

TE AO KI TE PŌ

Rangatahi Voices: A Māori Perspective on Recreation

From: Ben Whitaker, supported by Recreation Aotearoa

He Whakamihi / Acknowledgments

E poupouā ngā mihi ki te taiao, ki
ngā kura o ēnei kaupapa

tae atu rā ki te kawa o Hine te Rēhia

Te kawa i whakahari i te tīnana

Tākina te kawa kia tū, kia rongō nā
rāua e whakataurite ai i te kaupapa

Ko Tāne-te-waiora, ko Tāne-
whakapiripiri,

Nā Waiti, nā Waita, nā Maru, nā
Parawhenua-mea, nā Tangaroa I
whakaterere ai i ngā kaupapa nei.

oi, oi, ki te hoe!

Tipatapata ki Hokianga-whakapau-
karakia, ki te Punawai-o-te-Ao-
Marama, ki Te Whare o Tangaroa.
Mātai-rangi, Mātai-nuku, Mātai-uta,
Mātai-tai! Ki te tai timu, tai pari,
taiaha e!

Poi atu taku poi ki Te Oranga Kaiora,
ki te moutere o Waiheke o Tama-te-
kapua. E hora atu ngā wai hotuhotu
o Tikapakapa Moana. Hei oranga
Moana, hei oranga tangata!

Tū tonu mai ki te Kura o Mangakino,
te kura o te ngāhere, ki te pā
harakeke e puawai ngā rito.

Kia mau, kia ita ki te hoe

Whai ai te awa tipuna ki uta, ko te
awa Waikato, he piko, he taniwha!

Tau ana taku poi ki te Roto-rua-a-
Kahu-mata-moemoe. E tere ana ngā
wai pūhorohoro a te waka Hei Matau.
He waka takere e tārai ana ngā
kōhine pukenga.

Koia!

We acknowledge the projects, and
the treasures of these initiatives.

We arrive to Hine Te Rēhia, the law
that excites the human, uttering the
customs towards Tū, to Rongō they
who balance out these projects.

The many forms of water from Waiti,
to Waitā, Maru, Parawhenua-mea, to
Tangaroa. My feet pitter patter to
Hokianga whakapau karakia, my poi
flies to Waiheke to He Oranga Kaiora.
Still standing at Mangakino, where
the school meets the forest, a pā
harakeke that nourishes its young.
My Poi lands in Rotorua, where the
swift water carries Hei Matau
paddlers.

It is indeed!

‘Te Ao Ki Te Pō’ From the Known to the Unknown: This phrase suggests a journey from what is familiar (Te Ao, the world as we know it) into the realm of the unknown (Te Pō, often associated, mystery, or the spiritual realm). This title implies a process of exploration, discovery, and deep learning. It's about moving beyond the familiar to gain a deeper understanding of the world, including its spiritual and metaphysical aspects.

Rārangi Take / Contents

1. Te Pūtake / Introduction
 - 1.1. Kaiarotake: A Māori Lens on Evaluation
 - 1.2. Te Ao Māori and Recreation: A Conceptual Framework
 - 1.3. Research Methodology and Limitations
2. Te Whetū Rehua: A Māori Evaluation Framework
 - 2.1. Overview of Te Whetū Rehua
 - 2.2. Application of Te Whetū Rehua to the Case Studies
 - 2.3. Te Whetū Rehua and the Diversity of Recreation
3. Case Studies: Māori-Led Recreation Initiatives
 - 3.1. Case Study 1: Hokianga Sports Club - Te Whare o Tangaroa
 - 3.2. Case Study 2: Harbour Sport - Te Oranga Kaiora
 - 3.3. Case Study 3: Hei Matau Paddlers - Kōhine Programme
 - 3.4. Case Study 4: Mangakino School - Bush School
4. Key Themes and Findings
 - 4.1. Whakapapa and Cultural Connection
 - 4.2. Manukura and Leadership
 - 4.3. Whānau-Centred Approach
 - 4.4. Oranga / Holistic wellbeing
5. Te Reo o te Rangatahi
6. Te Whetū Rehua as a Catalyst for Change
7. Conclusions and Recommendations
8. References
9. Glossary of Te Reo Terms
10. Appendix

1. Te Pūtake / Introduction

This report presents a tūhuratanga/exploration of Māori-led recreation kaupapa/initiatives supported by funding from He Puna Korikori and delivered by Tāngata Whenua providers for rangatahi Māori.

It focuses on the experiences of rangatahi and aims to illuminate the impact of these programmes on young Māori, showcase the approaches used by Tāngata Whenua programme providers, and identify systemic and institutional barriers that hinder programme/kaupapa delivery and outcomes.

This report aims to challenge conventional paradigms of recreation and demonstrate the potential and benefits to rangatahi of Māori-centric approaches to recreation. By sharing these insights, it is hoped that this research will inspire and inform the recreation sector, encouraging support and development of new programmes and initiatives targeting rangatahi Māori.

