

Aotearoa New Zealand: a fair and just place where migrant communities can ascend to great heights of fulfilled aspiration and potential.

Empowering Aspiring Entrepreneurs

Supporting

Developing

anec

# Iti Rearea Collective Mid-pilot Impact & Insights

DECEMBER 2022



Live Your Dream



**ITI REAREA  
COLLECTIVE**

DIGNITY • EQUITY • OPPORTUNITY

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# The Collective and our Constellation Model



Derived from the Maori whakatauki

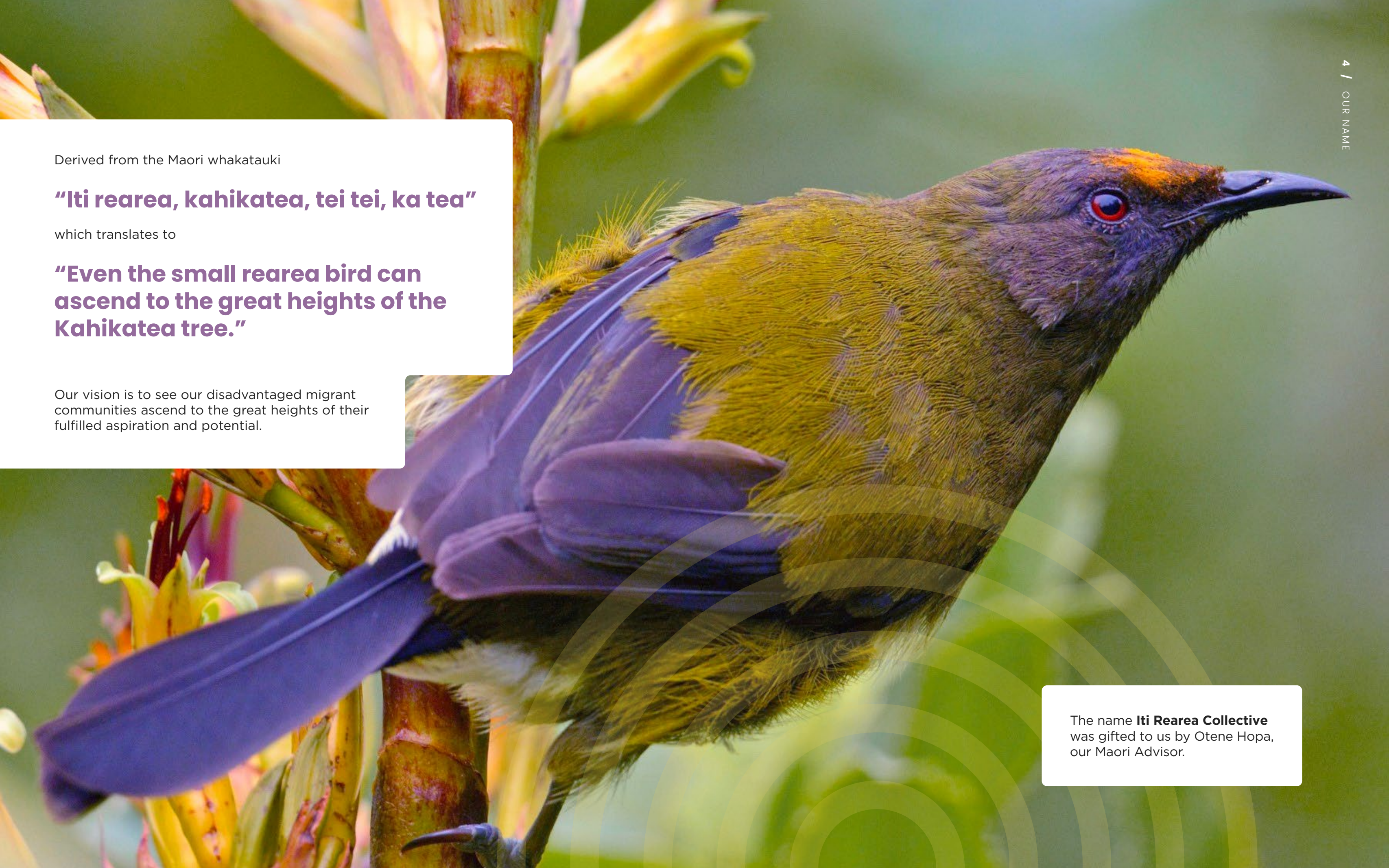
**“Iti rearea, kahikatea, tei tei, ka tea”**

which translates to

**“Even the small rearea bird can ascend to the great heights of the Kahikatea tree.”**

Our vision is to see our disadvantaged migrant communities ascend to the great heights of their fulfilled aspiration and potential.

The name **Iti Rearea Collective** was gifted to us by Otene Hopa, our Maori Advisor.



**Ngā mihi nui**  
to our funding partners!



## In 2019, Foundation North ran a co-design workshop to ideate and brainstorm different innovative and collaborative prototypes for ethnically diverse communities.

