

What have we learned about Māori and Pacific educational success?



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Foundation North's Māori & Pacific Education Initiative

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I Executive Summary

The Māori and Pacific Education Initiative (MPEI), funded by Foundation North (formerly the ASB Community Trust), has been ground-breaking in many ways, not the least being the successes the projects themselves have had, positively impacting on the lives of so many young Māori and Pacific people and their families.

This report sets out to synthesise the learning that has emerged from the evaluation process about what the driving factors were behind the educational success demonstrated in so many of the MPEI projects.

In a nutshell, Foundation North and the external evaluation team learned that what is essential for Māori and Pacific communities is that, first and foremost, their young people are able to go out into the world, standing strong and confident in who they are.

Fundamentally, Māori and Pacific communities aspire to produce young people of good character who demonstrate care, respect and aroha for whānau and community, and who exemplify the legacy, hopes and aspirations of their people. These aspirations include demonstrating leadership with integrity, service as well as high achievement, but not to the exclusion of other attributes of success.

The MPEI providers demonstrated that achieving these aspirations requires the following:

- ✘ **Māori and Pacific communities need to lead the design and implementation of the solutions to the challenges they face.** The MPEI providers had the core cultural competencies, contextual understanding of their communities and knowledge about what appropriate delivery of services might look like, and they demonstrated that this resulted in greater engagement and buy-in to the change processes required for young people and whānau to be successful. The results of the MPEI projects indicate that learners and young people have been effectively enabled to achieve “as Māori” or “as Samoan” or “as Tongan”.
- ✘ **Young people’s identity needs to be affirmed**, as Māori, as Samoan, as Tongan, as Kiwi-born Niuean, as Māori-Samoan ... Embedded in the MPEI projects were numerous examples of culturally grounded pedagogy as well as culturally responsive teaching, educational leadership, learning contexts and systems demonstrating their commitment to more responsive and rich learning experiences based on students’ strengths and interests. **The importance of cultural legitimacy** is understood by the MPEI providers to be the vital enabler of young people, so that they may proudly know their place in the world.
- ✘ **Whānau and aiga who are resilient and able to adapt** to the world around them and respond in ways that positively impact on their children.
- ✘ **Models of delivery that affirm Māori and Pacific whānau and aiga for who they are**, create a safe environment and a trusted, relational space, and that share with them the necessary support, knowledge and skills to engage effectively in their children’s learning.

II Background

The Māori and Pacific Education Initiative (MPEI)

In the face of overwhelming evidence of long-term, systemic educational failure for Māori and Pacific young people, Foundation North (known then as the ASB Community Trust) set out in 2006 “to explore a new, transformational approach to philanthropy”. The hope was that the new approach could go some way towards “overcoming educational underachievement in Māori and Pasifika communities” in Auckland and Northland. The cold, hard reality was that if left to continue, the wellbeing and prosperity of some Māori and Pacific communities was at serious risk; worse still, New Zealand’s economic progress, social cohesion and national identity could be argued to be on the line.¹

“Let’s do something big and bold”

Pat Snedden, Deputy Chair, 2006²

The Trustees of Foundation North set aside substantial funds, and committed to a long-term, innovative investment approach, that they knew would be risky and challenging for them, but necessary, if community-led solutions to seemingly intractable problems were to be found. The Māori and Pacific Education Initiative (MPEI) vision—**Mā tātou anō tātou e kōrero, We speak for ourselves**—captures the essence of the initiative, that communities know what is good for them, and must be able to speak for themselves and make their own decisions.³

Nine projects were chosen⁴ and funded for five years, each one inspired from within a Māori or Pacific community, with community backing, and focused on lifting the educational achievement of Māori and/or Pacific young people. The aspirations of these communities were clear:

“We want what others have: university enrolments; high paying jobs; people who are successful in their life careers whatever their field and confident about themselves and their culture. How come the state education system works for most people in the population but not for our peoples?”⁵

The projects selected offered a diverse range of solutions to the problem of educational underachievement—from early childhood to tertiary level—and their success demonstrates the acumen and ability Māori and Pacific communities have to generate compelling answers to the challenges they face.⁶

¹ MPEI contributors & Hancock (2013) *Nga Maumaharatanga: Māori and Pacific Education Initiative Our journey of forging philanthropic innovation together*, p. 15 (see References section for full source details—footnotes give short titles only)

