



RUA: DNA

In the last issue we began sharing the story of the Learning Centre by introducing the Spore - the reproductive cells that initiate growth. In this newsletter, we'll explore DNA - the parameters that guide the growth of an organism.

"Holistic Decision Making" [HDM] is a cultural framework used by the Learning Centre for making decisions. It acts as the DNA of the Learning Centre, informing the way we adapt and evolve. The HDM articulates the vision of the Learning Centre, and the approach we will take to achieve our vision and kaupapa [culture / values].

Like DNA, our HDM has been shaped by feedback from te taiao [the environment]. It speaks to the worldview of the Learning Centre - based on and modified by the histories, stories, knowledge and experiences which have formed the Activation Group. The HDM framework offers support for making decisions that align with the kaupapa.

The HDM process unfolds holistically - holding an understanding of the whole in balance with the parts, and the relationships in between.

Ki te kahore he whakakitenga ka ngaro te iwi

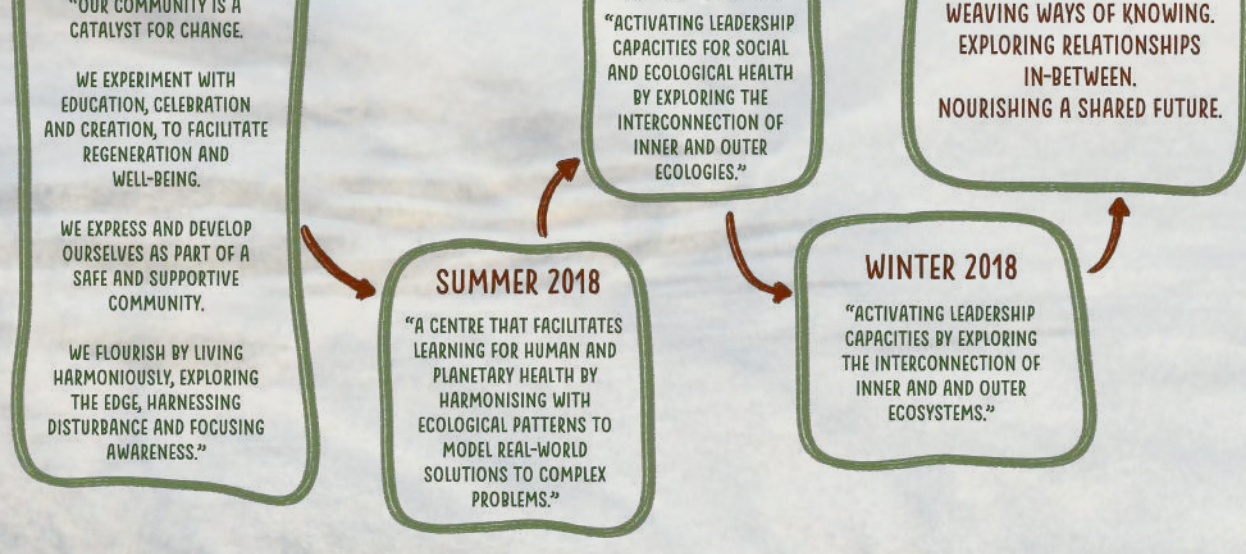
Without foresight or vision the people will be lost



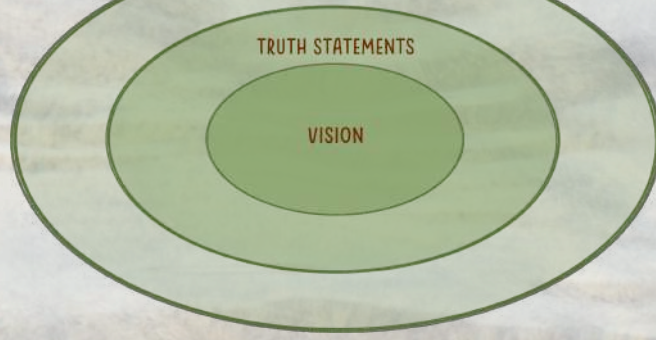
HOLISTIC DECISION MAKING : A LIVING PROCESS

The HDM is a living process which is constantly reflected on and refined by the Activation Group. It was the keystone process used to express the initial dream that emerged from a bush hut in Aorangi Forest in 2017. As a living process it continuously emerges from collective knowledge and ongoing conversations. Whenever someone becomes involved with this kaupapa, who they are and what they bring shapes the HDM.

When the Activation Group gathered in Taupo last month, again we reflected on the HDM, leading to the fifth iteration of our Vision.