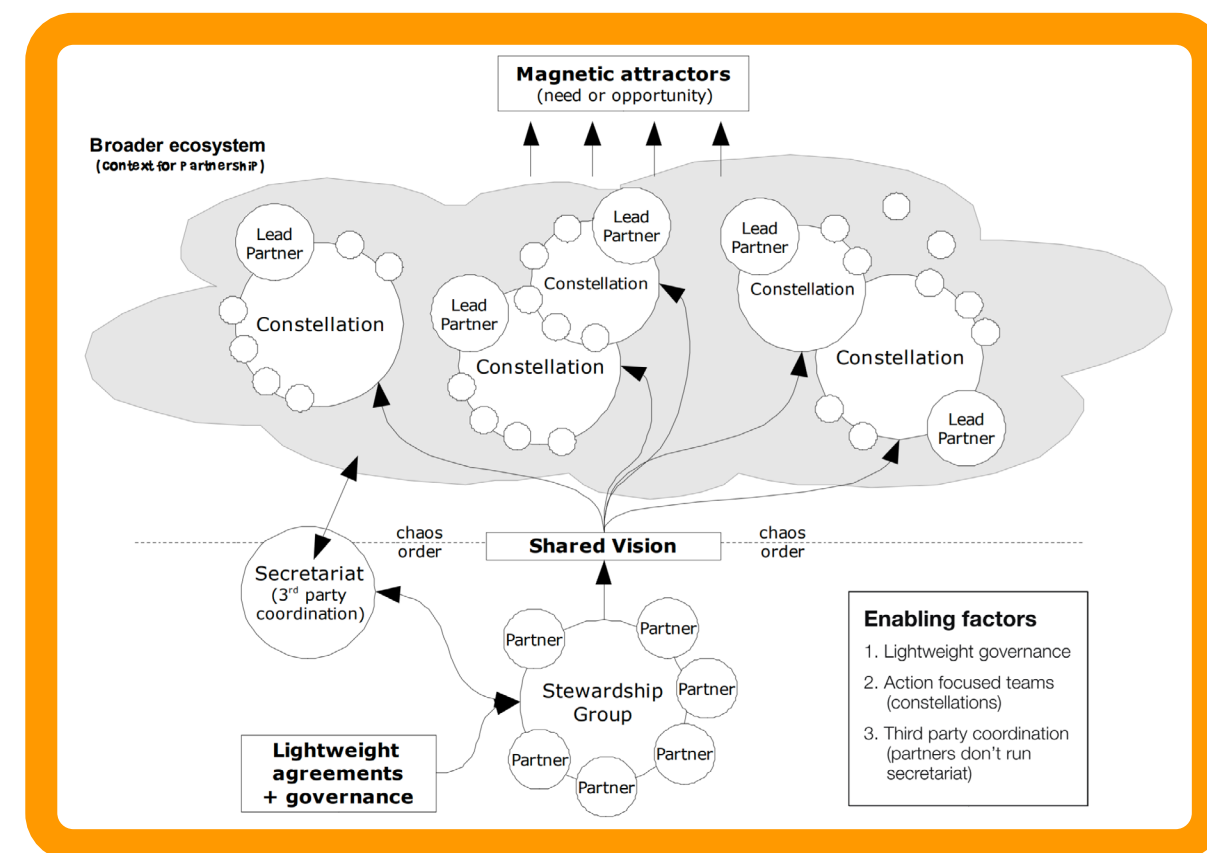
One idea, an “Ethnic Diversity Microfinance Fund” for former refugees and new migrants, gained traction.

Through research and a co-design process which involved potential partner organisations and individual experts across various sectors, the idea evolved into an entrepreneurship and microfinance initiative designed specifically for Aotearoa’s former refugee and migrant communities, with wrap-around support.

In August 2020, Foundation North approved a grant to fund a three-year pilot of this initiative. Over the following months, partner organisations came together to form the Iti Rearea Collective and agreed to a collaborative framework and governance model to implement the pilot, known as the Constellation Model of Collaborative Governance.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed among collective partners and an advisory group was established in March 2021.

A public launch event was held on 27 April 2021 with our first cohort of 25 participants.



The Constellation Model (Surman & Surman, 2008)

## Collective Partners

Community Engagement



Business Coaching



Fundholder & Infrastructure Support



Microfinance



Monitoring and Evaluation



Business Workshops



## Advisory Group



Anjum Rahman



Ayan Said



Clementine Ludlow



Fiona Natusch



Iosefa Enari



Jade Tang-Taylor  
(Chair)



Otene Hopa  
(Maori Advisor)



Rahul Watson Govindan



Thi Phan

## Strategic Leadership



Abann K. A Yor  
ARCC  
General Manager



Lisa Lopeti  
Iti Rearea Collective  
Project Lead



Dr Marissa Kologa  
Otago University  
Lecturer and Researcher



Natalie Vincent  
Ngā Tāngata Microfinance  
General Manager



Ron Lal  
Momentum Mind Lab  
Founder/CEO



Dr Sangeeta Karmokar  
Women Entrepreneurship  
Centre | Trustee & Founder

# Friends of the Collective

## GOVERNMENT



## BUDGET SERVICES



## CULINARY AND FOOD SECTOR



## RESETTLEMENT SECTOR



## OTHER



We exist to **remove systemic barriers** that are keeping our migrant communities from **reaching their full potential** in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our **theory of change**  
**long term goal** is:

By 2024, demonstrated effective pathways to refugee and migrant entrepreneurship and microfinance.

WE CURRENTLY SERVE:

Anyone who is a former refugee or an \*ethnic migrant facing systemic barriers and living in the Auckland region.

\*Aotearoa New Zealand's ethnic communities include anyone who identifies their ethnicity as African, Asian, Continental European, Latin-American or Middle Eastern.

Ministry for Ethnic Communities website.





# Our core focus is to remove the following barriers faced by refugee-background communities:

1

## UNEMPLOYMENT / UNDEREMPLOYMENT

Employment is one of the most pressing needs facing refugee-background communities to create their livelihood and integrate into New Zealand society. Currently, the majority are either unemployed or underemployed in low-skilled and low-paying jobs due to barriers such as language, unrecognised skills, experience and qualifications and discrimination. However, some have the potential and aspiration to become entrepreneurs or pursue self-employment.

2

## FINANCIAL EXCLUSION

Studies around the world have shown that former refugees are highly entrepreneurial and motivated to create their own financial independence upon resettlement. However, they face many start-up barriers including lack of access to capital (financial, human, social), lack of a viable business idea or experience, lack of knowledge of NZ systems and local markets and fear of losing their social welfare benefit and support.

3

## BARRIERS TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Studies around the world have shown that former refugees are highly entrepreneurial and motivated to create their own financial independence upon resettlement. However, they face many start-up barriers including lack of access to capital (financial, human, social), lack of a viable business idea or experience, lack of knowledge of NZ systems and local markets and fear of losing their social welfare benefit and support.

**“I was applying for jobs but they wanted New Zealand experienced people and I couldn’t get through the doors. I was like, what is that kind of New Zealand experience do you want? How is it that different to have New Zealand experience? Why don’t you give a try with me to know whether I’m experienced or not? They don’t even want to give me try.”**

- Participant\*

**“I need stock. For that I need capital. Where would I, a single [parent], unemployed for so many years... Where would I get the capital? No family around. No banks want to give any money, nobody wants to support. So where would I get money to make my dream happen?”**

- Participant\*

**“The biggest challenge for me to start a business in a new country is the lack of knowledge about the needs of the local market...”**

- Participant\*

\* for privacy reasons, at times our participants choose to remain anonymous.