The following chapters delve into the methodologies used and provide insights from evaluation undertaken for four He Puna Korikori funded programmes.

Key themes and findings are presented along with recommendations for future decision-making on system and programme design and funding.

He Puna Korikori was established by Recreation Aotearoa with funding and support from Sport New Zealand/Ihi Aotearoa. Initially called the “Outdoor Activity Fund” it aims to support recreation opportunities for targeted communities such as rangatahi, tangata Pasifika, Women and girls, migrant communities, whānau haua and tāngata whaikaha (disabled people or people with disabilities).

For the past three years, Recreation Aotearoa has administered the fund using a Te Tiriti-centred approach whereby 50% of funding is allocated to Māori communities (Tāngata Whenua) and 50% to non-Māori communities (Tāngata Tiriti).

He Puna Korikori Funding ended in April 2024.

1.1 Kaiarotake: A Māori Lens on Evaluation

Central to this research is the concept of Kaiarotake – a Te Ao Māori approach to evaluation.

A Kaiarotake is an evaluator with a deep understanding and knowledge of Mātauranga Māori, and the ability to carry out their work using Māori values, principles and approaches.

A Kaiarotake, brings a holistic, culturally grounded perspective that encompasses the interconnectedness of our wairua, tinana and whakapapa to places and spaces. Through a Mātauranga Māori lens, the Kaiarotake evaluates the impact of a programme, by connecting to the kaupapa and building strong relationships that result in enriched communication and understanding.

A Kaiarotake role was created to ensure that this project was conducted in a culturally responsive way, grounded in whakapapa and Te Ao Māori.

The Kaiarotake sought to capture the essence of the kaupapa, going beyond surface-level observations to uncover the ngako of Māori-led recreation and identify challenges faced by both rangatahi and Tāngata whenua programme providers. This required a deep understanding of Māori philosophies and worldviews, which are not always well understood or appreciated in mainstream evaluation practices.

This work was made possible by the support from Sport New Zealand, and the Active Recreation team.



1.2 Te Ao Māori and Recreation: A Conceptual Framework

Te Ao Māori offers a unique lens through which to understand recreation, emphasising interconnectedness, balance, and harmony with the natural world. This contrasts with Western concepts of recreation which are often more individually, and activity focused.

Recreation as Te Whai Oranga

The Māori concept Te Whai Oranga – the pursuit of wellbeing – provides a framework for understanding recreation. This perspective extends beyond physical activity to encompass mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. It recognises recreation as fundamental to people flourishing in harmony with nature.

Time and Space

Māori concepts of time and space differ significantly from Western linear models. The Maramataka, a lunar calendar, and the cyclical nature of the natural world inform Māori understandings of time. This polychronic perspective contrasts with the Western monochronic focus on linear progression.

Similarly, Māori concepts of space are grounded in whakapapa and relationships. Land, water, and sky are interconnected and imbued with spiritual significance. This holistic view of space influences how Māori engage with the environment and participate in recreational activities.

Values and Principles

Key Māori values such as whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, wairuatanga, tinana, and hinengaro underpin Māori approaches to recreation. These values emphasise the importance of community, respect, and balance in human-environment interactions.

Knowledge and Learning

Traditional Māori knowledge systems, embodied in institutions like Whare Wānanga and Whare Tapere, demonstrate a deep integration of learning and recreation. Playful and experiential learning methods were used to transmit cultural knowledge and skills in traditional Māori society. This approach recognises the importance of holistic development and the interconnectedness of learning and living.

1.3 Research Methodology and Limitations

Research Methodology

The Kaiarotake worked directly with some of the tangata whenua specific recipients of the 2023/24 He Puna Korikori funding. The focus of this work was to capture and document their initiatives and the impact on rangatahi through videos and written case studies.

To guide the research process and ensure ethical conduct, a set of Tikanga/ethical framework were developed. See Appendix 1

In-depth exploration was undertaken with four selected He Puna Korikori funded initiatives. This included:

- **Document Analysis:** Review of project proposals, reports, and other relevant documents to gather information on program objectives, activities, and outcomes;
- **Whakawhitiwhiti kōrero:** The exchange of dialogue in structured & unstructured environments;
- **Participant Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews with rangatahi participants, program leaders, and community members to gather their perspectives on the programmes impact and alignment with Māori values;
- **Kānohi kitea:** Visiting the kaupapa, and meeting in-person with participating rangatahi and leaders of the programme.
- **Observations analysis:** Direct observation of the delivery of the programme, activities and engagement between the rangatahi, the leaders and the environment. **Kohikohi Raraunga / Data Analysis:**

The research was undertaken using the evaluation framework, [Te Whetū Rehua](#), and aimed to assess alignment with Māori values and principles. By measuring the extent to which each programme embodies Te Reo Māori me ōna Tikanga, Rangatiratanga, Taonga Tuku Iho, Whanaungatanga, and Kaitiakitanga, the research sought to gain insights into their impact on rangatahi and effectiveness in promoting Te Whai Oranga.