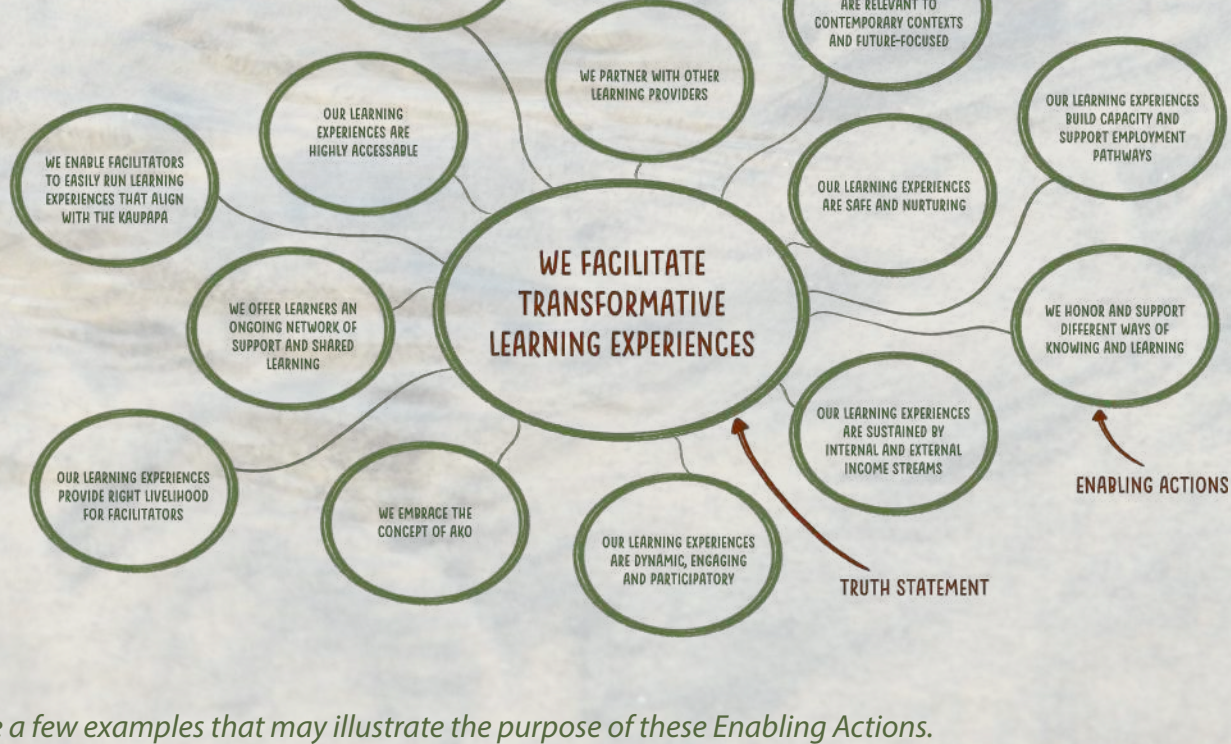
The HDM is set out as a series of nested circles, layers within layers, like the rings within the trunk of a tree. Central is the Vision - articulating where we want to be. Supporting the vision are our Truth Statements - what we need to be true to realise the vision. Around the Truth Statements sit our Enabling Actions. These are the more tangible, actionable things we need to be doing for the Truth Statements to be true, and the Vision to be realised.



The current Vision & some Truth Statements.



Zooming in on one Truth Statement and its Enabling Actions:



Here are a few examples that may illustrate the purpose of these Enabling Actions.

'Our learning experiences are relevant to contemporary contexts and future-focused'. This means that our courses are integrated with real-life skills and situations. For example, if we are offering an organic horticulture course it could produce food for the local community, and be focused on how we can produce food in a future of extreme weather and energy descent.

'Our learning experiences build capacity and support employment pathways'. This means that people are trained in applicable real-life skills that enable ethical livelihoods. Using the organic horticulture course example, this could manifest in the establishment of local farms or market gardens during the course that provide employment opportunities once the course is finished.

'Our learning experiences are accessible'. This means that our courses and internships are appropriate across cultures and demographics, while creative funding models reduce the cost of learning as much as possible.

'Our learning experiences are safe and nurturing'. This means that our learning experiences are emotionally supportive and are focused on rejuvenating learners wellbeing as they take in new experiences and information.

Our HDM framework is expansive and comprehensive. These images do not capture the real extent of this mahi [work]. We use an online software called Miro to map the HDM in an approachable and easily digestible way. This also allows us to continually update the HDM as it evolves over time.