# Our Programmes and Participants



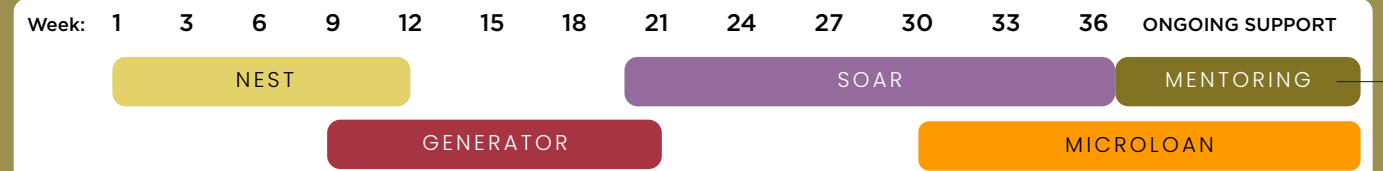
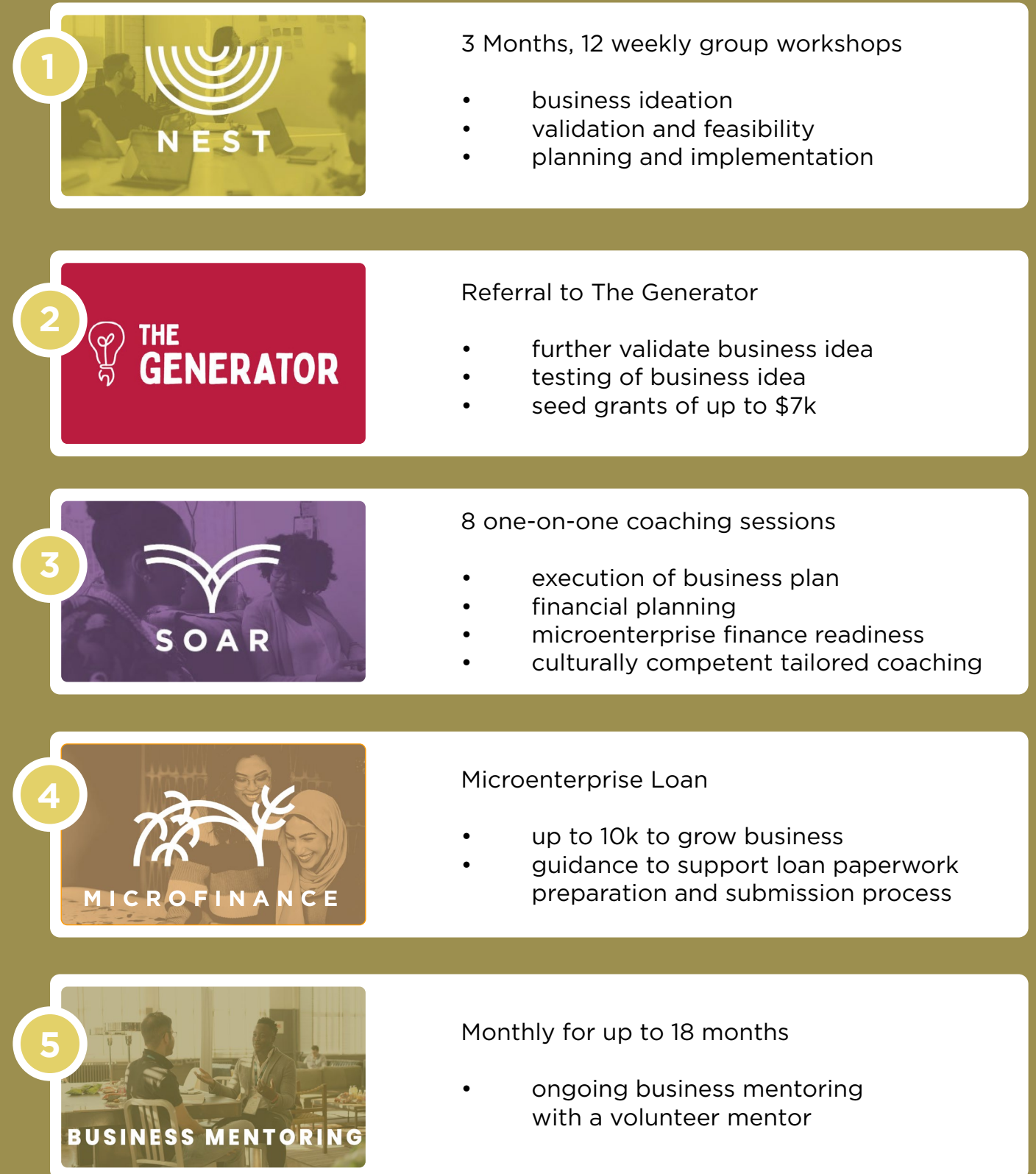
WHAT WE DO

We provide business workshops, coaching, microfinance and mentoring to enable aspiring migrant entrepreneurs to achieve financial independence and social inclusion by creating successful businesses.

Our current service delivery has been iterated in response to the changing needs and what we have learned from the community and participants over the past year and a half of this pilot.