² MPEI contributors & Hancock (2013)

³ Kevin Prime, Chair of ASB Community Trust, 2003-09, in Hancock (2009)

⁴ See Appendix A for details of the MPEI projects

⁵ Hancock (2009), p. 4

⁶ MPEI contributors & Hancock (2012) *He Akoranga He Aratohu: Māori and Pacific Education Initiative lessons to guide innovative philanthropic and social practice*

Māori and Pacific educational success

How educational success is defined—and by whom—has been a recurring conversation and theme throughout the MPEI. The MPEI Māori and Pacific providers told Foundation North and the evaluators (Kinnect Group), on more than one occasion, that educational success means much more than academic achievement.

For example, the three planks or pou—Be Māori, Be Educated, Be Rangatira—of Northland’s He Puna Marama **The Leadership Academy of A Company** illustrate the kind of vision of success that the MPEI providers have for their young people. Educational success includes academic achievement, but is so much more. Success in Māori terms embodies and embraces cultural dimensions such as knowledge and understanding of language, genealogy, history, and the principles and practices embodied in the Māori world. It includes leadership and active participation in the Māori world as well as the wider world. It also includes making a contribution to the aspirations and overall health, wellbeing and standard of living of whānau, hapū and iwi.⁷

Similarly, for Pacific people,⁸ educational success is a holistic concept that emphasises the value and respect of elders and leadership, and the building of strong relationships through service, reciprocity and connectedness to family and community. It is these things that define one’s wellbeing, sense of belonging, identity and culture. Academic success is contingent on the close alignment between the Pacific learner’s home, culture and educational environment.⁹

For Māori and Pacific, educational success is a strongly relational concept that pertains to more than the individual young person—it flows to and from and encapsulates whānau, hapū and iwi, family, community and church.¹⁰

The evaluators said they learned to look for evidence of educational success in the pride and sense of identity displayed in the young people and their whānau and aiga; the wellbeing and resilience of their whānau/aiga to support their young people; in the engagement of young people and their whānau/aiga in the life of their community, hapū, iwi, church, as well as with schools; in the leadership and service to others demonstrated by young people and their whānau/aiga; as well as in the educational and economic achievement of young people and their whānau/aiga.

It would be fair to say that although the evaluation criteria for educational success that the evaluation began with seemed broad to the evaluation team and Foundation North,¹¹ the MPEI providers’ own definitions of success were far more so.

Our collective learning from the MPEI projects was that there are some key features that underpin Māori and Pacific young people’s educational success. These are not newly discovered or known, they are well documented and also embedded in traditional and contemporary Māori and Pacific theory and practice. However, they are still not yet well understood in mainstream education contexts.

7 Durie (2001) A framework for considering Māori educational advancement

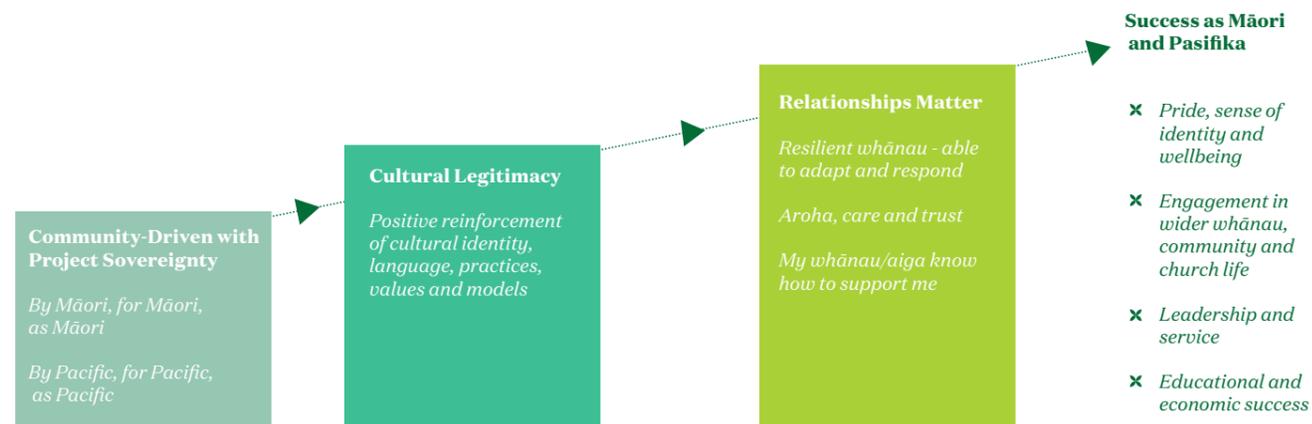
8 Originally, MPEI was named the Māori and Pasifika Education Initiative. Following discussion among committee members, the term “Pasifika” was replaced by the word “Pacific”. While the term Pasifika is used in some contexts, the word Pacific was considered a more universal expression. Pacific is an English term and Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand rely on English as their common language, while also speaking their own languages within their own communities. (MPEI contributors & Hancock, 2012, p.4)