Data was analysed using a thematic analysis approach to identify key themes and patterns related to the impact of these programmes for rangatahi Maori.

Research Limitations

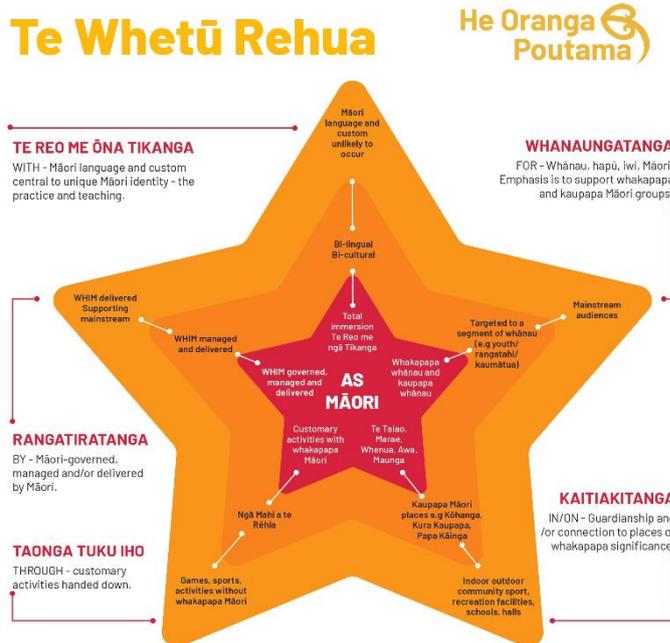
While this research provides valuable insights into Māori-led recreation initiatives, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations.

- **Sample Size:** The number of case studies were limited due to funding constraints and the capacity of the Kaiarotake and the providers.
- **Researcher Bias:** The Kaiarotake's cultural background and personal experiences may have influenced the interpretation of the data, although efforts were made to maintain objectivity and reflexivity.
- **Data Availability:** In some cases, data limitations, such as incomplete documentation or participant unavailability, may have affected the depth of analysis.

- **Focus on Māori Perspectives:** While this research prioritises Māori perspectives, it may not fully capture the experiences of non-Māori participants or the broader impact of the programs on the community.
- **Consequence of Conforming:** This is the feeling to align to normal patterns perpetuated through colonial systems, and the constant feeling of needing to assimilate Māori beliefs into a system that may not accept their ideologies or approaches around evaluation and research.
- **Translation:** The translation of Māori concepts and experiences into the English language for the purpose of this report may have resulted in some loss of nuance or accuracy. English language structures and categorisations can differ significantly from those in Te Ao Māori, potentially leading to challenges in fully capturing the richness and complexity of Māori thought.

It is important to consider these limitations when interpreting the research findings and drawing conclusions. Future research with a larger sample size and additional data sources may be necessary to further explore the impact of Māori-led recreation initiatives.

2. Whetū Rehua: A Māori Evaluation Framework



2.1 Overview of Te Whetū Rehua

Te Whetū Rehua is a framework developed by He Oranga Poutama and Sport New Zealand with Māori community sport and recreation providers to support Māori participation in sport and recreation “as” Māori. It is grounded in five key values:

- Te Reo me ōna Tikanga
- Rangatiratanga
- Taonga Tuku Iho
- Whanaungatanga, and
- Kaitiakitanga.

The framework aims to help organisations design and deliver culturally responsive activities and assess the extent to which participation aligns with Māori cultural values and aspirations.

Te Whetū Rehua has been used to guide the [He Oranga Poutama](#) initiative, which focuses on increasing Māori participation and leadership in sport and recreation at the community level. The framework has also been adopted for use in other contexts, such as the [Tū Manawa](#) funding programme and organisational cultural capability development.

Te Whetū Rehua has been instrumental in guiding the He Puna Korikori fund. The framework provides a clear set of criteria for applicants to demonstrate their alignment with Māori values and principles. By using Te Whetū Rehua, He Puna Korikori has been able to prioritise initiatives that authentically reflect Māori aspirations, values for sport and recreation.

2.2 Application of Te Whetū Rehua to the Case Studies

Te Whetū Rehua served as a critical lens through which to analyse the He Puna Korikori funded case studies. By using the framework's five key values as research criteria we sought to understand the extent to which these initiatives aligned with Whetū Rehua, but also the benefits and impacts.

The application of Te Whetū Rehua involved a qualitative assessment of each case study based on:

- **Applicant self-assessment:** Examining how applicants described their programme's alignment with Te Whetū Rehua in their funding applications.
- **Rangatahi Participant feedback:** Analysing interview and observational data to understand participants' experiences and perspectives on the programmes cultural relevance.
- **Researcher observations:** Assessing programme activities, resources, and environment to identify evidence of Te Whetū Rehua values in practice.