Weeks 1 through 36 have wrap-around support which includes:

- Personal financial mentoring
- Language support
- Homework support
- Networking
- Childminding

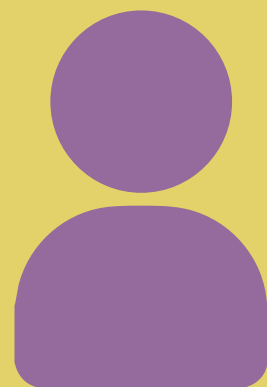


# Our Impact



**118**

applications  
received to date



**91**

participants  
to date



**4 NEST programmes completed**

= 90 participants  
(60% graduation rate)



**3 SOAR programmes completed**

= 21 participants  
(89% graduation rate)



**Finance: 62 participants (77%)  
expressed interest in getting  
a microfinance loan.**

Two applications currently  
under review

**Businesses:**

**x4**

launched

**x8**

in early growth

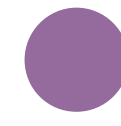
**x24**

in development



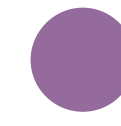
**x12**

new jobs created



**43%**

male



**57%**

female

## ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF OUR PARTICIPANTS

Afghani  
Burmese  
Burundi  
Columbian  
Congolese  
Egyptian  
Eritrean  
Ethiopian  
Indian  
Iranian  
Korean  
Pakistani

Palestinian  
Peruvian  
Russian  
Saudi Arabian  
Singaporean  
Somali  
Sri Lankan  
Sudanese  
Syrian  
Turkish  
Uyghur



**17,080** Facebook page reach



**11,473** Instagram page reach



## Tarane Taheri Haraiva

2021 NEST GRADUATE  
2022 SOAR GRADUATE  
CURRENT MICROFINANCE APPLICANT

<b>Established Business:</b>	Haraiva - women's clothing brand, tailoring and alterations
<b>Country of Origin:</b>	Afghanistan
<b>Arrived in NZ:</b>	2019 under the Quota Refugee Programme
<b>Employment Status:</b>	Self-employed
<b>Credentials:</b>	BSci, Level 5 NCEA English (currently completing)

### JOURNEY TO AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND

Tarane resettled to NZ in 2019 with her mother and three siblings from Afghanistan. They spent one year in Palmerston North and then moved to Auckland in 2020. Her family tried to support themselves independently at the time, renting a house from a private landlord and working but they found it was unaffordable with the cost of living. Tarane's sister worked full time in multiple jobs but it was too hard. The following year, they moved into a hotel under emergency housing and are now thankful to be in more suitable transitional housing, all thanks to their social worker who advocated for their placement.

### TARANE'S INCREDIBLE DRIVE AND AMBITION

Tarane is an incredibly driven, ambitious and motivated young woman with a passion for tailoring and a dream to employ and create jobs, sustainably, for women from her Afghan community.

At only 24 years of age, she has a big vision for herself and her family and it's obvious that she is the driving force behind the family business. She comes from a long line of tailors, and tailoring has had a huge influence on her life. Her mother previously owned a tailoring stall at a market in Iran where Tarane helped out and learnt how to sew when she was just a child. In Afghanistan she studied science and midwifery. Tarane and her oldest sister are the first women in their family to attend university.

## MOTIVATION TO START A BUSINESS

Since Tarane's overseas science qualification is not recognised in NZ, she decided to create a livelihood for her family doing what her family knows best - tailoring. Tarane participated in both our NEST and SOAR programmes which gave her the confidence, knowledge and skills to turn her business ideas into reality. Haraiva was launched during our SOAR programme in July 2022 and in the following month, the Haraiva shop in Royal Oak was established.

The business is so much more than just economic support for the family. In the early years of their resettlement, Tarane's mother and sister suffered from depression. Since opening her shop, her family has benefited immensely. Her mother at first was hesitant as she thought that working in a store was dangerous for a woman, as it is in Iran. But after a few months of operating, she says "My mom prefers the shop more than being at home now. She tells me she is finally happy and that the shop has brought them a sense of place and security, especially with the housing being not so sure (transitional)."

In addition to being a safe place for the family to work and be together, the shop also provides experience for her siblings to practise their English with customers and become more confident as Tarane often sends them on errands to buy material and talk with other businesses in the community.



## TARANE'S POTENTIAL AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

Tarane shows strong leadership qualities. She has persevered against the odds to become a woman of influence in her family and to her community both here in NZ and back in Afghanistan. Since observing her studying and owning her own business, her Uncles have now allowed their daughters to enrol in University back in her home country and Tarane says that this motivates her to want to inspire more young women to dream big and achieve great things.

Here in NZ, she quickly reached an Instagram following of over 500 potential customers in the span of just a few months and has diversified her brand(s) to include products that span the Muslim, Afghan and New Zealand markets. She is currently applying for our microfinance loan to invest in material and equipment.

Future goals for Tarane's business are to diversify into Muslim mens clothing, so she has created a new brand 'Barchi'. Tarane wants to use her business for good, to support the local economy by only buying materials made in NZ. She would like to create jobs for other Afghan women who have newly resettled to NZ and are unable to find work elsewhere. Her heart is to create social inclusion for her Afghan resettled community and to see them thrive in their new home. It has been a privilege to journey alongside Tarane, to witness her growth and the ripple effect that she is having in her community and beyond!

# Businesses Launched



## Mazzaya

Middle Eastern cuisine



## RedCoats Cleaning Services

Commercial cleaning

<https://redcoatsgroup.co.nz/>



## Taste Of Myanmar

Burmese Cuisine

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100083653267018>



## Zorah

Ethnic women fashion and bridal wear

Website in development

## Businesses in Early Growth



### Beauty Basics

Beauty salon

[https://www.instagram.com/beauty\\_basics\\_ltd/](https://www.instagram.com/beauty_basics_ltd/)



### Beri Beauty

Hairdressing

<https://www.beribeautynz.com/>



### Bilen Beauty

Hair extensions and products

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100084175361898>



### Haraiva

Tailoring and womens fashion

<https://www.instagram.com/haraiva.nz/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/haraiva.nz>



### It's Your Soul

Halal baking and catering

<https://www.instagram.com/its.your.soul/>



### Mi Casa Es Su Casa

Colombian cuisine

<https://www.facebook.com/micasaessucasanz>



### Qasedak Kitchen

Afghani and Iranian cuisine

<https://www.instagram.com/qasedakkitchen/>



### Turkish Style Homeware

Imported turkish homeware

<https://www.instagram.com/turkishstylehomeware/>



# Media Coverage



<https://www.1news.co.nz/2021/04/17/new-collective-helping-former-refugees-achieve-their-business-dreams/>

In July 2022, Chasing A Plate filmed a three-part series for their YouTube Channel featuring three of our food-based entrepreneurs and their home businesses.

This series was released in August 2022 and collectively has received 12,972 online views to date. All three businesses grew in their online presence and engagement with new customers.