9 Ministry of Education (2013) *Pasifika Education Plan 2013–2017*

10 Martin (2012) *He Kurahuna—Māori Expressions of Educational Success*; Ministry of Education documents such as *Ka Hikitia—Managing for Success*, *The Māori Education Strategy 2008–2012* (updated 2009) and *Pasifika Education Plan*; see also Macfarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, & Bateman (2007) *Creating culturally safe schools for Māori students*

11 See Appendix B for MPEI definitions of the educational outcomes to be evaluated

Figure 1: A theory of change for Māori and Pacific educational success



The MPEI projects provided the evaluation with a rich source of unique, local and distinctively different programmes all focused on changing the educational outcomes of Māori and Pacific young people. From these examples, Foundation North has been able to draw together learning about the critical dimensions of Māori and Pacific educational success that emerged across the projects.

We found clear synergies between the MPEI projects and the principles and dimensions for educational success found in several guiding documents referenced above. Across the different projects, three dimensions emerged as keys to success for Māori and Pacific educational success.

These are illustrated above and include:

- ✘ being community-driven with project sovereignty
- ✘ cultural legitimacy
- ✘ relationships matter.

This report presents a synthesis of the evaluation findings as they pertain to the essential building blocks for Māori and Pacific educational success; that is, the learning that has emerged from the successful projects in the MPEI.

See other reports in this series for what was learned about the key components of Māori and Pacific high-engagement funding, challenges of project evaluation, and assessment of the overall value for investment of this initiative. (See www.foundationnorth.org.nz/how-we-work/maori-pacific-education-initiative/.)

III Dimensions of educational success for Māori and Pacific young people

Below, we explore in more depth the dimensions of educational success that emerged across the MPEI projects.

Community-driven with project sovereignty

The majority of the MPEI initiatives have developed from the community in response to needs identified in and by the community. This reflected the vision of the MPEI that Māori and Pacific communities be able to speak for themselves.

It is also significant that Māori and Pacific people led the majority of these projects. And so it is in the faces and in the actions of the leaders of these projects that young people and their families can see and recognise the transformational change they can be, for themselves and their communities.

School principal Ann Milne wrote:

“If tweaking school environments to better reflect our ‘diverse’ student population, with one-off cultural meals or weeks, bilingual/multilingual signage, bilingual programmes, a kapa haka group and the like, really made a difference for Māori and Pasifika learners, we would already have different results.”¹²

The MPEI projects operate far beyond these surface manifestations of cultural diversity to something deeper, more intrinsic and sustainable. The MPEI projects are strongly “by Māori for Māori” and “by Pacific for Pacific”. MPEI providers have core cultural competencies, contextual understanding of their communities and knowledge about what appropriate delivery of services might look like. This results in greater engagement and buy-in to the necessary change processes required for young people and whānau/aiga to be successful. The results of the MPEI projects indicate that learners and young people have been effectively enabled to achieve “as Māori”, “as Samoan”, “as Tongan” and so on.

Table 1 describes MPEI providers’ perspectives on the importance of project sovereignty.

