



## Rangahau Tūkinu Whānau Māori Research Agenda on Family Violence

Te Puni Kōkiri recently completed a Māori Research Agenda as part of the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families Programme of Action. The Māori Research Agenda will strengthen the Taskforce's leadership in eliminating whānau violence by generating new knowledge that supports whānau ora. The fact sheet presents a summary of the Māori Research Agenda. The full report can be found at [www.tpk.govt.nz](http://www.tpk.govt.nz)

### OVERVIEW

Family violence is a significant problem in New Zealand, and costs the country in many different ways. As such, eliminating family violence is a significant priority for the Government. Current statistics indicate Māori are substantially over-represented as both victims and perpetrators of whānau violence. However, most research to date does not adequately analyse the culturally distinct experience and role of Māori in relation to family violence. The Government's response to family violence is being led by the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families ('the Taskforce'). The Taskforce provides overall leadership for the programme of action to address family violence of which the Ministry of Social Development is the lead agency. Te Puni Kōkiri is a member of the Taskforce and has primary responsibility for leading an initiative within the Programme of Action known as the Māori Research Agenda.

The Māori Research Agenda outlines seven Māori research priorities that support the development of an evidence base on Māori approaches to eliminating family violence. This work will inform the planning of policy and research work programmes and is an important contribution to the knowledge of government on Māori family violence.

The Māori Research Agenda was informed by input from:

- Māori whānau violence experts,
- a comprehensive literature review, and
- lessons from programme studies of the culturally distinct aspects of three Māori service providers.

The experts helped to guide the research and provided valuable feedback on the findings.

Family violence in relation to Māori is described as being of epidemic proportions. The literature review describes the breadth and scale of family violence in relation to Māori as serious, entrenched and intergenerational. It confirms the shortage of new research in relation to Māori.

The three programme studies referred to in the Summative Report highlight the critical package of knowledge, skill and experience required to work in the field of whānau violence, and how these are brought together by Māori organisations within a service provision context. This includes: (1) a depth of knowledge in tikanga Māori; (2) theory and practice knowledge (in the fields of counselling, mental health and social work for example); and (3) organisational capability.

The Māori Research Agenda identifies the need for a systematic and strategic approach to developing a research plan with seven key research areas suggested as priorities:

- Defining whānau violence;
- Understanding the origins of whānau violence;
- Affirming and valuing culturally distinct approaches to whānau violence;
- Building an evidence base about 'what works' in relation to whānau violence;
- Evidencing whānau, hapū and iwi based approaches to whānau violence;
- Understanding the critical organisational factors that support innovation and resilience in the delivery of kaupapa Māori approaches to whānau violence, and
- Exploring the potential utility of indigenous approaches to whānau violence.



## RESEARCH SCOPE

### Project Purpose

The overarching purpose of Māori Research Agenda project is to support Māori approaches to eliminate family violence and provide information on the efficacy of culturally distinct approaches. This will contribute to government's knowledge on ways to eliminate family violence and inform future planning of policy and research programmes and potential investment decisions. As well as providing advice to government, Te Puni Kōkiri's role in family violence in relation to Māori includes membership on the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families, supporting the development of an evidence base to validate culturally distinct approaches to eliminate family violence, and to lead the Family Violence Māori Research Agenda project.

### Project Objectives

The overarching objectives of the project were to:

- inform research priorities around Māori and family violence and the development of an evidence base to eliminate family violence; and
- identify priorities for further research in the area of Māori and family violence.

### Project Scope

The Family Violence - Māori Research Agenda project comprised three parts:

- Input of Māori whānau violence experts – convened by Te Puni Kōkiri to guide this research;
- Literature review – in relation to Māori and family violence; and
- Programme studies – research into the culturally distinct aspects of three Māori service providers' programmes which address Māori and family violence.

## INPUT OF MĀORI WHĀNAU VIOLENCE EXPERTS

Te Puni Kōkiri convened a group of Māori whānau violence experts to guide this research. They met with Te Puni Kōkiri immediately prior to the commencement of this research. On completion of the programme studies' component of the research, they met with the researchers (and Te Puni Kōkiri) to provide feedback on the research findings. The programme studies were sent out in advance of the meeting and an independent Māori facilitator facilitated the hui. The meeting notes were transcribed and were later utilised by the researchers in the development of the proposed research agenda. In addition, further literature and feedback was provided to the researchers outside of this meeting via email and telephone conversations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Whilst there has been little new research in relation to Māori and family violence, current kaupapa Māori approaches are promising. These approaches use a "methodology that seeks to address violence from within a Māori cultural worldview and are structured around tikanga Māori (cultural values and practices) to facilitate learning, self examination"<sup>1</sup>, cultural esteem and behaviour change. This is described in the Transforming Whānau Violence conceptual framework as "(1) dispelling the illusion that whānau violence is normal and acceptable; (2) removing opportunities for whānau violence to be perpetrated; (3) teaching transformative practices based on Māori cultural imperatives that provide alternatives to violence."