**Mi Casa Es Su Casa**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sScxDiK2WCw>

**Taste of Myanmar**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5pFDIUskrl>

**Qasedak Kitchen**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWIEekGDJkk>





## Wahid Karimzad

2022 NEST GRADUATE

<b>Business Idea:</b>	Import of Middle Eastern food products
<b>Country of Origin:</b>	Afghanistan
<b>Arrived in NZ:</b>	2021 under the Afghan Emergency Resettlement Programme
<b>Employment Status:</b>	Receiving Jobseeker Support
<b>Credentials:</b>	MBA, BBus, DipIT, DipAc

### JOURNEY TO AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND

Wahid left Afghanistan with his wife, mother and five children when the Taliban took control late last year and came to NZ in November of 2021 as evacuees with critical visa status. The family had a dramatic escape from the Taliban, who were in the process of besieging his city. While dangerously attempting to reach the local airport, Wahid was shot at and (momentarily) lost one of his daughters. After repeated attempts to obtain emergency visas from the French embassy and failing, they finally, with ten other families, were able to evacuate through the NZ Defence Force.

When Wahid and his family first arrived in NZ, they lived in a hotel for the first four months while waiting to be transitioned into state housing. He says his children are “in love with their new home” and are enjoying it the most out of everyone in the family. Wahid has experienced a lot of anxiety about his family’s future in this past year, but has found Kiwis to be kind and welcoming. They are now thankful to have permanent residency and to call NZ their home.

#### WAHID'S OVERSEAS ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERIENCE

Wahid is incredibly entrepreneurial, a creative thinker, independent and kind. He has an open mind, is well connected and is a devout family man. Wahid has owned several businesses in his home country including: a trade business importing second hand pearls from Canada, a construction management company (which saw significant growth over a five year period from 2007 to 2012; at the end of which his contract base had a value of up to 12 million) and an interior design and project management company (Asia Decor) which imported interior design products from Germany, Korea and the United States. In addition to importing goods, Asia Decor diversified into the Construction Project Management industry and at the time he had to evacuate, his company employed 17 interior architects, 5 site managers, 6 carpenters and sub-contracted several civil and electrical engineers for various construction projects. Asia Decor had built a strong reputation for quality and had plans to expand into Dubai prior to the 2021 insurgency.

When Wahid speaks of his past experiences he understands that the businesses he built in Afghanistan had significant economic potential, but can clearly see that the lack of safety and the political instability of his home country meant limited growth and long term viability. He is hopeful that the endeavours he pursues in NZ can be different. Wahid is clearly passionate about entrepreneurship as his face lights up with pride and enthusiasm speaking about his past business ventures.

#### MOTIVATION TO START A BUSINESS

Wahid's main motivations to start a business in NZ are to create work and stability for his family, and to also have the flexibility to attend to his family's needs such as transporting them to school and English classes. He is also a leader and entrepreneur at heart, and cannot really be put into the 'box' of a full time employee; it would break his spirit. His new life as a forced migrant is not like in Afghanistan where he was at work 7am-7pm with others helping his family. He now has a limited support system and is the only fluent English speaker and driver, making him the main communicator, interpreter and transporter for all of his family's needs.

He is keen to learn about the NZ system of business, particularly tax and import compliance. Wahid sees in NZ an opportunity to do something different here, as he did in Afghanistan. He understands that to be an entrepreneur in the global market he needs to be fluent in English. To improve his English and gain confidence, Wahid studies English with English Language Partners in the evenings.

#### WAHID'S POTENTIAL AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS IN NZ

Wahid has found the NEST programme really helps him understand NZ. It has been insightful and a great foundation for his understanding. He appreciates that the programme is accepting of his unique position as a forced migrant and his current level of English. He has seen opportunities to import products from the Middle East, particularly Turkey, Iran or UAE and has been able to research and refine his business idea.

Wahid's extensive entrepreneurial experience, skills and attitude have potential to contribute significantly to our local economy. The kind of industries and businesses he has been involved in (importing and construction) make his specific skills set and experiences relevant and transferable to the NZ market.

In ten years time, Wahid sees something special for himself in NZ. He is intentional about creating a life in NZ that is both full and meaningful for himself and his family. He aspires to create a business that he is passionate about and that will create jobs for his whole family and others. He has to be the owner of his own business and needs to be a leader in order to feel true fulfilment. While enthusiastic, Wahid is aware he needs to be careful about the risk of creating a new business in a new environment and potentially coming off government support too soon. Overall, he is hopeful about his future and optimistic about having a business in a country with economic stability.

## Insights and Key Learnings so far

This section outlines the results of research conducted by University of Otago's STARlab during Year 2 of the Iti Rearea Collective's three-year pilot. This mixed-methods research supports the work of IRC by providing independent, empirical data to inform our understanding of the participants' experiences and the programmes effectiveness. In Year 1, research results lead to important programmatic changes, such as a focus on founder wellbeing, connection to English learning resources, and intentional integration into the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem in Auckland.

The quantitative and qualitative results of Year 2's research further underscore the important, unique service that IRC is providing to resettled refugees - entrepreneurial education, mentoring, community - which were not available for participants prior to the creation of the NEST and SOAR programmes. Participants in this research were realistic but hopeful, recognising the challenges in being self-employed but also determined to achieve their goal of business-ownership.

One participant put it best when she said:

“Different country, different environment, different rules – New life, new opportunity, new language.”

## QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

The nature of entrepreneurial programmes, including those that serve clients from marginalised communities, is that not everyone will end up building a high-performing business. Entrepreneurs from any background compete in an open economic market. While the distinctive skills and products that refugee background entrepreneurs bring to that market often provide a competitive advantage, there will still be many NEST and SOAR participants who do not end up creating a profitable business. However, this does not equate to a failure of the programme. Entrepreneurship programmes are valuable beyond their capacity to create new ventures and new jobs. We consider the development of an entrepreneurial mindset, potential for empowerment, and other non-economic impacts to be important outcomes for Iti Rearea Collective’s programming. Thus, IRC’s research and evaluation aims to identify and measure hypothesised secondary impacts, namely Entrepreneurial Self Efficacy, Resilience, and Wellbeing. The scales used in the quantitative research for Years 1 and 2 are outlined in the table below.