Table 1: MPEI provider perspectives on project sovereignty

For Māori providers:	For Pacific providers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Gives authority (mana) to Māori providers and communities to develop their own models and ways of working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Provides for Pacific-led programmes and services using Pacific approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Ensures being Māori is a core element of what creates change; that is, teaching our children what the essence of “being Māori” is, and what Māori values such as manāki are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Brings Pacific cultural knowledge and upbringing to the work with Pacific families, which is at the heart of what is needed to understand the underlying nuances behind a situation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Gives effect to Treaty principles; that is, working towards ensuring the programme funding is protected, working in partnership with the funder and the providers, ensuring ample opportunities for participation in strategic and tactical decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Means that there is a culturally specific and appropriate understanding of the context of the struggles and poverty issues facing our families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Influences systems and pathways to be responsive to Māori 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Allows providers to do things in a Pacific way, sharing our culture so it can be passed on to the next generation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Ensures the environment within which Māori develop and learn is taken into account, and in particular where the “start line” is for them, which is not the same as for non-Māori 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Ensures we can model Pacific leadership—essential for our success and sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Ensures the time it takes to engage with Māori students and whānau at the beginning of the journey is acknowledged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Meaningfully embraces our culture, and supports connections with family ✘ Means we can legitimately make a spiritual connection, and go to the core of our beliefs ✘ Ensures there is belief and recognition that parents want the best for their kids and that there is potential in every individual

¹² Milne (2009). *Colouring in the white spaces: Cultural identity and learning in school*, p.49

A key learning demonstrated by the MPEI projects is that transformative change is possible when Māori and Pacific realities, practices and understandings underpin the development and implementation of education solutions for Māori and Pacific.¹³

This learning is consistent with Kaupapa Māori—a way of doing things which privileges Māori values, attitudes and practices, and asserts the strength and resilience of Māori voices, experiences and conditions.¹⁴ This approach acknowledges and respects the strengths, capacities and resilience of Māori communities and has been found to increase the chances of transformational change.¹⁵

Significantly, the MPEI projects have also demonstrated that Māori and Pacific communities are capable of creating change across a wide spectrum of vulnerability. Although there is strong evidence about the difficulty of effectively intervening in later years, these providers have demonstrated that it is possible to create significant change, when projects are led by people from these communities who are capable, passionate and sufficiently well-funded and supported.¹⁶

Many of the projects used and adapted models and practices that are not Māori or Pacific and included non-Māori and non-Pasifika in their projects. This is consistent with responsive, reflective, Māori and Pacific leadership—remaining open to new ideas, taking on and adapting theory and practice that are seen as aligned with values and kaupapa and capable of enhancing the outcomes being sought.¹⁷

For example, the **Rise UP** curriculum draws from De Bono’s thinking hats, and enquiry learning theory and practice, and has been adapted for Pacific children and families. The **High Tech Youth Network** has a clear rationale that sits behind the project and this is informed by extensive research and evaluation of both indigenous and overseas models of delivery. A great deal of effort has been put into building an evidence base about how and why the approach can be adapted and used in the New Zealand context, and is consistent with Māori and Pacific values and principles.

Foundation North’s vision for and implementation of the MPEI meant that Māori and Pacific communities were given an opportunity to exercise their authority autonomously and to apply cultural knowledge and wisdom to each of their particular situations. They were able to decide and choose the models and practices they used to develop solutions for their own young people, whānau and communities.

This opportunity was located within an expectation that the funder would walk alongside providers, in a relationship of high trust; where the ups and downs of the journey would be transparently shared between providers and funder. Foundation staff and Trustees hoped that, with providers, they would work together to problem-solve and evolve the needed strategies to address programme opportunities and challenges.

The MPEI projects have demonstrated that Māori and Pacific communities are capable of creating change across a wide spectrum of vulnerability.

Cultural legitimacy

Māori providers said that cultural legitimacy is all about:

- ✘ developing our cultural identity “as Māori” as the basis for leadership and educational achievement
- ✘ utilising cultural values and practices such as manāki, awhi, akiaki, kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (in person engagement), wairuatanga (spirituality), te wā, tuākana-teina, koha (reciprocity), tauutuutu, whakapapa (kinship relationships), and whanaungatanga (relationships)
- ✘ developing the ability to articulate and express cultural strengths as fundamental to who we are
- ✘ supporting young people to discover their whakapapa as well as their aspirations, access their marae and link them to their tūrangawaewae.

Pacific providers said that cultural legitimacy is all about:

- ✘ developing a sense of identity and purpose, knowing who you are and where you are going
- ✘ understanding and recognising there is a continuum of cultural experience according to how strongly influenced a young person’s Pacific culture has been by New Zealand culture
- ✘ developing young people’s belief in themselves and what they are good at (their X factor).

Cultural legitimacy boils down to young people, their whānau and community being free to be who and what they are;¹⁸ feeling safe, welcome, affirmed, celebrated and “normal” in their educational environment, as well as in the wider world.

