to grow and flourish. Individual projects do not exist in isolation; they all find themselves as a part of a highly interdependent parallel program where everything is organic. (Others may call this Systems Thinking, Boundary-less Operation, Complexity or Chaos Theory.)

- **Compare this with conventional project management:**



In conventional project thinking, we often look at the present situation, find one or more opportunities to solve a problem or to improve something, prioritise those that we want to focus on, then plan to get down to doing it, largely in isolation from everything else that is going on around it in its environment. Projects are run in silos and the focus is on sticking to the plan for each individual project and delivering it's pre-described, tightly specified, “output”. The result may be “outcomes” that do not always meet our or our customer’s real expectations.

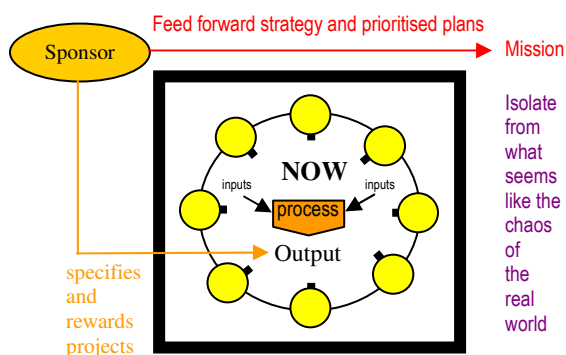
Einstein reminds us that “We cannot solve the problems of today with the same thinking that caused them”

- **Program teams in a Living World environment:**

The school told us “We formed a circle, a very tight circle. We said we will work hard and play hard and the circle will be so tight that if anyone wants to get in they will have to fight to do it. Because we will make sure we succeed and will enjoy ourselves doing it, and what it will create is that other people looking in will say What's happening?, What's Te Whaiti doing? and they will want to come in. That's how we did it - we had ourselves, our spouses and our children and worked it. We played - and it created an environment, and other people started to look, and say; Can I come in for a look? - and that started the ball rolling”

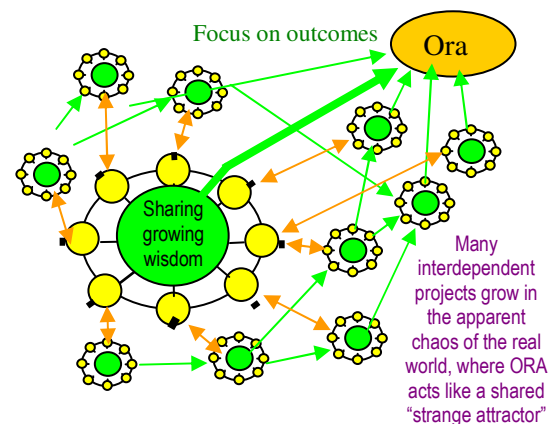
(a) The noses facing inwards team:

example: a conventional “problem solving” project team in a linear (machine like) environment



(b) The noses facing outwards team:

example: a program team interacting in a living organisation with many projects and partners

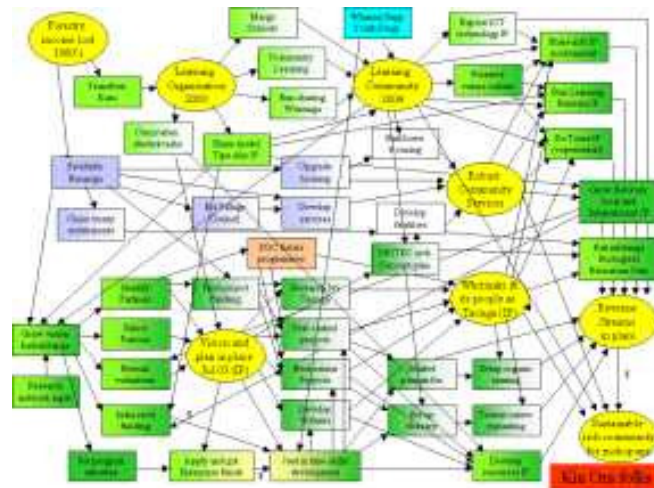


Teams with noses inwards and noses outwards are both appropriate depending on the situation (just as are the Newtonian and quantum theory). If we think with noses inwards we see a program as the algebraic sum of a number of projects, whereas with noses outward thinking a program is exploiting a world of external opportunity with win-win partnerships where progress is unconstrained by our internal resource supply.

- **Program and Project Roadmaps:**

With Tipu Ake we don't talk much about project plans or confuse ourselves with the term Strategic Planning.