Applying Te Whetū Rehua values into the analysis of the programmes helped to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities in each case study. This analysis is not an analysis on Te Whetū Rehua, it was to understand how kaupapa interpreted, understood the framework and what valuable insights could be gained when we integrated Te Whetū Rehua values into our mahi.

2.3 Te Whetū Rehua and the Diversity of Recreation

Te Whetū Rehua offers a valuable framework for assessing how recreational programmes uphold and encourage Māori values. Te Whetū Rehua encompasses a diverse range of activities that extend beyond traditional practices.

Balancing Tradition and Innovation

Rangatahi Māori participate in a wide range of recreational activities, including those influenced by Western culture. Activities such as kayaking, rock climbing, and snowboarding can contribute to physical and mental well-being, personal development, and social connection, all of which align with broader Māori values.

The challenge for the sector lies in finding ways to integrate these values into programme design and activities. This might involve incorporating elements of Te Ao Māori into programme design, such as using whakapapa to connect participants to the environment or incorporating traditional knowledge and skills, but it must be done in an authentic manner and not incorporated for the sake of it.

Avoiding Stereotypes and Assumptions

The application of Te Whetū Rehua should not lead to stereotypes or assumptions about what constitutes "authentic" Māori recreation. To apply Te Whetū Rehua it is important to understand its history and the many contexts it can be applied in.

It is important to avoid creating a hierarchy of recreational activities, where some are deemed more "Māori" than others. Instead, the focus should be on the overall impact of the programme and the participants well-being, cultural identity, and connection to community.



3. Case Studies: Māori-Led Recreation Initiatives

Four case studies were created from four tangata whenua recipients of the He Puna Korokori 2023 funding round. These case studies represent a diverse range of geographic locations, programme types, and rangatahi Māori. The selection process considered factors such as programme delivery and timing and the willingness of recipients to demonstrate the impact of He Puna Korikori funding.

3.1: Hokianga Sports Club: Te Whare o Tangaroa

A Māori-led and facilitated programme that connects rangatahi Māori of Hokianga to the moana and ancestral knowledge through traditional and contemporary water activities.

[Te Whare o Tangaroa Case Study](#)

[Alignment with Te Whetū Rehua](#)

- **Rangatiratanga:** Strong evidence of Māori leadership and control over the programme.
- **Whanaungatanga:** Emphasis on building relationships and community connections.
- **Kaitiakitanga:** Demonstrated connection to the local environment and marine resources.

3.2: Harbour Sport: Te Oranga Kaiora

A Regional Sports Trust and two Kura Kaupapa Māori working with local Iwi and recreation/education providers, to deliver a Moana Wānanga: grounded in te ao Māori, water safety and accessibility.

[Te Oranga Kaiora Case Study](#)

[Alignment with Te Whetū Rehua](#)

- **Te Reo Māori me ōna Tikanga:** Strong integration of Māori language and cultural practices.
- **Whanaungatanga:** Collaboration between multiple organisations and community groups.
- **Kaitiakitanga:** Focus on water safety and environmental education.

3.3: Hei Matau Paddlers: Kōhine Programme

A whānau led Waka Ama club, based in the Waiāriki rohe, that created a programme to develop young female paddlers with skills and values that transfer outside of the sport.

Hei Matau Padders Kōhine Case Study

Alignment with Te Whetū Rehua

- **Rangatiratanga:** Māori leadership and governance within the club.
- **Taonga Tuku Iho:** Integration of traditional Māori knowledge and practices.
- **Whanaungatanga:** Strong emphasis on whānau and community connections.

3.4: Mangakino School: Bush School

A rural school, led by a Māori principal, that services a Māori community, has developed a Localised Curriculum based around EOTC. 'Bush School' teaches from a Māori worldview engaging rangatahi in the Taiao.

Bush School Case Study

Alignment with Te Whetū Rehua

- **Te Reo Māori me ōna Tikanga:** Incorporation of Māori language and cultural practices into the curriculum.
- **Kaitiakitanga:** Strong focus on environmental education and guardianship.
- **Taonga Tuku Iho:** Integration of traditional Māori knowledge and practices.

4. Key Themes and Findings

A key component of this research was to capture rangatahi Māori voice and understand how rangatahi experience Māori-led recreation programmes. Through interviews, surveys and observations of rangatahi in the field, the Kaiarotake found that all programmes were successful at engaging positively with rangatahi through outdoor recreation. Surveys of rangatahi garnered information that supported the building of confidence, knowledge and skill transfer and successful enjoyable Māori-led recreation activities.

Key themes that emerged across the case studies include:

- **Whakapapa and Cultural Connection:** The importance of grounding recreational activities in cultural spaces, practices, and with te reo Māori me ōna tikanga.
- **Rangatiratanga, Manukura and Leadership:** The role of Māori leadership and engagement with community.
- **Whānau Centred Approach:** The significance of Māori values in recreation for rangatahi Māori.
- **Whai Oranga / Holistic Wellbeing:** Māori being Māori, affirmation of cultural narratives.