A critical distinction noted by the literature review is the difference between family violence and whānau violence. Whānau violence is defined as "the compromise of te ao Māori values and can be understood as an absence or disturbance of tikanga<sup>2</sup> and transgressions against whakapapa."<sup>3</sup> Within this definition of whānau violence the use of Māori traditional knowledge and cultural practices are fundamental to addressing whānau violence and achieving whānau ora (wellbeing). On the other hand, it is argued that the term family violence is not broad enough to encompass fully the realities of whānau. The definition of family is based upon a nuclear model. This is not a definition that encompasses the complexities of relationships within whānau.

The literature review provides a strong argument that historically whānau violence was not part of te ao Māori (traditional Māori society) and when violence did occur, it was addressed collectively. It is argued that colonisation has undermined whānau structures and relationships within whānau including gender relationships, and that the violence evident in Māori communities is the contemporary legacy of colonisation.

It is further argued that mainstream approaches to violence have failed to meet the needs of Māori, evidenced by the unmet need in Māori communities, and have failed to stem the epidemic of whānau violence.<sup>4</sup> Kaupapa Māori approaches (including Māori cultural constructs, Māori cultural templates and tikanga Māori) are advocated as having the capacity.

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1 Ibid

2 Where tikanga is defined as the process of practising Māori values.

3 Pihama (2008), p. 5.

4 Ibid.

## PROGRAMME STUDIES

The three programme studies referred to in this report highlight the critical package of knowledge, skill and experience required to work in the field of whānau violence, and how these are brought together by Māori organisations within a service provision context.

*A description of each of the three programme studies has been provided on pages 7-9 of this fact sheet.*



## ■ MĀORI RESEARCH AGENDA: OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As a result of the input of sector experts, literature review and programme studies further opportunities for new research have been identified.

The key objective of new research would be to identify essential practices and approaches that underpin the work of Māori practitioners/providers and whānau, hapū, iwi, community. Furthermore, research that focuses on how society can change to be more supportive of whānau being non-violent would be part of a decolonising approach – decolonising a country that has been built on violence.

Given the magnitude of the problem and the lack of research to date, a systematic and strategic approach to developing a research plan is needed, with seven key research areas suggested as priorities:<sup>5</sup>

- Defining whānau violence;
- Understanding the origins of whānau violence;
- Affirming and valuing culturally distinct approaches to whānau violence;
- Building an evidence base about 'what works' in relation to whānau violence;
- Evidencing whānau, hapū and iwi based approaches to whānau violence;
- Understanding the critical organisational factors that support innovation and resilience in the delivery of Kaupapa Māori approaches to whānau violence; and
- Exploring the potential utility of indigenous approaches to whānau violence.

### Identifying Research Priorities

The research priorities and gaps identified in the literature review were the starting point for development of the research agenda. In a two-stage process, the programme studies and then feedback from Māori whānau violence experts were analysed to see whether they were congruent with the research areas outlined in the literature and/or gave rise to additional or new research areas. Furthermore, the following set of questions informed the analysis for the summative report:

- What are the key messages and themes in relation to Māori and family violence?
- What are the gaps and inconsistencies in the literature that require further investigation?
- What are the key characteristics of Māori designed, developed, and delivered initiatives?
- What are the key principles and values, which appear to be common across both the literature and service provider studies?
- What conclusions can be drawn about the validity of the proposition that "Māori designed, developed, and delivered programmes are good practice when addressing family violence for Māori?"

### Defining whānau violence

Research suggests that whānau violence is different from the western conception of family violence and encompasses a wider range of issues than family violence. While whānau violence is equated to family violence, Māori responses (and service provision) are constrained by being located within an inappropriate cultural context. Therefore, differentiating whānau violence from family violence facilitates understanding as to why a different approach is required for Māori. Such an understanding begins to provide 'space' to develop responses tailored to the needs of whānau Māori.

