

Te Huarahi mo te puawaitanga o ngā kura whānau ngatahi o Te Puaha o Waikato (Te Huarahi)

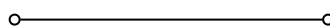


Te Huarahi’s aim is to enable, encourage and assist schools and whānau to work together in order to achieve better educational outcomes for Māori students in their community.

Te Huarahi was formed in 2009 by whānau, board members, principals and school staff as a collective response to a number of Pukekohe schools receiving ERO reports which identified the need for major improvement in Māori student achievement and schools’ engagement with Māori. To achieve change, goals were identified in five key areas: Early Childhood Education, whānau education, celebrating success, building authentic relationships, and raising achievement.¹ The initiative is driven by schools, however health and social service agencies are also involved, as all organisations working with Māori whānau were invited to participate. Membership of Te Huarahi is voluntary. It is registered as a Trust and functions as a network providing support to member organisations in order to achieve the collective goals.

“Te Huarahi is the waka that provides the opportunity for members to get the knowledge they need to achieve our goals. It is about working collectively, making systemic changes for generations.”

In this case study Māori and Pākehā governance board members discuss the power of a community working collectively to share experiences, ideas, and resources to address some entrenched attitudes. The interviewees identify community training workshops as pivotal, having diverse sections of the community engage in learning together has led to changed practice and relationships. The case study also discusses the importance of hapū-based Treaty relationships, and some of the challenges in establishing those relationships.



Beginnings

When we developed our strategic plan in 2009 one of our goals was building authentic relationships between our schools and whānau. We had to discuss in detail what that was and how it could be measured. We concluded you can’t have a good relationship if you don’t understand each other. We felt that schools and whānau having an understanding of te Tiriti o Waitangi – the foundation document in our country – would support building authentic relationships. School staff engaging in Treaty training became one of our outcomes.

Treaty training was identified as a way that authentic relationships could be built for several reasons. School leadership in Pukekohe is non-Māori — the perspectives and approaches being taken for Māori students were non-Māori perspectives and approaches. Learning about te Tiriti was seen as foundational to supporting staff to understand the need to make an effort in relation to Māori achievement and to build their understanding for engaging with Māori whānau. Schools have a responsibility to have knowledge of the Treaty, and so the training fitted with that. While some schools had a Treaty policy, the training was intended to help bring those policies to life. Pukekohe has a long history of hurt for Māori—we had to heal our relationships with each other and the Treaty training was seen as underpinning that.

Developing understanding of tikanga was also seen as critical. Schools also enrolled en masse in the Mauri Ora programme offered by Te Wananga o Aotearoa. The programme was an opportunity for Māori and non-Māori to learn together and gain knowledge of Māori tikanga and practices in a context that was relevant to Tainui.

Treaty education

Introductory Treaty workshops were delivered by the Treaty Resource Centre on Saturdays at Ngā Hau e Whā Marae o Pukekohe. The first workshop was attended by school leaders and staff. The majority of schools made Treaty training a Teacher Only Day and attendance was compulsory. This showed commitment from school leadership. By the time the second workshop was run, whānau members and community agencies were also keen to attend. The third workshop focused on Treaty application.

Members of Te Huarahi identified the follow aspects as being important to the success of the Treaty training.

Location

- The workshop was held on a marae, which contributed to raising understanding of local tikanga (particularly for those had not been on marae before).
- Holding the training locally – “We would have struggled to get people there if it was outside of the community.”

Learning together

- Undertaking the training collectively, rather than as individual schools, allowed for consistent information to be delivered to all those in the network.
- Opening the training up to the whole community helped build connections between community groups, schools and whānau. It was positive for whānau members to see schools there committed to learning.
- It provided an opportunity to recognise that each school is in a different place in its Treaty journey and to discuss and share approaches.
- Attending alongside other organisations, from different sectors, gave the sense of not being alone doing this. Hearing different points of view was thought provoking.