4.1 Whakapapa and Cultural Connection

Whakapapa emerged as a foundation of mana lifting recreation initiatives for rangatahi Māori. This theme underscores the importance of grounding recreational experiences in spaces of cultural importance and encouraging recreation through Māori platforms, to share cultural narratives, traditions.



“75% of Kaupapa engaged in, on or around Marae” Ben Whitaker, 2024

The Marae: A repository of knowledge and tikanga.

Recreation activities that incorporated the Marae easily connected participants to cultural narratives and tikanga Māori, reinforcing a Māori worldview. Across the four kaupapa, three used the Marae as a platform for engagement to varying degrees.

Te Oranga Kaiora used Piritahi Marae as an integral space in their activity. The Marae functioned as a traditional pōwhiri space, bringing together participants and providers in a formal Māori way, celebrating cultural identity and rangatahi leadership through service. When interviewing rangatahi in these spaces, they were lively, vibrant, playful, full of energy and often speaking in Te Reo Māori and English.

“Each kura kaupapa would lead our mihi, karakia, waiata, mihi whakatau, we encourage them to shine in those spaces that they are so confident, to show their true skills and Māoritanga.”

Moriki Read, TOK 2023

What came through from rangatahi in spaces that prioritised whakapapa connections, was pehapehatanga (boasting) - which reflected a sense of being proud of their identity and whakapapa.



Barriers to Whakapapa & Cultural Connection.

- **A Māori Lens**, the holistic interconnected nature of te ao Māori, and understanding of Māori philosophies create a unique experience in outdoor recreation. Atua and tīpuna narratives are embedded into the landscape creating layers of connection for tangata whenua. Lack of cultural awareness, appropriation and marginalisation of Māori culture remains a barrier for the recreation sector and for rangatahi Māori.

- **Facilities** enriched with cultural identity, such as Marae, enhance rangatahi Māori wellbeing and reinforced identity. When rangatahi go to their marae, they see their tupuna in the poupou, they connect with stories of Māori origin that reflect them and their experience in the Taiao. Recreation, for rangatahi Māori, that does not connect to rich cultural facilities, lacks engagement and activation of wairua Māori.
- **Intergenerational trauma** felt by rangatahi Māori has a large impact on how rangatahi relate with each other, and their culture. Evidence shows colonisation has impoverished Māori language and culture.

“We have taonga tuku iho, and sadly we have our trauma tuku iho... a lot of them (whānau) don't have the skill set, ... we had the Tohunga Suppression Act and those skills have been lost, and so it is regaining that knowledge and learning how to share it.”

Piripi Rawiri, TWoT 2023

4.2 Manukura and Leadership

The research found that strong Māori leadership was strengthened by hapori/community support systems. Systems based on whānau engagement and advocacy for rangatahi. These leaders were often deeply connected to the whānau within the community, great communicators, teachers and possessed a strong understanding of their communities values and aspirations.



Feedback from interviews with rangatahi and parents, showed that rangatahi engagement and experience was bolstered by their connection with the leader.

“(One challenge was) the fear of the waves, but just knowing that you’re safe with the people around you (Matua Piripi).” **Hāni (14), TWoT 2023.**

“He (Mr.B) is just funny, motivative, and when you think people are letting you down he lifts you up.” **Tiare (9), Bush School 2024**

Key characteristics of Manukura Leadership:

- **Cultural Competency:** Leaders demonstrated a deep understanding of Te ao Māori. They were able to effectively integrate Māori values and practices into programme design and delivery.
- **Relationship Building:** Effective leaders fostered strong relationships with participants, whānau, and community partners. They created a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone felt safe, valued and respected.
- **Mentorship and Empowerment:** Leaders played a key role in mentoring and empowering rangatahi to develop their leadership potential. They

provided opportunities for young people to take on leadership roles and responsibilities.

“75% of programmes were fully governed, managed, or significantly involved Māori” Ben Whitaker, 2024

Barriers to Māori Leadership

- **Pūkenga.** The lack of external facilitators/operators with the knowledge to understand and deliver Kaupapa Māori recreation approaches. Both Te Oranga Kaiora and Bush School relied on non-Māori recreation providers to facilitate safe and engaging activities for rangatahi. For Te Oranga Kaiora, the impact was that te reo Māori and a Māori worldview were not delivered through the water safety and water access parts of the programme. For Bush School, finding a teacher who holds Mātauranga Māori and works in Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) or recreation is rare. Capable Māori leaders in recreation are few and far between and development of Māori within the sector is needed.

“To have our rangatahi Māori aspire to be working in a place like Sir Peter Blake MERC, like EMR Experience Marine Reserves, working out in the Taiao but bringing that Mātauranga Māori to the table, a step further is having our whānau, our Iwi having those kaupapa going (Marine Recreation Providers).”