### OUR THREE MEANS OF TESTING

CONSTRUCT	VALIDATED SCALE	DESCRIPTION
Entrepreneurial Self Efficacy	<i>Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy Scale</i>	The ESE was developed to measure a person’s belief in their capacity to take action and attain their goal, specifically on actions considered foundational to new venture creation. The scale has been validated for use with migrant populations, and was thus deemed appropriate for use in this evaluation by its creator.
Resilience	<i>Brief Resilience Scale</i>	The Brief Resilience Scale was developed to measure a person’s perception of their ability to recover or “bounce back” after a stressful event. This scale is widely accepted as a valid measure of resilience.
Wellbeing	<i>Personal Wellbeing Index – Adult</i>	The PWI-A measures a person’s life satisfaction across multiple domains, and was developed by the International Wellbeing Group and the Australian Centre on Quality of Life to be used with diverse populations.

## ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF EFFICACY

The 2022 results of the Entrepreneurial Self Efficacy survey continue to show a statistically significant increase, building on the strong results from 2021. Participants in 2022 showed the largest increases in perceived ability to find necessary capital, estimate startup funds, and recognise entrepreneurial opportunity. This overlaps with increases shown in 2021, albeit at a more modest level.

## RESILIENCE

The Brief Resilience Scale asks participants several questions about their perception of their ability to bounce-back or recover from setbacks or stress. In the 2022 cohort, there was a small overall average increase in resilience (0.1). The 2021 cohort showed an average decrease on this scale, which was hypothesised to be due to external environment, namely the COVID-19 lockdown that occurred during the programme.

“The results of the 2022 cohort are promising; in post testing, participants reported a marked average increase in their ability to “snap back when something bad happens (+0.67)” and not “taking a long time to get over set-backs in my life (+0.33).”

## WELLNESS

The wellness measure asks questions about satisfaction in different areas of the participant’s life. “How satisfied are you with your life as a whole?” In 2021, there was an average +1.0 increase in the post-test responses. The results in 2022 showed an even stronger increase, with an average of +3.0.

## CONCLUSION

The results presented here provide compelling evidence that NEST and SOAR have positive impacts on participants’ self-efficacy, resilience, and overall wellness. While these results are not conclusive due to the limited dataset, the year on year parallels establish an encouraging pattern of positive impact that will be further evaluated in Year 3. As noted in the Year 1 evaluation, a demographically matched control group would provide an important baseline against which these results could be interpreted. IRC’s strategic leadership is exploring the feasibility of a control group for Year 3. In addition, we would like to undertake a longitudinal assessment using these surveys at 6 and 12 months post-intervention, to explore NEST and SOAR’s potential long term impacts on self-efficacy, resilience, and wellness for participants, their whānau and the wider community.

The resulting four themes have been found in our ongoing research:

## Building Community, Establishing Independence, Increasing Responsibility, and Developing Confidence.

The themes from this analysis were strongly cohesive, and provided additional depth to the areas covered in the Year 1 interviews. Participants explained that their efforts to build a business were tied to the idea of building a community. As one participant put it: “it’s not just the restaurant – it’s building community.” Participants also communicated that independence was an important goal as founders, and that they wanted to avoid being dependent financially. This was further underlined by a thematic area relating to the increased responsibility they felt as new founders, where their efforts were directly tied to the outcomes they would see.

By far the strongest theme to emerge from the interviews was a focus on confidence during IRC’s programmes. This is articulated by a participant who summed up her personal growth in the programme as “feeling confident and feeling comfortable and feeling integrated.”

### 1. BUILDING COMMUNITY

There were two aspects of community building that emerged from the qualitative analysis. First, participants related that they felt IRC worked to build a supportive community with their programmes, where participants felt valued and understood. As one participant stated:

**“Something which is really, really great about this programme is that they make people to feel that they are important.”**

This speaks directly to the core values of IRC facilitators who engage with participants as founders who can make a positive impact with their skills. In addition to participants’ appreciation for the supportive entrepreneurship community that IRC has developed, they also related how they understand their own businesses to contribute to community building. In particular, several participants who spoke to their desire to create community with their work, such as one participant who said: **“I think actually that no matter what are the differences of culture, of people, but food can, food and music can bring people together, even if they don’t understand the language, but the music will soften everything and the food will, will bring people closer.”** It is well established that SME’s contribute to the creation of strong local communities (Cornwall, 1998; Fitzgerald & Muske, 2016). These responses underscore participants’ interest in using their new ventures as avenues for the creation of positive community engagement.

### 2. ESTABLISHING INDEPENDENCE

Participants also spoke to the importance of establishing their own independence through entrepreneurship. This is of particular note as the majority of NEST and SOAR participants currently receive government benefits. For the participants, independence was associated with safety. As one participant stated:

**“This has always been my dream. I always wanted to stand on my own feet and not being dependent on anyone because when you are dependent on someone if that person for any reason is not around, you cannot survive.”**

The ideas of personal and economic independence were overlapped for participants; Economic independence was viewed as a means to secure what one participant called a “good life”: **“I would like to live a good life. I do not want to be to regret in the future. I always want to tell myself that yes, you have done everything properly in your life.”** There is consensus that economic independence through work is a critical pathway to socio-economic integration for many resettled refugees (Anger & Strang, 2008). Participants in these interviews shared that the programmes offered by Iti Rearea Collective supported their pursuit of economic independence through self-employment. In particular, the option of entrepreneurship motivated them to work towards this kind of independence.

### 3. INCREASING RESPONSIBILITY

The reality of starting a business includes the recognition of an increase in responsibility. As a founder, participants are responsible for all aspects of their business's success. This can feel like a heavy burden, in particular for founders with cultural obligations to family and community.