Skilled facilitation

- A skilled facilitator who created a supportive, non-threatening environment. The facilitator set the rules very clearly and knew when to step in. She kept it very simple, and gave an opportunity for us to ask more. Participants felt valued. Her knowledge of tikanga was important, particularly as the training was held at the marae.
- The facilitator knew some of the local history. She knew that Pukekohe has a long history of hurt and poor relationships between non-Māori and Māori, and acknowledged that this was one way that we could start communication. That was critical.
- It was good for both Māori and non-Māori to see a non-Māori talking about this. That also challenged us to think, ‘I look like a Pākehā and behave like a Māori, and you look like a Māori but don’t behave like a Māori...’ It made us realise that it didn’t matter who was leading the way but that we all needed to help make changes together. That was important.

Consistency and neutrality

- Having the same facilitator for all the workshops was important as people got to know and trust her. If the facilitator had changed whānau may not have kept coming.
- Using an outside organisation to deliver the training made it more neutral.

Outcomes of Treaty workshops

Knowledge and awareness are critical to change. Some people thought the English version of the Treaty was it. Schools had the English version displayed and that translated into strategic plans and implementation. It was empowering to hear the facilitator say, “When I talk about the Treaty I am talking about Te Tiriti o Waitangi [the Māori text].” For some people that was an adjustment.

The workshops helped with starting conversations, breaking down barriers, and shifting thinking. They opened people’s minds. It generated some deep thinking about what we are doing in our schools and communities. Hearing what others are doing stimulated a lot of thought.

We are sitting in a unique part of New Zealand where there has been deep hurt for Māori in our community and that is not forgotten. They have experienced racism, and been beaten for speaking Māori, so it has been quite a challenge to break those barriers down. It has taken five years to start to do that, to show that as Te Huarahi, we mean what we say, that we are not going away, that we are not a one-hit wonder, not token. So we are just now starting to get some mutual respect.

By the second Treaty workshop, whānau started to attend and for some it changed their perspectives of the Treaty. There are a lot of negative stories about being Māori in Pukekohe—being banned from shops, having to walk on the other side of the street. Kuia and kaumātua have lived that and that has filtered through to families – this is what Pākehā did to us. The training allowed whānau to think about what the Treaty might mean to them now and to see that that schools were still learning and are making changes. For example, as a result of examining how to engage whānau and seeing the need to make structural changes, some schools invited Māori to join the Board of Trustees. For many local schools this is the first time they have had Māori representation.

The Treaty training has changed conversations, particularly between teachers and parents. There was a lack of relationships, now there is improvement in that area—relationships are building. Māori whānau are seeing non-Māori being interested in Māori things, consistently, and not just one aspect. It is little things like the principal playing the guitar for the kapa haka group. That shows great leadership to their staff, which is important.

On a bigger scale since the first workshop we have had two Māori enrichment classes open in Pukekohe. In the past it was too hard, people didn’t want to know. Before the first workshop there were four kapa haka groups for all of Pukekohe. Now we have over 15 in primary and high schools, and one in every early childhood centre. We now have paid kapa haka tutors, whereas before it was, “Oh, Whaea can you come down for an hour?” The schools were asked in the Treaty workshop, “Do you value kapa haka? If so, you need to pay.” The workshop meant school leaders had to consider “Am I really doing the best thing for my tamariki, for *all* my tamariki?”

The workshops have led to some deep discussion in individual schools. It has led to some confirmation for Māori staff to be unapologetic about what te Tiriti o Waitangi might look like in a school setting and how to be applying it. It was neat to see how motivating it was for members of the community. The Treaty is no longer just the ‘3Ps’¹, it is my life, my work, my history, how I work with whānau, how I relate. We had to look past the articles to ask “What does this mean for you in your practice to get to those hard to reach whānau? How are you going to change what you do to help raise Māori achievement?”

The Treaty application workshop was the best-attended and the most diverse in terms of groups. In the beginning we needed to have principals on board to make changes. Now it is about working with a range of

¹ An acronym for the government defined Treaty principles of partnership, participation and protection.

community organisations to look at what they can do in their mahi. We now have three different schools hosting three different Treaty workshops at the next level. It is neat to see the schools taking that on. It is taking on a life of its own.