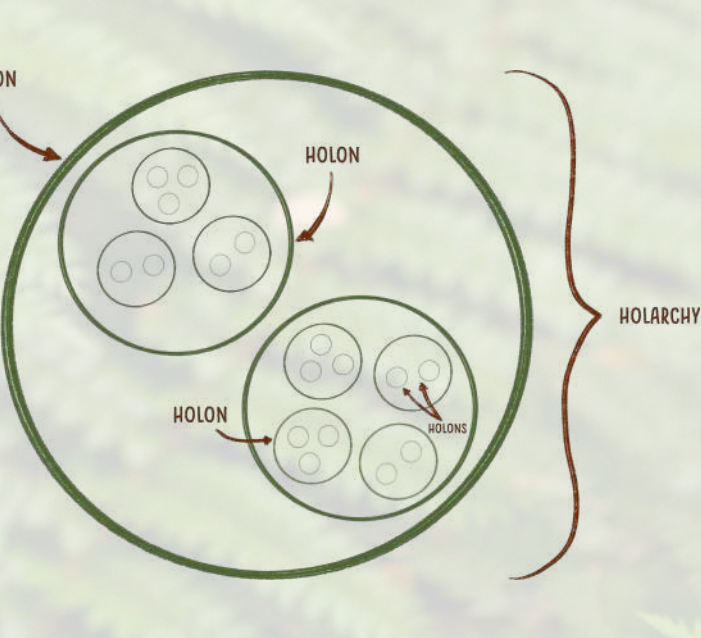
ECOSYSTEM INSIGHT

HOLON: SOMETHING THAT IS SIMULTANEOUSLY A WHOLE AND A PART

HOLARCHY
Coined by Arthur Koestler, 1967

Let's explore how systems are nested, diverse and deeply interconnected by playing with the concepts of holons and holarchies. Everything is a holon! You're a holon! You're a whole being, made of many parts, and are part of many wholes. The holarchy is a concept developed to understand how life is made up of holons, nested within holons, nested within holons.

It was a form of remembering and re-framing a worldview that has been present in many indigenous societies for eons. In Aotearoa this holistic awareness is deeply ingrained in Te ao Māori [the Māori worldview] which sees the world as a web of relationships - nested and interconnected. This can be understood through whakapapa and whanaungatanga.



The holarchy is everywhere. As humans [wholes] we are made up of parts [our limbs, organs, cells, memories, spirits and emotions]. We are nested within other wholes; our home, culture, species, planet, galaxy and universe. All of these are holons. Within Māori health frameworks such as Te Whare Tapu Whā it is recognised that a whole person is made up of several dimensions (hinengaro/mind, tinana/physical, whānau/family, wairua/spirit) which all need to be balanced for human hauora [wellbeing].

The layered circles of the HDM means we can zoom in and out between different parts of the whole to explore the relationships in between. Like balancing the whole vision of our HDM with the statements nested inside it, we seek to understand the bigger picture of our world in balance with all its parts.



Over the last week, we have been celebrating Matariki [Māori New Year]. For us this is a time to zoom out to the big picture, to reflect on the whole of the year that has been, celebrate the present and look to the year to come. It's a time of remembering the relationships between those who are living, those who have passed and the world around us. We look to the position of the stars in the sky, the cycle of the moon and the relationship to our lands, waters, plants, animals and people.

WHAT'S FEEDING US

Pūrākau:
Māori Myths
Retold by Māori Writers

Matariki and Māori astronomy
Dr Rangi Matamua

How to fight desertification and reverse climate change
Allan Savory

Matariki Festivities 2019

WHAT'S FEEDING YOU?

What are you reading, listening to, watching, and doing that's relevant to our kaupapa? We can help spread information through the network to provide nutrients for this community.

Reply to this email with relevant information and links, so we can share them around. Through nutrients and strong relationships this network will thrive.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

We would love to hear from people who are keen to support this kaupapa. Right now we're particularly interested in hearing from people about potential land for the Centre, opportunities for financial support, expertise in developing businesses and organisations, website development, and administration support.

GRATITUDE

Our understanding of Holistic Decision Making has been deeply influenced by Dan Palmer and James Andrews, who share and teach around this process.

Both Dave and Sam have been working in collaboration with Dan and James for some years now. We have adapted Holistic Decision Making to meet our needs and we have not captured the full essence of its potential in this newsletter. Dan Palmer credits Allan Savory for originating the concept, where it has derived from 'Holistic Management' - a framework for empowering land managers to make land management decisions.

For more information, see Dan's blog: <https://www.holisticdecisionmaking.org>

NEXT MYCELIUM MAIL: TORU - SOIL

In our next issue we recount our experiences with participating in a unique learning community in Aotearoa, which is facilitating transformative learning.