**“Now starting on business, we will be the one who are dealing with the clients and then you know, who are the complaints or you know ... it will be on our shoulder, that responsibility will be on our shoulders.”**

This increase in responsibility was not seen as net negative by interview participants; rather they understood it as an inevitability for anyone operating a business. However, more recently research has focused on entrepreneur Mental Health and Wellbeing (MWB), impacts of the challenges founders face, and the impacts on venture success, founder wellbeing, and family wellbeing (Stephan, 2018). In this study, some participants linked the increase in responsibility with stress. As one participant stated:

**“I try no stress, because stress not help... If, if I stress, my children stress and I cannot afford that because children eyes on me and follow me.”** This underscores the importance of the community Ite Rearea Collective has built to support programme participants as they continue their entrepreneurial journey.

### 4. DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE

The strongest theme throughout the interviews was Developing Confidence. Participants uniformly related that their experiences in NEST or SOAR led to an increase in their confidence interacting with people outside of their social circles. As one participant stated:

**“I knew that I was capable of running this business and I knew that I have a good idea and I had lots of experience in this field. However, I didn't know how to sell myself I didn't know how to present myself.”**

This illustrates a common theme that participants were unsure how to communicate their abilities to potential customers or suppliers. Much of this was due to the vast differences in business culture between participants' country of origin and Aotearoa New Zealand. It was important that participants felt confident that they were expressing themselves in socially acceptable ways. One participant explained: **“I learned ... that I should not wait for the others to understand. I have to present myself in the most appropriate way to tell them that I'm talented and I have this capability and I have this idea and I'm a capable person.”** Understanding that a direct, informative approach communicated her capability allowed her to feel comfortable engaging with, and selling to, customers in a new and effective way.

For other participants, achieving long dreamed of goals led to a deep sense of personal satisfaction and confidence. This is strongly articulated by one participant who shared:

**“My objective was to legalise my kitchen and I achieved that... it was the best thing that could happen to me it was a dream that I've had for 12 years and I've managed to achieve that, to get that goal. The day that we got the approval, I had tears down my face and I was thinking, I made it, I made it, I made it!”**

In this example, working with the NEST and SOAR programmes connected the participant to the missing information and connections she needed to take these specific steps. In addition, having IRC facilitators and mentors to walk alongside her ensured that she felt secure enough to do so. The importance of IRC's staff and community was also appreciated by this participant, who benefited from hearing about others' challenges: **“It boosts my confidence a lot ... to be in an environment where you're not alone, and other people are starting businesses as well. Meeting, hearing the same challenges or even different challenges to other people is actually good, make you feel that you're not alone and that you're not crazy when you're facing all these things.”**



The results presented here illustrate a dynamic and capable cohort of nascent entrepreneurs in the midst of their founders' journeys. Looking holistically across the quantitative and qualitative results, IRC's programmes benefit participants by creating a supportive community for a population that has heretofore been largely excluded from entrepreneurship in Auckland. The broad yet modest increases in resilience and wellness demonstrate that the programmes are able to preserve participants' wellbeing while at the same time challenging them to learn new skills, take calculated risks, and interact with new groups of people. Because of the stress associated with entrepreneurial activity, especially for founders with limited English language ability, any increase should be viewed as a success in developing healthy entrepreneurial behaviours. The increases in Entrepreneurial Self Efficacy are even more compelling, especially given the most recent cohort's initial high level of ESE. These results are further scaffolded by the strong theme, Developing Confidence, in the qualitative interviews. Participants related stories of achieving hard won entrepreneurship goals through extending their networks, learning about kiwi business culture, and communicating their own unique capabilities. These efforts are underscored by participants' desire to assume responsibility and seek independence; not alone but through the co-creation of supportive communities. Business creation for IRC participants is a goal, but is not a guarantee as their ventures compete with other businesses in an open economic market. However, participants are keen to establish themselves as founders.

As one participant aptly put:

“The only way to find out if it's going to be a success is if I give it a try.”

### Dissemination of Results

The research co-occurring with NEST and SOAR has generated new knowledge situated in the lived experiences of Iti Rearea Collective's programme participants. The unique structure, approach, and design of the programmes, in addition to the participants' experiences are important to share with other academics and practitioners working in this space. Because of this, the research is currently being prepared for dissemination in multiple channels to audiences beyond the primary stakeholders in Auckland and New Zealand.

Dr. Kaloga presented IRC's innovative collective governance model at AUT's Refugee Journeys Symposium – Celebrating diversity, participation, and future thinking in November of 2022, entitled Iti Rearea Collective: Using the Constellation Model to Enable Systemic Change that Supports Entrepreneurship in Resettled Refugee Populations. She has submitted an abstract on this topic to The Journal for Community Practice's special issue on Community Collaboration. In addition her proposal, Integrating design thinking and evidence-based practice to develop entrepreneurship support for resettled refugees, was selected to be expanded into a chapter for a forthcoming edited volume, Refugee Entrepreneurship: A Research Companion, which will be published by Routledge. The STARlab team is also working on a manuscript focusing on the qualitative analysis presented here, to be submitted to the Entrepreneurship and Regional Development Journal. These outputs will rigorously document the work of IRC partners, STARlab researchers, and NEST & SOAR participants, establishing Iti Rearea Collective as a thought leader in the resettled refugee entrepreneurship sector.

### Year 3

In Year 3, there will be several changes in the research activities. Based on the richness of qualitative data from Years 1 and 2, we will not need to collect an additional 20 interviews with participants. Rather, we will interview both participants and organisational partners to ensure that the experiences of collective governance are explored during the pilot phase. A key focus of IRC is addressing systemic barriers; in Year 2 the leadership team noted that we had begun to identify specific levers of change. It will be important in Year 3 to evaluate IRC's engagement in these areas, and any demonstrated or developing systemic impacts generated from these actions. A third objective is to contribute to the small emerging group of refugee entrepreneurship scholars in New Zealand. STARlab has already established relationships, and the group intends to meet regularly in 2023 to explore synergies and collaborations.

We would love to celebrate and shine a spotlight on a few of our successful entrepreneurs who have graduated from our programmes. Their resilience, ambition and passion has been most inspiring and we are privileged to be journeying alongside them and learning how to tailor to their needs.