The success of the MPEI projects is underpinned by the ability of Māori and Pacific providers to create environments where young people and their whānau/aiga feel culturally legitimate and celebrated. For example, the cultural capital that Otara youth bring to the games, videos and animations they create at **High Tech Youth Network** is celebrated and valued by not only their tutors but also industry stakeholders who support the training and offer internships. Similarly, the cultural gifts and talents that the young children have are studied and celebrated through **Rise UP**’s programmes.

The people leading and working within the MPEI projects hold important cultural capital, knowledge and credibility. This enables them to become trusted by whānau and the young people they work with. They understand how to positively and meaningfully engage with parents, whānau, communities and wider support networks, and through the use of language (Te Reo, Samoan, Tongan etc) and other culturally specific practices that legitimate the identities of the young people and their whānau. All these factors are well known to contribute to educational success.¹⁹

¹³ Jones, Ingham, Davies, & Cram (2010) Whānau Tuatahi: Māori community partnership research using a Kaupapa Māori methodology

¹⁴ Smith (1999) *Decolonising methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*

¹⁵ Mertens (2009) *Transformative research and evaluation*

¹⁶ Gluckman, P. (2011). *Improving the transition, reducing social and psychological morbidity during adolescence*

¹⁷ Tākao, Grenell, McKegg, & Wehipeihana (2010) *Te Piko o te Māhuri, The key attributes of successful Kura Kaupapa Māori*

¹⁸ Macfarlane et al. (2007)

¹⁹ Ministry of Education (2011) *Ka Hikitia* Measurable Gains Framework logic model; see also Smith’s (2003) keynote address on *Indigenous struggle for the transformation of education and schooling*; and Ministry of Education (2010) *Pasifika Education Plan 2009–2012*

However, the processes by which identity is affirmed are by no means always straightforward, as one story from **Ideal Success** illustrates. When one young woman was first enrolled in the programme, she was clear about her identity, “I’m not a Māori, I’m a Mongrel”. The whole family situation was far from ideal, and the potential for there to be a lost generation of young people was high. However, with intensive support from Ideal Success, she is now teaching in a Kōhanga Reo, other members of her whānau are off drugs and all are working, and the youngest members are now doing well in school.

All the projects have a fundamental belief in the cultural advantages and inherent capabilities of the young people and of their communities. These are reinforced through the everyday use of Māori and Pacific values and practices.

For example, the whakatauki “He mokopuna, he kaumātua, he mokopuna” is exemplified in the rituals and day-to-day practices of **The Leadership Academy of A Company**. The cadets of He Puna Marama build a deep spiritual connection and understanding of their ancestors, of their grandfathers’ sacrifice and courage in battle, that lays a platform, a legacy, for the way in which they perceive their future pathways and responsibilities.

Many other Māori principles and ways of working such as whanaungatanga (the building of relationships); manaakitanga (nurturing relationships, looking after people and being very careful about how others are treated) as well as approaches that are kanohi kitea (which focuses on the importance of meeting people face-to-face), and mahi-a-whānau (working with families) are embedded deep within the service delivery and day-to-day running of the Māori projects.

Teu le va principles²⁰ underpin the operations of the Pacific projects. This is evident in the strong focus on the moral, ethical and spiritual dimensions of relationships with all key stakeholders. Deeply embedded within the programmes are spiritual ways of learning that are relevant for Pacific young people and their families. For example, in both **C-Me** and **Rise UP**, processes of aspirational envisioning are used to reveal the talents and gifts that people hold within them. This revelational process is deeply spiritual, and it is by “catching the vision” that Pacific people know they are on the right track, that the learning is meaningful. Reciprocity and service elements are also strong. Examples include the “Servolution” programme run by Rise UP Trust and the “Recycle success” message emblazoned on jackets given to Trades At School graduates. Given the many intergenerational challenges to identity faced by young Pacific people of first, second and third generations living in New Zealand, the success of the MPEI projects is notable.²¹

For many young Pacific people, identity is complex and evolving. It is frequently multicultural and intergenerational, and although there are links made back to the islands of origin, this identity is less clear for many young Pacific people. Pacific people in New Zealand are redefining their identities, and the MPEI Pacific providers know this. They recognise that it is vital for all people to have a sense of belonging if they are to fly.²² For example, the “Know who I am” component of the **Rise UP** programme was designed for young people and their families to explore their roots and identities and to affirm and celebrate the gifts and talents they have been given by their ancestors.

