

A boxing programme delivered in schools that develops life skills and promotes self-esteem.

[The academy teaches] respect, responsibility, resilience, and rangatira as a leader. So [it] wasn't something that was just, let's come in and give [rangatahi] some exercise, there was a purpose behind it. (School Teacher)

West Auckland Boxing Academy delivers boxing lessons in schools with the support of Tū Manawa funding and Sport Waitākere. The boxing lessons aim to get tamariki and rangatahi physically active and build their self-esteem, confidence and ability to communicate with others.

The lessons are delivered in schools for tamariki and rangatahi aged nine to eighteen. Tū Manawa helped West Auckland Boxing Academy cover the costs of delivery including the two coaches and setting up the equipment at schools.

Active Recreation

Tamariki (5-11)

Rangatahi (12-18)



Outcomes

Access to play, active recreation or sport opportunities

Access to culture and language - Māori and other cultures

Improved physical skills

Improved confidence

How the outcomes were achieved

- Access to a safe/familiar environment
- Access to the necessary equipment
- Access to a trained instructor/coach
- Access to knowledge about the opportunity
- Reduced geographic barriers

- Inclusion of participants who identify as part of the culture
- Activities that include cultural components
- Governed, managed and/or delivered by whānau, hapū and iwi

- Practicing physical skills
- Guidance from trained coaches
- Access to equipment
- Learning about the skill

- Activities that promote increased self-esteem
- Provision of a space without fear of discrimination
- Activities that promote inclusion and peer acceptance



What was the need?

West Auckland Boxing Academy identified a need for an accessible active recreation opportunity for tamariki and rangatahi without the need for transportation or large fees.

There's hundreds of things to do in Auckland which require a lot of money. For a lot of our families, just getting from [one location] to [another location] is an issue, or putting food on the tables. (Project lead)

Many of the tamariki and rangatahi in their community do not get the chance to participate in active recreation opportunities.

Many of [our rangatahi] get lost in the mix of family and work [...] they don't stand out on their own. I want for our younger ones to do something that's for them, an activity that they enjoy, meet new people, and learn about being fit, learn about sharing and caring. (Project lead)

How was their application process?

West Auckland Boxing Academy met with Sport Waitākere to discuss Tū Manawa before submitting their application.

I met with a couple of the [Sport Waitākere] team to discuss what the process was, but also what they would fund or what they couldn't fund. (Project lead)

Sport Waitākere were happy to support West Auckland Boxing Academy to apply and thought what they wanted to do aligned well with their strategy as an RST.

Our strategy is to work with our tamariki and rangatahi [...] They are focusing on providing opportunities for those who are missing out, which is also something that was part of our strategic plan. (RST Tū Manawa lead)

What is the West Auckland Boxing Academy?

The West Auckland Boxing Academy provides a space for building fitness and skills that rangatahi feel safe and comfortable in. They partnered with three schools to deliver their free boxing lessons.

For [our participants], being able to come to a place where they feel safe, comfortable, and where they can have a conversation with someone that they know and trust, is just as important as the actual boxing. (Project lead)

The lessons for rangatahi range from learning the fundamentals of boxing to competitor's groups. Younger tamariki participate in fun activities and games that emphasise collective goals.

So for the younger ones, it's a lot of games, it's a lot of fun, it's a lot of activities that actually make them work alongside each other and work together to make things happen. (Project lead)

The boxing lessons were delivered during lunch time and after school. The boxing programme fits well with schools' strategies to provide young people with a safe environment to be physically active.

[The programme] fits really nicely with schools, physical and activity plans, and it's not sparing or one-on-one boxing. (Project lead)

What's next?

Tū Manawa enabled West Auckland Boxing Academy to deliver their boxing lessons. However, they partially rely on their own funding to deliver their lessons but are still keen to continue to support their participants regardless of the cost.

I think at the end of the day, for us, it's more about physical activity and seeing more young people become active, more than it is about money. (Project lead)

The difference West Auckland Boxing Academy made

Who participated?

