**Nomination Example Aroha Wilson**

**Leadership**

Currently **Chief Executive of Urban Youth Arts Trust**, Aroha leads one of the largest youth arts organisations in Aotearoa, reaching over 10,000 young people annually through visual arts, performance, and digital storytelling programmes across Te Whanganui-a-Tara. Aroha is the first Māori woman to hold this role in the Trust’s 30-year history.

With over 80% of programme participants identifying as Māori or Pasifika, Aroha has transformed the Trust's approach to equity, embedding cultural leadership and pastoral support across all operations. Under her leadership, the Trust now delivers wraparound services that support participants not only in their creative growth but also in educational pathways, wellbeing, and leadership development.

The Trust’s kaupapa, *"Empowering Expression, Transforming Futures"*, reflects Aroha’s vision of nurturing talent as a catalyst for broader social change. Her strategic direction over the past five years has deepened community partnerships, secured multi-year investment from philanthropic and corporate partners, and expanded the Trust’s reach into under-served neighbourhoods.

**Influence**

Aroha’s commitment to growing others is evident in her mentoring of emerging arts leaders and development of a new leadership pipeline within the Trust—one that reflects the communities it serves. She has recruited a diverse, intergenerational leadership team that centres equity, collaboration, and creativity.

Through her advocacy, youth artists are now regularly featured in national exhibitions, media, and storytelling campaigns, reshaping public narratives about rangatahi potential. Aroha also sits on two national advisory panels for youth and arts development, helping shape sector funding and innovation strategies.

Her efforts have led to partnerships with universities and arts institutions, providing pathways to higher education and careers in the creative industries for young Māori and Pasifika talent.

**Impact**

Prior to joining the Trust, Aroha held senior roles in community-led innovation and public sector transformation, including as a Programme Lead for Social Impact at a Crown Entity, and Director of Engagement for a nationwide digital inclusion initiative. Her career has been defined by bridging systems and communities, with a focus on equity, identity, and belonging.

Her appointment as CEO marked a major milestone for the sector and she continues to use her platform to champion gender equity, Indigenous leadership, and youth voice. A regular speaker at conferences, schools, and business forums, Aroha is widely recognised for her mana-enhancing leadership and her ability to shift hearts and minds.

**Additional Information**

Aroha is a proud mother, a kapa haka performer, and an active contributor to kaupapa Māori initiatives. Her leadership style is inclusive, grounded, and future-focused—driven by deep purpose and unwavering belief in the power of people. Aroha would be a natural and impactful addition to the Global Women network.