Moriki Read, TOK 2023

Having manukura, and role models to drive the kaupapa is imperative for rangatahi to feel safe and connected. The Kaiarotake observed that rangatahi would look to the manukura for guidance, coaching, during activities, the manukura in some cases acts as a guardian figure a pou (pillar) for rangatahi.

4.3 Whānau-Centred Approach

All visited kaupapa had a whānau-centred approach, where the rangatahi were safe and supported in their recreation. The Kaiarotake observed and interpreted intentional systems such as Te Oranga Kaiora’s ‘Tuakana - Teina’ mentor system and naturally occurring terms such as cuz, Matua and Whaea, across all kaupapa. Māori pedagogies and a Te Ao Māori view are emphasised through these whānau-centric systems and rangatahi wellbeing grows and is protected by

making connections and building relationships based on whakapapa and whānau.

**“100% of programmes targeted and supported Māori communities, focusing on whānau, hapū, and Iwi involvement”
Ben Whitaker 2024**

“As a club, we've never looked at how well our adults are doing, it's about how are we mentoring and bringing our young ones up. When they are doing well, I think us as a club are doing well.”

Mel Rika, HMP 2024

“You don't just paddle, it's also managing friendships and building them.”

Kiriana (11), HMP 2024

“(A highlight was) that we get to see our cousins and we get to surf.”

Māriño (8), TWoT 2023

“Ko te highlight me kī, ko te whanaungatanga.”

Ritchie (10), TOK 2023

Barriers to Māori Values in Recreation

- Mainstream recreation is often focused on team or individual activity and does not prioritise the notion of whānau. By leading recreation with whakapapa-based understandings and a whānau-centred approach, rangatahi Māori feel better supported to make new learnings, take opportunities and develop skills through recreation.

4.4 Whai Oranga: Holistic Well-being

Cultural Narratives and Storytelling

The Kaiarotake observed rangatahi participants thriving in spaces where they could celebrate their identity as Māori through cultural storytelling. The use of pūrakau (traditional narratives), haka, waiata and karakia enriched the experience, building connections between cultural pedagogies and recreational activity. These narratives helped to connect participants to their heritage and inspired a sense of pride and identity.

Examples

‘Mātai nuku, mātai rangi, mātai uta, mātai tai’ is a cultural wayfinding tool used by Te Whare o Tangaroa to understand and interact with the natural environment and its patterns. This expression is also shared and implemented in karakia and waiata used in Te Whare o Tangaroa to develop a rich cultural understanding of the Taiao. The Kaiarotake observed that the rangatahi connected to each other and the environment through karakia, and there was a shift within the group to being a more focused and engaged collective.

‘Te Whakataetae a te Atamira/ The Stage Competition’ of Te Oranga Kaiora, where rangatahi competed in teams, creating a skit based off the learnings from the Moana Wānanga. Skits were performed in te reo Māori and ranged from waiata, to theatre, to dance/rap choreography. The Kaiarotake observed the mahi of Hine Te Rēhia (traditional activities associated with recreation and leisure), as rangatahi used waiata and dance to convey messages on contemporary issues facing rangatahi and our environment. Māori identity and creativity flourished in this space.

‘Moreover, the connections between haka, karanga, waiata, te reo, hongiri, marae, and whanaungatanga are less well known than each individual component. Yet it is the culture as a whole that affords meaning and provides a korowai that enables the particular element to flourish. Important too, is the recognition that culture is an essential part of identity; it is a foundation for wellbeing.’ - Tā Mason Durie

Barriers to Whai Oranga

- Lack of cultural practices, understanding of key modes of Māori concepts and ideologies such as, mana, tapu, noa, ihi, wehi and wana. The lack of karakia, waiata, haka, and hongiri within mainstream outdoor recreation

spaces is noted as a systemic challenge rangatahi Māori have had to confront and overcome.

- Lack of knowledge around the use of pūrakau and cultural narratives by programme providers.

5. Te Reo o te Rangatahi

Rangatahi express a deep connection between recreation, personal identity, and cultural belonging. Māori-led initiatives provide essential spaces for young people to explore their place in the world, building confidence and resilience.

Through these programmes, rangatahi are discovering a strong sense of self. As one participant shared, "I try more stuff, I would gain up mana and get up to more bravery." These experiences have empowered rangatahi to overcome challenges, develop leadership skills, and foster a growth mindset. It shows how they are bringing forward concepts of mana into everyday life.

A connection to the natural world is a cornerstone of Māori identity, and recreation plays a vital role in nurturing this relationship. As another rangatahi expressed, "I have learnt more stuff about nature. It makes me feel great." These experiences cultivate a deep appreciation for the environment and inspire a sense of kaitiakitanga.

Māori-led initiatives offer a unique opportunity for rangatahi to celebrate their Ahurea. By incorporating te reo Māori, tikanga, and whakapapa into recreational activities, young people feel a strong sense of belonging and pride in their heritage. These spaces provide a platform for cultural expression and transmission.