### Understanding the origins of whānau violence

The research indicates that violence within whānau, hapū and iwi was historically not an acceptable practice. There is a need to identify at which point family violence for Māori became a significant issue and traditional methods were marginalised as a process of dealing collectively with the issue. Therefore, understanding Māori/tribal history allows for Māori to dispel the myth of violence being 'normal' for Māori and to reclaim cultural values and practices as a transformative element.

### Affirming and valuing culturally distinct approaches to whānau violence

Māori providers use culturally distinct approaches to meet the needs of whānau. There is a need to capture the rationale, principles and values that underpin the conceptual frameworks, models and practice. The purpose of the research therefore is to document the culturally distinct approaches used in service provision to: (1) facilitate sharing, affirmation and validation of knowledge; (2) inform best practice; (3) provide benchmarks against which to measure future progress; and (4) evidence the decision-making process.

<sup>5</sup> The order and number of research priorities does not imply an importance of ranking or prioritisation.

### **Building an evidence base about 'what works' in relation to whānau violence**

To really understand what works in whānau violence there is a need to identify not only the nature of any intervention but the 'dose required'. By this we mean the intensity, frequency and duration of programmes and the time required to achieve sustainable behaviour change. Also there is a need to identify the progressive 'markers' of wellbeing in the short, medium and long term.

Therefore the purpose of the research is to: identify what works, with whom and in what situations or contexts in relation to whānau violence; to identify the components and determinants of successful programmes and how these are brought together and managed within the varied contexts of service provision (personal, whānau, organisational, hapū, iwi and policy context etc) to facilitate whānau ora.

Additional research purposes include to: (1) document the process of healing leading to whānau wellbeing; (2) better understand the required 'dosage' of programmes and services; (3) assist in the development of more effective programmes and services; (4) better understand the stages of change and which interventions optimally work at each stage of change; (5) assist policy makers and funders to understand the stages of change; (6) develop appropriate benchmarks and indicators to monitor whānau outcomes and programme performance; (7) contribute to programme development and best practice in relation to Māori; (8) advocate for community development approaches.

### **Evidencing whānau, hapū and iwi based approaches to whānau violence**

Kaupapa Māori models are critical to making change in the current context related to whānau violence. However, there is little research or literature related to specific whānau, hapū and iwi in terms of family violence and how those whānau, hapū and iwi engaged with the violence within their own tikanga and cultural contexts.

There are two main purposes to the research. Firstly, to document specific whānau, hapū and iwi approaches to whānau violence (e.g. oral history, ngā mōteatea, tribal narratives etc), as a means of affirming and reclaiming traditional practices. Secondly, drawing on this knowledge there is a need to facilitate the development of whānau, hapū and iwi approaches to whānau ora (as a means of addressing whānau violence).

### **Understanding the critical organisational factors that support innovation and resilience in the delivery of kaupapa Māori approaches to whānau violence**

Kaupapa Māori approaches are advocated as having the capacity to both reverse whānau violence<sup>6</sup> and provide a pathway to whānau ora. Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki, Te Whakaruruhau Inc and Te Whare Ruruahu o Meri appear to be exemplars of innovation, organisational resilience and have retained enduring 'community' mandates.

Identifying the critical organisational factors and understanding how these are brought together by Māori organisations within a service provision context will provide core information and improved knowledge and understanding about: (1) what a 'good' organisation looks like; (2) how the critical organisational factors are brought together/managed to best effect; (3) what it takes and what is required to deliver kaupapa Māori whānau violence initiatives; (4) insightful and transferable 'learnings' to support and sustain the development of other iwi and Māori provider organisations, e.g. securing and maintaining 'community' mandate for service; (5) what is required by policy makers and funders to support and sustain current kaupapa Māori whānau violence service provider organisations e.g. what provision should be made for leadership development, succession planning if organisations are to be sustainable over time?

### **Exploring the potential utility of indigenous approaches to whānau violence**

Given the lack of literature and recent research in the area of whānau violence, it is possible that other indigenous approaches to family violence might offer potentially useful ideas and learnings in terms of addressing whānau violence. However, the unique cultural, social, political and economic context of indigenous peoples means care must be taken when reviewing these approaches, particularly in relation to their transferability to Aotearoa/New Zealand and with Māori.