All the projects have a fundamental belief in the cultural advantages and inherent capabilities of the young people and of their communities. These are reinforced through the everyday use of Māori and Pacific values and practices.

All the projects demonstrated a commitment to developing more responsive and rich learning experiences and curriculum based on students’ strengths and interests.

It is well documented that one of the critical ingredients necessary for students to engage in learning is a curriculum that is relevant and meaningful to them. An Education Review Office report in 2012 identified issues across a range of learning areas and contexts, in a significant number of primary and secondary schools, which negatively influenced Māori and Pacific learners’ opportunities to achieve. These included the need to shift to more student-centred learning, a more responsive and rich curriculum based on students’ strengths and interests, and using assessment information for learning.²³ The office called for a more responsive and rich curriculum based on students’ strengths and interests.

A number of the MPEI projects emerged from a frustration that the mainstream education system was not effectively engaging their youth. The MPEI projects are led by passionate people with a sense of urgency about creating a step change for themselves, for the sake of their families and communities.

All the projects demonstrated a commitment to developing more responsive and rich learning experiences and curriculum based on students’ strengths and interests. Creative, strengths-based approaches are being used to engage young people and their whānau.

Examples include the use of technology and the strong industry links in the **High Tech Youth Network** and **Mutukaroa**’s deliberate support for whānau and learners to understand their assessment and next steps for learning. **He Puna Marama** implemented individual learning plans with all cadets. Cadets’ strengths and goals were regularly reviewed for progress. Personalised learning plans enabled cadets to pursue their goals and strengths across the curriculum areas. **C-Me Trades At School** mentors young people and provides them with opportunities to begin their trade and gain work experience while they are still in school. Being able to learn job skills in the workplace is a key component emphasised by C-Me Trust. **Rise UP** celebrates culture, service and families through enquiry learning models. **Manaiakalani** uses netbooks to open up the worldwide web to engage young researchers as they “learn, create and share”.

The projects also demonstrate the use of culturally grounded pedagogy as well as culturally responsive teaching, educational leadership, learning contexts and systems. For example, the use of Pacific students’ study groups, initiated at the **Unitec** Graduate Diploma in Not for Profit Management, enabled the students to learn in a Pacific space. The **Rise UP** Trust has adopted enquiry-based learning as a model that works especially well with their Pacific learners. **High Tech Youth Network**’s deliberate use of sociocultural constructivism as the guiding pedagogy and **Manaiakalani**’s model of “learn, create, share” are other examples of projects finding culturally relevant models of learning.

²⁰ Airini, Anae, Mila-Schaaf, Coxon, Mara, & Sanga (2010) *Teu Le Va – Relationships across research and policy in Pasifika education*

²¹ Siataga (2011) ‘Pasifika child and youth well-being: roots and wings’, pp. 153-167, in Gluckman (2011)

²² Siataga (2011)

²³ Education Review Office (August 2012). *Evaluation at a glance: Priority learners in New Zealand schools*

Relationships matter

This dimension of success was complex and multilayered. It included the following three aspects:

- ✘ *Resilient whānau/aiga—able to adapt and respond*
- ✘ *Aroha, care and trust*
- ✘ *My whānau/aiga know how to support me.*

Resilient whānau/aiga

Māori and Pacific whānau and aiga want their children to be successful in the fullest sense—they want them to be both connected to, and proud of, who they are as Māori, as Tongan, as Samoan, as Niuean etc, as well as educationally successful.

The evaluators learned that many of the MPEI providers know that numerous Māori and Pacific families require intensive support to get to a place where they can effectively engage in and support their children’s learning. For these families, the relationships they have with each other need healing and nurturing to become strong and resilient, so that they can support their children to flourish. There is evidence of the need for quality family ties and relationships to support children’s success; a significant number of the projects make explicit links to the importance of strong, stable, healthy, enabled whānau and families being critical to educational success.²⁴ The primacy of the needs of whānau has seen several projects direct activity at ensuring the strength and support of the whānau and aiga.