Ultimately, these programmes are more than just recreation; they are pathways to holistic well-being. Rangatahi are thriving in environments that honour their cultural identity, support their personal growth, and foster a deep connection to the natural world.

6. Te Whetū Rehua as a Catalyst for Change

Te Whetū Rehua has the potential to be a powerful catalyst for change in the recreation sector. By providing a clear framework for assessing alignment to te ao Māori values, it can encourage organisations to uphold or consider Māori values and principles into design and delivery. As He Puna Korikori has demonstrated, it is also an effective tool to allocate funding to Māori-led initiatives and increase culturally responsive opportunities available for rangatahi Māori.

It is essential to acknowledge the socio, environmental challenges and context in which Te Whetū Rehua exist in. There are challenges which are inherited, systemic, generational that shouldn't be associated with Te Whetū Rehua, instead Te Whetū Rehua is seen and used as tool to correct these imbalances.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Incorporating the key dimensions of **Te Whetū Rehua** into programme design is a powerful way of creating culturally responsive recreation opportunities that engage rangatahi and deliver benefits that extend beyond mainstream recreation programmes.

- Recommendation: Promote the ongoing use of Te Whetū Rehua to design and evaluate not just Māori -led recreation programmes but all recreational activities.

While all five dimensions of Te Whetū Rehua are important, **Whanaungatanga** emerged as a critical factor for rangatahi Māori. In particular, the involvement of whānau, including multiple-generations, and the opportunity to build and deepen friendships, was frequently mentioned as an important factor by rangatahi.

- Recommendation: Create opportunities for the wider whānau to be involved in the design and delivery of activities, and priorities building friendships and connections.

Kaupapa Māori recreation programmes are a powerful way to connect rangatahi to their **whakapapa** and create a deeper sense of belonging and purpose. This was supported and enhanced by using cultural narratives and pūrakau as well as through haka and waiata.

- Recommendation: Ground programmes in the whakapapa using cultural narratives such as pūrakau, haka, waiata.

Māori leaders with connections to their local community and strong understanding of Māori values and culture can inspire, empower and uplift rangatahi Māori and create safe, inclusive environments that encourage them to engage and push themselves.

- Recommendation: Support rangatiratanga / Māori leadership as a means to create authentic, engaging opportunities for rangatahi Māori.

Te reo Māori is vital for acquisition and transmission of mātauranga Māori, however, there are a limited number of providers with the required skills to deliver programmes in te reo Māori. Likewise, there is a need to build the **cultural competency** of the recreation sector, and an understanding of Te Ao Māori perspectives on recreation to deliver more culturally responsive programmes.

- Recommendation: Invest in building the cultural competency of the recreation sector including increasing understanding of recreation from a te ao Māori lens.
- Recommendation: Support the growth of te reo Māori by providers.

By prioritising and investing in Tangata Whenua led programmes using Te Whetū Rehua, funders can create more opportunities for rangatahi Māori and begin to address inequities in funding systems.

- Recommendation: Continue to invest in Tangata Whenua-led programmes through funds such as He Puna Korikori and Tū Manawa.

8. References

Durie, M. (2017). Pūmau Tonu te Mauri: Living as Māori, now and in the future. Te Puni Kōkiri. Retrieved from <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/o-matou-mohiotanga/culture/pumau-tonu-te-mauri-living-as-maori-now-and-in-the>

Sport NZ. (2020). "Māori Voices of Play" insights report 2020. Retrieved from https://sportnz.org.nz/media/4862/sport-nz-ma-ori-voices-of-play-report-8_14.pdf

Sokratov, A., & O'Brien, J. (2014). Hīkaka te Manawa: Making a difference for rangatahi [E-book]. New Zealand: Health and Disability Commissioner; Te Rau Matatini. Retrieved from National Library of New Zealand website: https://natlib-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/11kio3m/NLNZ_ALMA21280050780002836

Mental Health Foundation. Te Whare Tapa Whā. Retrieved May 1, 2024, from <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/te-whare-tapa-wha>