The purpose of the research is to review indigenous approaches to family violence to: (1) identify possible options or learning that, in part or in whole, appear to have potential to be utilised by iwi and Māori provider organisations; (2) add to our body of knowledge about indigenous and family violence; (3) affirm and validate Māori knowledge and practice, as part of body of knowledge that sits within an indigenous context; (4) identify and develop indigenous networks to facilitate sharing of information about best practice and what works with indigenous peoples.

6 Supra n4.



## ■ PROGRAMME STUDIES: BUILDING AN EVIDENCE BASE TO REALISE MĀORI POTENTIAL

To inform the research priorities for Māori, Te Puni Kōkiri contracted FEM (2006) Ltd to undertake research into three Māori designed, developed and delivered initiatives that address family violence, and to document the culturally distinct approaches utilised. This will contribute to the development of an evidence-based best practice framework to identify what works for Māori to eliminate family violence.

The three organisations/programmes examined in this research were:

- Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki Incorporated, New Plymouth: Tū Tika o Aro Tika – Domestic Violence Education Programme for Māori Men;
- Te Whare Ruruhou o Meri Trust, Auckland: Rangatahi J.A.M – Residential Children's Holiday Programme; and
- Te Whakaruruhau Incorporated, Hamilton: The "Transition and Wellbeing Programme" for women.

The three initiatives profiled were selected because they:

- presented themselves as using Māori designed, developed, and delivered family violence initiatives;
- had a proven track record of service delivery to Māori ;
- had extensive experience in providing family violence specific programmes for Māori;
- were willing and had the capacity to participate within the required timeframe; and
- were seen to already encapsulate a Māori Potential Approach, being both culturally distinct and capable in their field.

The programme studies employed a qualitative approach and included interviews with the managers of each organisation and key programme personnel, as well as analysis of programme documentation (and observation at one of the programmes).

The full case studies are available in the Māori Research Agenda Report at [www.tpk.govt.nz](http://www.tpk.govt.nz)

## TŪ TAMA WAHINE O TARANAKI

Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki is a kaupapa Māori organisation that has operated for more than 20 years in the Taranaki region. It offers a range of community based mental health and social services. This includes counselling, social work, supervision, education programmes and training services.

This case study focuses on Tū Tika o Aro Tika (a Domestic Violence Education Programme for Māori Men). Tū Tika o Aro Tika employs a methodology that seeks to address violence from within a Māori cultural worldview. The sessions are structured around tikanga Māori that assist in facilitating learning and self-examination. These include: tikanga, identity, whānau, whanaungatanga, Taranakitanga, mana and te ao Māori me te ao hurihuri. In particular, Taranakitanga, the deeds of Tohu Kakahi and Te Whiti o Rongomai, and the culture of passive resistance are strongly evident throughout the programme.

The most significant challenge they face is one of time. They believe it is important to have sufficient time and the necessary resources to work with the men and their whānau to provide the essential support required to bring about sustainable behaviour change and personal transformation.

Many of these men have known violence as an everyday occurrence in their lives, often since childhood. Changing behaviours entrenched over a lifetime takes (often years, not months) support, tools, mentoring, guidance, and affirmation. Importantly, men need to know and come to the realisation that there is another way, and tikanga Māori provides that pathway.

Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki believes that in order to bring about personal transformation more than the current 18-week programme is needed. They believe the programme needs to be of a longer duration and, importantly, there needs to be support to whānau during the programme and ongoing support for men and their whānau after the programme.

Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki currently provides this support, to the extent possible, within the current level of resources. However, due to programme funding and resource constraints, Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki are not able to provide the level (frequency and intensity) of support to men and their whānau that they believe is necessary to achieve the required behaviour change.

Despite the challenges of lack of resourcing, a perception of institutional racism and misconceptions about the programme, the historical legacy and commitment to whānau, and an ethos of non-violence continue to sustain and nurture the commitment of Tū Tama Wahine o Taranaki to whānau ora.



## TE WHARE RURUHAU O MERI

Te Whare Ruruahu o Meri is a Charitable Trust that operates under the guidance and direction of Te Pihopatanga o Te Tai Tokerau, the northern branch of the Anglican Church of Aotearoa. It has operated in the South Auckland community of Otahuhu since 1984. It offers a range of community based social services. These include counselling, social work, youth work, an alternative education programme and domestic violence support to whānau.

Te Whare Ruruahu o Meri operates from a kaupapa Māori base and their services are underpinned by a combination of tikanga Māori and Christian principles. Rangatahi J.A.M (Jesus and Me) is a programme that aims to provide a safe, fun and caring programme for children who have been victims of family violence. Staff focus on wellness for the whole whānau and want children and whānau to know that there is somewhere they can go to for help. Tikanga include: te kawa o te marae, identity, whakapapa, awhi mai awhi atu, whakapono and he taonga te mokopuna.