## PARI QASEDAK KITCHEN

MIDDLE EASTERN CUISINE

Pari resettled to NZ in 2019 from Afghanistan via Indonesia with her husband and three children. She has a huge passion for food saying that “here in NZ, when I am cooking any type of food, especially the ones I am familiar with, they are the ones that I have memories of, cooking makes me feel good about my life.” Pari specialises in both Afghani and Iranian food. When she first arrived, she often cooked for friends who encouraged her to sell her food. When Pari cooks, she feels she is able to express her true identity. “When I cook my own country’s food, I feel like I can be myself here. My true Afghan self. Because there have been stages in my life where I shouldn’t have shown where I was from and who I was.”



Although Pari had been a professional cook in Indonesia she didn’t know much about doing business in NZ and had no understanding of the tax system or food compliance. In July 2021 Pari was referred to our NEST programme by Belong Aotearoa after she had completed the WISE catering course.

During the NEST programme, Pari developed her business brand and strategy and acquired the business knowledge and confidence to launch her home catering business. Pari progressed to our SOAR programme in March 2022 where she received her food registration, grew her social media presence and set up an online food ordering system to expand her customer base beyond personal networks. Pari’s reputation for being a top quality chef also spread quickly within the Afghan and Iranian communities especially during Ramadan, and since then, she has been fulfilling large catering orders for functions and events most weekends.

Pari is generating a steady income to help support her family and dreams of having her own restaurant one day. Her daughter participated in our social media internship and now supports Pari with managing her online marketing and processing orders. Pari’s business, Qasedak Kitchen was featured on the Chasing a Plate Youtube channel in August 2022 and has received over 6000 views. We are so proud of Pari and what she has been able to achieve in such a short span of time in NZ!



## GLEIDES MI CASA ES SU CASA

COLOMBIAN CUISINE

Gleides resettled to NZ with her four children from Ecuador in 2010, after fleeing from Colombia. She has been cooking since she was 11 years old when she helped her mother cook and sell food at local markets and on tourist buses to support their family. With over 35 years of culinary experience, Gleides's dream has long been to have a Colombian cuisine restaurant in NZ, but she had no idea where to start.

Gleides joined our NEST programme in July 2021 where she developed her business knowledge and business plan for Mi Casa Es Su Casa. In March 2022, she progressed to our SOAR programme where despite facing several personal challenges, she persevered and was able to refine her business plan and apply for her food registration for her home based business. She also grew from an informal Whatsapp customer group to having a social media presence and online food ordering system.



Gleides currently serves customers mainly from her Colombian community on a regular basis. The joy her food brings to her own Colombian community further illustrates the value of a programme like ours which not only creates a livelihood, but also a valuable connection for their customers in the wider resettled community to their own home countries that they were once forced to flee. Gleides quotes she has “seen many tears in people’s eyes when they try my food and they say ‘Whoa, Gleides, this is Colombia’.” She describes Mi Casa Es Su Casa as “a small place where everyone can find their Grandma’s house when they arrive...where that authentic flavour in the house takes you straight back.”

Not only has Gleides created a business supporting her passion for Colombian food and culture, but she has also created social cohesion and a sense of belonging for her Colombian community in NZ with her thriving hospitality and infectious personality. We are so proud of what Gleide is building and her contribution to our NZ society and economy.

# BERI BERI BEAUTY

HAIRDRESSING



Beri arrived in NZ from Peru six years ago for her 30th birthday, on a working holiday. She had planned to travel to other parts of the world but she fell in love with NZ and decided it was her home. Beri is now a permanent resident and is excited about gaining her citizenship in the near future. She started working as a nanny and then began hairdressing, utilising her 15 years of experience which she attributes to her mother who first taught her at the age of 16.

In early 2021 Beri took a leap of faith and registered her company Beri Beauty, began renting a studio chair in Mt Eden, but she really needed guidance on how to operate a business in NZ. Beri heard about our programmes from a Latino friend who told her that it was a welcoming environment for people who were “not kiwi’s” and struggled with English as a second language.

Beri says she found the SOAR programme motivating, encouraging and that it gave her the confidence and push she needed to seek out more clients and to establish her brand. She found the Auckland extended lockdown very challenging as the coaching was online and not face to face, which was a lot harder for her to learn. What she most appreciated was having a business coach who really pushed her. “She (business coach) was strict and competitive and this was exactly what I needed. We remain friends to this day. She also speaks a little Spanish so together we talk English and Spanish and practice.” SOAR helped to grow her client base and now she does very little marketing as word of mouth and client referrals sustain her business.

Beri recently had a health scare. It has made her realise how important work-life balance is and how much she values her life here in NZ. She feels lucky to have such flexibility with her work and how her business has carried her through this adversity.

Beri is one of only a few specialist Latina hairdressers in Auckland, and together with her clients they speak Spanish in the salon. She has captured a niche market as she understands the unique requirements of Latina hair and skin colour, the process to dye this kind of hair and how it is different from other ethnicities. Beri is an example of the value that our former refugee and migrant communities bring to NZ with their global experience, unique skills and cultural background. We are so proud of her!





WITH MINISTER RADHAKRISHNAN AND ADVISORY GROUP MEMBER AYAN SAID AT THE AUCKLAND ETHNIC WOMEN'S FORUM MARCH 2021



ADVERTISING NEST IN THE COMMUNITY MARCH 2021



ITI REAREA COLLECTIVE LAUNCH EVENT APRIL 2021



NEST PROGRAMME GRADUATION JUNE 2021

**#HEARD**  
 people who have lived experience  
 as forced migrants or former refugees  
 are at the decision making table,  
 and are co-design and re-design partners

ATTENDING THE TŪMANAKO SUMMIT JUNE 2021



SOAR BUSINESS COACHING SESSION JULY 2021



NEST BUSINESS WORKSHOP JULY 2021



PROJECT LEAD WITH NGĀ TĀNGATA MICROFINANCE GENERAL MANAGER AT THE TOITŪ TAHUA: CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE FINANCE INCLUSION SUMMIT JULY 2022



SOAR PROGRAMME GRADUATION JULY 2022



LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING SEPTEMBER 2022

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NEST COHORT GRADUATION DEC 2022



# ITI REAREA COLLECTIVE

DIGNITY • EQUITY • OPPORTUNITY

**Thank you!**

Please get in touch with Lisa Lopeti (Project Lead) for any inquiries.

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