9. Glossary of Te Reo Terms

- **Te Ao Māori:** The Māori worldview, encompassing the spiritual, physical, and social dimensions of life.
- **Ahurea:** Culture, cultures.
- **Mātauranga Māori:** Māori knowledge, traditional knowledge, skills, and values.
- **Whakapapa:** Genealogy, lineage, or ancestry, connecting individuals to the natural world and their community.
- **Kaitiakitanga:** Guardianship and stewardship of the natural environment.
- **Whanaungatanga:** Relationships, kinship, and belonging.
- **Manaakitanga:** Hospitality, generosity, and care for others.
- **Manukura:** leader, outstanding leadership
- **Rangatiratanga:** leadership, and autonomy.
- **Taonga Tuku Iho:** Treasures passed down through generations, including cultural knowledge, artifacts, and traditions.
- **Rangatahi:** Youth.
- **Tāngata Whenua:** The people of the land, Indigenous Māori people.
- **Kaupapa:** Project, initiative, or program.
- **Pā harakeke:** A community of people who nurture and support each other.
- **Pūkenga:** Skills, facilitators, experts.
- **Wairua:** Spirit.
- **Tinana:** Body.
- **Maramataka:** Māori lunar calendar.
- **Te Whai Oranga:** The pursuit of well-being.
- **Kaiarotake:** A Māori evaluator with an understanding of Mātauranga Māori.
- **Tūhuratanga:** Exploration.
- **Ngako:** Essence.
- **He Puna Korikori:** A fund established by Recreation Aotearoa to support recreation opportunities for targeted communities.
- **Te Whetū Rehua:** A framework for assessing the cultural alignment of recreation programmes.
- **He Oranga Poutama:** A Sport New Zealand initiative focused on increasing Māori participation and leadership in sport and recreation.
- **Whare Wānanga:** A traditional Māori learning institution.
- **Whare Tapere:** A traditional Māori performance space.
- **Moana:** Ocean.

- **Taiao:** Natural environment.
- **Poupou:** Carved figures on the front of a Māori meeting house.
- **Mihi:** Greetings, formal introductions.
- **Karakia:** Incantation.
- **Waiata:** Song.
- **Mihi Whakatau:** Welcome ceremony.
- **Haka:** Māori ceremonial dance.
- **Hongi:** Traditional Māori greeting involving pressing noses together.
- **Marae:** Māori meeting ground and cultural centre.
- **Pūrakau:** Traditional stories.
- **Mātai nuku, mātai rangi, mātai uta, mātai tai:** A cultural wayfinding tool used to understand and interact with the natural environment.

10. Appendix 1

Te Ao ki te Pō: Ethical Framework for Research on He Puna Korikori Applicants

This ethical framework is grounded in the principles of Te Ao Māori, guiding our research on He Puna Korikori applicants. It reflects our commitment to honouring the dignity, rights, and perspectives of participants while ensuring the integrity of the research process.

Ngā Whāinga o tēnei Rangahau - Research Objectives

The research aims to:

- Capture the perspectives and experiences of rangatahi Māori participating in He Puna Korikori funded initiatives.
- Understand the impact of these initiatives on rangatahi well-being and identity.
- Identify systemic and intergenerational barriers faced by rangatahi and kaupapa Māori providers.
- Contribute to the development of culturally appropriate and effective recreation programs for rangatahi Māori.

Te haepapa o te Kaiarotake - The Role of the Researcher

The Kaiarotake, as a Māori researcher, will embody these principles in their conduct and practice. This includes:

- **Whanaungatanga:** Building strong, respectful relationships with participants, communities, and stakeholders.
- **Manaakitanga:** Demonstrating hospitality, care, and respect for all involved in the research process.
- **Kaitiakitanga:** Upholding the responsibility to care for and protect the well-being of participants, their communities, and the research data.
- **Wairuatanga:** Acknowledging the spiritual dimensions of research and the interconnectedness of all things.

Te Tukanga Rangahau - The Research Process

- **Whakamana Tangata (Respect for Participants):** Participants will be fully informed about the research, including its purpose, procedures, potential benefits, and risks, in both written and oral form. Their voluntary participation will be emphasised, and they will have the right to withdraw at any time. For rangatahi unable to provide informed consent, assent will be sought, and consent will be obtained from a parent or legal guardian.
- **Manaakitanga (Respect and Care):** Participants will be treated with utmost respect, care, and dignity. Their well-being is paramount throughout the research process.
- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** The principles of partnership, participation, and protection will guide our interactions with participants, ensuring their rights and interests are upheld.

- **Kōrero Muna (Confidentiality):** Participant information will be treated with strict confidentiality. Anonymity will be maintained wherever possible, and data will be securely stored and accessed only by authorised researchers.

Kia tapatahi te Rangahau - Research Integrity

- **Ngā Tikanga o te Mahi (Research Methods):** Rigorous and culturally appropriate research methods will be employed. Data collection will involve kānohi kitea (face-to-face interactions) to foster genuine connections and understanding.
- **Arotake Kōrero (Data Analysis):** Data will be analysed with care and respect for participants' experiences. Findings will be presented truthfully and transparently.
- **Whakamana Kōrero (Authenticity):** The research will strive to authentically represent participants' voices and perspectives.

Whai tikanga - Cultural Responsiveness

- **Whakapapa and Whanaungatanga:** The research will honour the importance of whakapapa (genealogy) and whanaungatanga (relationships). Building strong relationships with participants and communities is central to the success of the research.
- **Kaitiakitanga (Guardianship):** The research will be conducted with care for the environment, communities, and participants.
- **Mana Whenua:** The research will respect the mana whenua of the regions involved, acknowledging the significance of the land and its people.