What is evident from Te Whare Ruruahu o Meri is that tikanga Māori and Christian principles are so much a part of the organisation and its programmes and are implicit in all they do, that it is difficult at times, without prompting, for staff to articulate uniquely Māori aspects and or cultural concepts. Staff do not consciously think about what component part of the programme is about tikanga or about Christian principles. There is no need to. It is who they are, it is what they do, it is core to their being and how they operate. The challenge for the researchers was to begin to draw out and make explicit the uniquely Māori aspects that underpin the organisation/ programme.

The most significant challenge they face is whānau commitment to change. Whānau face many challenges on a daily basis from issues related to providing for their families, to the challenges associated with changing their behaviour. Many of the children and their parents have known violence as an everyday occurrence in their lives, often since childhood. Changing behaviours entrenched over a lifetime takes (often years, not months), support, tools, mentoring, guidance, and affirmation. Importantly, children and their parents need to know and come to the realisation that there is another way, and tikanga Māori provides that pathway.

Te Whare Ruruahu o Meri believes that in order to make the programme more effective they need to grow rangatahi leader, and continue to promote the concept of whānau wellbeing in their work with the parents of the children. Ongoing support to children and their whānau post the programme is also important. Many children return to the holiday programme time and time again and this enables the reinforcement of values and principles, further respite for parents, and opportunity to be a part of supporting children to blossom and grow in a loving and supportive environment. Te Whare Ruruahu o Meri is committed to providing a range of services that support whānau to be violence free.





## TE WHAKARURUHAU INC

Te Whakaruruhau Māori Women's Refuge was established in 1986 to accommodate the rising number of Māori women and children seeking culturally appropriate assistance from violence and oppression usually inflicted upon them by a known adult male. Geographically, it services an area that extends across Hamilton city. Regular contacts include referrals from and to outlying areas such as Ngaruawahia, Huntly, Raglan, Cambridge, Morrisville, Matamata and Te Awamutu.

The organisation operates from a kaupapa Māori base where manaakitanga, wairuatanga, kotahitanga, and whanaungatanga are the values that determine practice. Principles of aroha, mana and tapu are the overall goals which underpin and inform the direction and nature of support provided. Due to the impacts of family violence, colonisation and patriarchy on Māori whānau structures, values and beliefs, a primary goal for Te Whakaruruhau is to provide a strong 'surrogate' whānau environment.

Research findings:

- Leadership and vision have been vital to Te Whakaruruhau providing a service that is effective, culturally appropriate, far-reaching and successful
- Culture-specific frameworks and practices employed by Te Whakaruruhau have been highlighted as vital to achieving success and whānau ora. They have demonstrated that programmes need to be culturally 'wide' enough to encompass the needs of the whole whānau and 'deep' enough to identify their socio-economic needs
- Capacity building has been instrumental in enabling Te Whakaruruhau to cater to, and facilitate pathways to achieving whānau ora through adequate and appropriate resourcing of whānau while in crisis, transition and interdependence
- Critical-mass is viewed by Te Whakaruruhau as essential to building collective action to effect social change and to achieve overall success in the elimination of violence against women and children
- Diversity of programmes and the development of a wrap-around service provision (though not new) are viewed by Te Whakaruruhau as critical to facilitating positive and achievable pathways towards whānau ora. In providing a framework of support and protection, Te Whakaruruhau has been conscious that a simple "one size fits all" approach is not adequate when working with Māori whānau who are affected by domestic violence.



## CONCLUSION

The Māori Research Agenda outlines key research priorities that will contribute to a robust evidence base that supports culturally distinct approaches to eliminate family violence within Māori communities.

The literature review highlighted that there is limited research on uniquely Māori approaches to address family violence. Existing literature has largely focused on evaluating programmes rather than providing an evidence base to generate new knowledge. Further the literature review supports the reclamation of Māori values, practices and approaches as transformational levers to support Māori towards whānau ora.

The programme studies confirm culturally distinct approaches have transformed the people with whom those Māori service providers have engaged with. However, organisational capacity and capability continues to compromise the sustainability of Māori service provision.

The Māori Research Agenda will strengthen the Taskforce's leadership in eliminating family violence within Māori communities by generating new knowledge that support positive approaches to enable whānau ora.



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