Instead we talk about Roadmaps that describe the multiple paths that lead to our destination and focus more on the interdependencies between these activities and the dynamic real world environment we all work within. Milestones on these roadmaps allow us to keep track of where we are up to on each path. All along the route we continually sense opportunities, changes in environment, constraints, and risks, then use our collective wisdom to make decisions that will maximise the "outcomes" the whole program will deliver. Here is an example of a roadmap – perhaps it looks complex and highly interconnected to you. Sorry, that's real life!



See this Roadmap example in real time at: <http://www.kaitiakitanga.net/program/roadmap.ppt>

- **Organisational (Partnership / Alliancing) Process Map:**

With Tipu Ake we don't bother drawing organisational hierarchy charts as they put up more barriers (normally putting those who provide or control the funding at the top) and do little to help us understand the processes and interactions needed to implement a complex program. In Tipu Ake terms money is treated as just another tool like a hammer or a spade, and what is really important are those who put their energy behind it.

So instead we draw Organisational Partnership Maps, which show the relationship between all parties involved, and what they can each contribute. This allows us to seek the win-win opportunities that will flow from their participation. Central to this is the Maori concept of Ohu - A group of representative volunteers working together with the interests of the wider community and its future at heart.

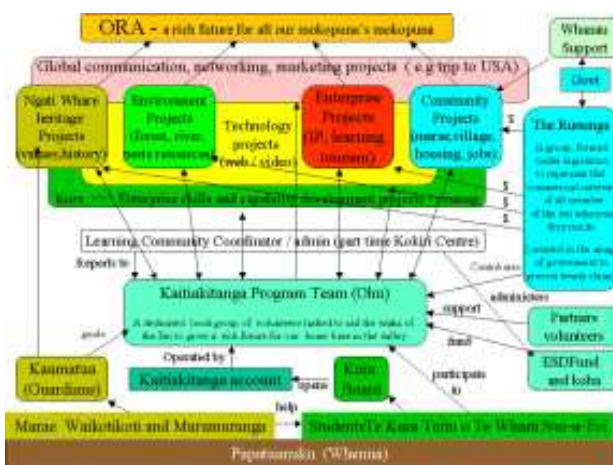
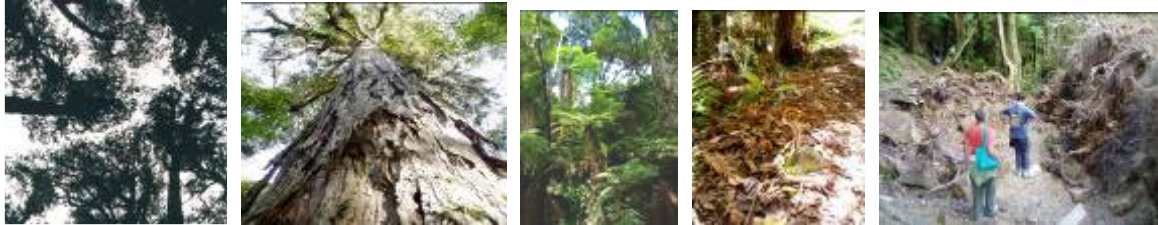


Fig 8:

See this Organisational Map in action at <http://www.kaitiakitanga.net/program/structure.ppt>

- **Nature's Collaboration Network**

If we look up in the rainforest we see the branches of the trees try not to touch each other, whereas under ground we find a network of microscopic mycorrhizal root fungi ¹⁵ that exchange nutrients between the diverse species and the earth. The most effective collaborative networks seem quite invisible, they are under-ground



- **The concept of Ohu – Collaboration beyond ordinary project team thinking.**

We learnt about this in a historical document Te Whaiti 1950 ¹⁶ <http://www.ngatiwhare.iwi.nz/who/history.htm>

“The building of a carved house was a job of extreme importance. Tree felling was tedious work, taking a long time with the stone tools they had. Incantations had to be said to appease the anger of the God Tane before the tree was felled. Then the timber had to be manhandled to the site of the house. Neighbouring tribes gathered at the pa to give a hand not only in the felling and splitting operations but also in the carving and building. Food was donated both by those participating as well as the tribes unable to come. It is here that “Ohu” – working together in communal spirit – is seen at its best. Indeed the Maoris are noted as the greatest exponents of Ohu. Their very existence was based on it, and it made them great in their day. Nothing was impossible. The great migration was possible only by co-operation or Ohu; the broad Pacific Ocean became a pond to those explorers of old. They had faith in themselves and their ability to work together; and knowing this all things were possible”.