Treaty relationships

Learning about Treaty relationships in the workshops helped us to understand the new trend that is coming through in education to build relationships with hapū and iwi, not just with whānau. It connected a lot of dots.

Sometimes ideas aren't embraced by hapū because they feel like it is a tick box process. In the past schools haven't been required or encouraged to consult. Schools were designers of the curriculum that they facilitated with students. Now Ka Hikitia² suggests we are supposed to co-construct that with hapū and iwi, and no one has shown us what that looks like. Seeing examples would be really helpful. We are learning that if we want to support Māori student achievement we need to do that in a relationship, built around co-construction. The reality of fulfilling that is scary for schools. Damage was done in the past in these relationships, when hapū/iwi wanted to work together with schools and were turned away. Now schools are wanting to have the relationships, so there is some repair to be done in order to build the relationships.

As a collective, Te Huarahi needs to improve on our relationships with hapū. They know who we are and some have attended our hui. Marae are in the loop but are not active members. Tainui came to a meeting with us and delivered a kaupapa—but that is not a Treaty relationship, it is a relationship of acknowledgement. Tainui has a 50 year education plan so questions for us are, "How does Ngāti Tamaoho as the hapū want us to help support them with that? How can we work with them to support their plan?"

The distinction between Treaty and equity has challenged us—we had lumped them together. We thought we were working to build Treaty relationships, we learned in the Treaty application workshop that it is not a Treaty relationship unless you have co-constructed your business with local hapū, and we hadn't. We had designed something for them and sought to share it. It has been a shock to discover we were at step one and to realise there is a lot of work to do that genuinely and well.

Building Treaty relationships with hapū is a challenge. It is great to know that you should. The next step is how to do that. It is not a simple thing. You don't just turn up to the marae and say, "We want to build a Treaty relationship with you." They would say "Who are you? Why are you here? Why have you turned up now? Where have you been all this time? Actually we would like to chat with you about some hurt that we have. What are you doing for our children?"

It is difficult for schools to know who and how to go about discussing these things with hapū, to know which hapū to approach when there are several. The local Huakina Development Trust operates on behalf of many marae in the area but not all. We have sought to have a relationship with them but they are going through organisational and political changes themselves as the marae/hapū that they have acted for are now working more independently. There are many marae and we could cause offence if we went to one and not others – it is a tricky situation to navigate.

When Te Huarahi started we invited everyone and then started with who came on the day. Many of us were Māori but we were educators as well. That has influenced the path we have taken. When we presented our plan to Te Huakina the response was polite but basically, "We didn't have any input so good

² The Ministry of Education's Māori Education Strategy. See: <http://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/overall-strategies-and-policies/the-Māori-education-strategy-ka-hikitia-accelerating-success-20132017/>

luck with that.” What we have learnt and embraced from that response is the desire to include them more in the planning ahead.

There is no clear-cut pathway in developing relationships with hapū. That is a potential barrier but navigating that is also exciting, and it could be a strong step for schools to take in discussion with hapū. That is the value of Te Huarahi, that as a collective we could begin discussions with local marae/hapū around a process for consultation. That might be one of the goals when we review our strategic plan, that we develop these relationships and work through the issues.

Reflection and advice

Leadership is critical—without principals and school leadership on board we would not have made the headway we have around changing the intergenerational issues. Schools took on board some of the knowledge around Te Tiriti and put that into practice. The kōrero in the first Treaty workshop was pivotal in helping schools consider how they were leading and how they were impacting on Māori whānau, and finally recognising there was a link. Before, the thinking was, ‘We do this and you do that,’ and there was a big chasm. Through the workshop school leaders realised, ‘What I do impacts on what my teachers/school does, which impacts on what my student believes, which impacts on what their whānau expects.’

The biggest learning for us has been that it is a really massive thing to be living a true Treaty relationship. It is not just about understanding the document that was signed all those years ago and looking for little ways that you apply that at home and in your workplace. It is a much bigger concept. The steps are big but we are on the journey.