More than 60 tamariki and rangatahi have participated in the West Auckland Boxing Academy. Participant ages ranged from 9 to 18 years and around two-thirds were male (65%) and one-third female (35%). The majority (86%) of participants were Māori and Pasifika.

What did coaches think?

The head coach believed the programme provided tamariki and rangatahi an opportunity to participate in a fun physical activity, as most of them were not involved in organised sports.

I would almost say all of [our participants] are not involved in any kind of formal sport. And so this is kind of their chance to get physically active. Because we do physical activity in such a fun way, they often don't see it as kind of exercising but rather just having fun. (Head coach)

The programme also encourages rangatahi to reflect on issues around masculinity and violence.

One guy wanted to do boxing because his stepfather values violence [...] Over the weeks we've seen his thoughts on what it is to be a man [being] challenged, and he really respected the boxing coach and heard [the coach] talk about how we love boxing, but violence is something that doesn't have a place in our gym or in our lives. (Head coach)

What did teachers think?

One of the school teachers believed the programme was well-organised and inclusive. They were glad to see rangatahi enthusiastic about the programme.

I felt [the boxing programme] was very inclusive. A lot of it was barrier breaking, there was people that you didn't expect them to want to be part of that. And actually, you can see them getting in [...] Kids that were not normally you would associate active participants in sports or other energetic activities wanted to be part of the program. So which is really, really good. (School teacher)

They also appreciated being able to have the programme located at their school.

I really benefited from [the boxing programme] and I was pleased that we actually were able to participate in the programme overall [...] and we're grateful for [Tū Manawa] because [the boxing programme] is something that we would probably not have been able to do without that funding. (School teacher)

Access to play, active recreation or sport opportunities

West Auckland Boxing Academy provide a familiar environment, trained coaches and the necessary equipment to participate.

We take all of the equipment that we need with us, and run the programme with the young people in the school. So [whānau] are not worried about transport, there's already built-in supervision, health and safety. And the young people just get to join in. (Project lead)

They also remove the need for whānau to transport their rangatahi through delivering during school time.

It doesn't become a hassle for mum and dad. It doesn't become a hassle outside of school hours. (Project lead)

Access to culture and language - Māori and other cultures

West Auckland Boxing Academy deliver their boxing lessons at a local kura kaupapa.

We do work really closely with te kura kaupapa. We run a class specifically with a Māori kura school and we work closely with the marae. (Project lead)

The boxing lessons are delivered by Māori and West Auckland Boxing Academy is governed by Māori.

The coach is Māori and the board is Māori. (Project lead)

They also encourage participants of other cultures to learn about and embrace their own cultural identity.

[Our programme] includes who they are and where they stay, where they fit in the world [...] We want to acknowledge that they are Māori, Samoan, Fijian, Indian or Fijian Indian, and we are also looking at how we can offer opportunities that take them a little bit out of their comfort zone. (Project lead)

Improved physical skills

Participants of West Auckland Boxing Academy learn new physical skills through practice, guidance and encouragement from peers

[One of our participants] couldn't skip. He was so awkward and he just couldn't get it. And all the kids were [cheering for him and supporting him], and he can skip now. He actually needed someone to show him, someone to work with him, someone to stand beside him, and someone to ask to turn the rope and just get him to jump in time. (Project lead)

Improved confidence

The programme helps young people to increase their confidence through group activities.

[One of our participants] was just too shy to do [the finishing exercise], because she has to count to ten... But over the weeks, she just kind of came out of her shell. And by the end, she's one of the most loud confident people calling out her ten, and that may not seem like a big thing, but for her, to speak in front of a group or to do anything like that at the beginning of class, there's no way. (Head coach)

A school teacher noticed increased confidence for both girls and boys through their participation in the West Auckland Boxing Academy.

There's a few [students] actually [that have increased their confidence], and I would say it was generally girls, but there's also a young Samoan boy who is still in my learning space, he lacks a great deal of confidence [...] and I was worried that he might be reluctant to participate, but whenever [I] go down [I can] see he was giving his all, so that's really positive. (School teacher)