The concept of Ohu was further explained to us by Peter Ruku Te Korako – Waitaha ¹⁷ as:

“A specific group taken out of the main group, accepting the responsibility of a big challenge which should they win through, becomes the effort of the group alone - a humbling experience for brave people who will be in deep water right over their heads. You can't be appointed to it, you must be a volunteer. It is pivotal in advancing the cause of all the people.”

Perhaps this leads to a different governance model for running programs in a living organisation operating in a complex and interdependent world, namely:

A circle of volunteers with their noses pointing outwards (see page 10), attracting others to the cause, but making it somewhat hard to get in – entry requiring acceptance of the Tipu Ake team behaviour guidelines (see page 6)



You may note synergies between this and the new form of alliancing contracts that increasingly are being used in major civil construction and similar projects. The alliance can be a team with strong behavioural groundrules but no independent legal status that integrates all parties in a project in a creative way that allows all to share the risks and rewards. For information on alliancing contracts as they are being applied in Australia and New Zealand see PCI Alliancing ¹⁸ Website <http://www.pci-aus.com/>

Examine the illustrated Transit NZ report on the Grafton Freeflow Alliance ¹⁹ - the Grafton Gully Motorway Project in Auckland New Zealand <http://cmi.transit.govt.nz/html/ggp/home.htm>

- **New approaches to project evaluation that focus on outcomes, beyond just outputs.**

Most project and program evaluation is currently done at the process level (where most organisations operate) using data based analytical measurements that often require direct outputs to be measured. We often hear the expression “If you can't measure it you can't manage it”.



Tipu Ake teams don't ignore the importance of measurement but they go far beyond this, using their collective sensing and wisdom to assess whether their actions are aligned with and contributing to outcomes; inspiring organic growth at all levels in the process. Reporting of progress is very much presented in stories with pictures. These carry the lessons from the past to the future. <http://www.kaitiakitanga.net/program/overview.htm>



Santropol Roulant¹⁸ is a youth driven social and intergenerational service organisation in Montreal that has thought carefully about the nature of organic evaluation, involving questioning, reflecting, experimenting and sharing. See the paper they have produced in collaboration with the McGill University, School of Management: <http://www.santropolroulant.org/images/Organic%20Evaluation.pdf>

See also Not Just Trees in the Ground - WWF NZ http://www.wwf.org.nz/fck_image_uploads/file/WWF-New%20Zealand%20Not%20Just%20Trees%20in%20the%20Ground.pdf

For more learning that that supports "Living Organisation" system thinking, read supporting stories from other innovative organisations around the world at: http://www.tipuake.org.nz/stories/supporting_stories.htm

Conclusion:

Our world is changing; our industrial age models for organisational structures and leadership may not be well suited for the information age with all its complexity. In this paper we have considered a different approach:

- Vision - being determined and unified about where we would like to be and working back from that,
- Verbs - doing the courageous things together that will help take us all towards it
- and Tipu Ake - a potent medicine that helps us and our teams grow courage from within.

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5. The Tipu Ake Lifecycle: For more information on Tipu Ake visit www.tipuake.org.nz where you will find it shared in the public domain for the benefit of all the worlds future childrens. Here you can download the full model, stories, Powerpoint explanatories (in English and French) and its unique conditions of use. Tipu Ake is traditional intellectual property, which will continue to belong for all time at Te Whaiti Nui-a-Toi. Guarded by its kaitiaki, the children and people living there. See www.tewhaiti-nui-a-toi.maori.nz Acknowledge by koha, a gift in return based on its value to you.
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21. Bumble Bee – Ken Thompson's shared know-how on team dynamics, virtual collaboration and bioteaming www.bioteams.com
22. Cynefin - Dave Snowden <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cynefin>, also video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mqNcs8mp74>

For links to more stories about growing living organisations http://www.tipuake.org.nz/stories/supporting_stories.htm

The writer, Peter Goldsbury, has been privileged to be a part of the community and coordinates the now international volunteer team and network that has documented and helps share Tipu Ake. By day he runs project management workshops "Leading Projects and Innovation in your Organisation" that extend conventional program thinking with collaborative Tipu Ake style tools. www.projectmanagement.co.nz This papers enhances a presentation at the World Congress for Total Quality Management, Wellington 4-6 Dec 2006 "Developing Management and Organisational Capability to Improve Business Performance" <http://www.worldcongressnz.com/> It was derived from an earlier paper on Radical Program Management delivered at the Project Management Institute Global Forum 2004, Anaheim California.