For example, **Ideal Success** Trust’s Ngā Huarahi Tika programme works with a young person and his or her whānau, across a number of wellness domains, including economic, social and housing, to strengthen family resilience, which has a direct impact on the child’s ability to learn. Evidence from the focus groups, the digital story and evaluation of whānau journeys against the organisation’s outcomes framework has shown families have been strengthened and this has had an impact on the educational achievement of the young people in the programme. As one parent noted:

“He wasn’t very confident; he used to be back in the corner, but since he’s been here [Ngā Huarahi Tika], he stands proud, his back is straight. He’s got confidence now and I put it down to what he learns here. He’s always got questions now; he’s got the confidence to speak and ask questions. We put it down to what he’s learning here. His reading, writing, spelling and maths is back on track; as a matter of fact he’s advanced.”

24 Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph (2003) *The complexity of community and family influences on children’s achievement in New Zealand: Best Evidence Synthesis*

Rise UP works with families and young people to better understand how they relate to each other, as well as what they know about each other. They provide tools and experiences that encourage and support families to work together, to problem-solve and gel together in ways they have not done before. They are clear that change in young Pacific people’s lives will only be effective if their families and communities are an integral part of programming.²⁵

Ensuring whānau and aiga are resilient, able to respond and adapt to the ups and downs of life, is a critical and necessary step for many Māori and Pacific children and young people in order to become strong individuals, capable of succeeding in education and life. The influence of family on so much of a child’s life, including their education, is huge. And although the shape of whānau may change over time, its influence will continue to be critical to the success of the young people growing up in it. Strong, capable whānau are the key to successful young people.

Aroha, care and trust

The Ministry of Education’s *Ka Hikitia* Māori Education Strategy (2008)²⁶ highlights the importance of partnerships with whānau, language, identity and culture, knowing where learners come from and building on what learners bring with them.

However, for many Māori and Pacific whānau, there are barriers for them to overcome before they feel confident and able to create meaningful relationships with teachers and schools.

The evaluators learned that a key contributor to whānau engagement in the MPEI projects was that whānau and aiga felt the providers had aroha and care for them, that they were non-judgemental and inclusive. Providers said that “people need to know how much you care”, and they talked about whānau and aiga as whānau, “We do what we do as if they were our own whānau.”

Common to all the MPEI projects was that the leaders know their students, whānau and community. They are of these communities; they have long-term, trusted relationships with whānau and aiga as well as with people in the wider community. This deep relational positioning of the key people in these projects is reassuring to whānau and aiga; they are faces that are known and respected and it is this trusted relationship that is key to whānau and aiga taking important steps towards engaging in their children’s education.

Paying attention to strong relationships and productive partnerships with whānau is a key aspect of all the MPEI projects. The learner or young person is always seen as part of a wider whānau and community and relationships are deliberately and proactively nurtured and valued as significant enablers to the achievement of the child or young adult.

Paying attention to strong relationships and productive partnerships with whānau is a key aspect of all the MPEI projects.

25 Ministry of Health (2008) *The health of Pacific children and young people in New Zealand*

26 Ministry of Education (2008)

VI Conclusion

My whānau or aiga knows how to support me

The evaluators learned that with increased resilience, and the support of a trusted face, many Māori and Pacific whānau and aiga were hungry to learn how they could engage in and support their children's learning. For many whānau and aiga, this could still be tough, for all sorts of reasons. For example, there were whānau who worked long hours or multiple jobs to put food on the table, and there simply wasn't time left in the day to support their children the way they would like to. There were other whānau and aiga who for one reason or another hadn't acquired the confidence or knowledge necessary to support their children's learning on a day-to-day basis.

The MPEI providers understood the many challenges in the lives of their whānau and aiga, and their programmes reflected this. A key component of the success of all the programmes was the intentional support processes, people and practices that ensured whānau and aiga could confidently support their young people's learning journeys. For some, there are mentors or cadres in place that the young people can form meaningful relationships with, while they navigate the secondary-tertiary-employment pathway effectively. This is a key feature of the **Trades At School** and **He Puna Marama** theories of change.

Others, like **Mutukaroa**, **Ideal Success** and **Rise UP**, work to support whānau and aiga to develop and learn the skills and knowledge needed to have powerful learning conversations with their children and their teachers, so that they can engage effectively with the education system and support their children's achievement within it.

Other MPEI providers recognise that access to knowledge and technology needs to go beyond the programme's four walls; access needs to extend to whānau and aiga if young people are going to be supported to enquire, learn and share more effectively. A key component of the **Manaiakalani** and **High Tech Youth Network** programmes is the extension of access to technology to the whānau, aiga and communities in which the young people live.

The evaluators learned that what is essential for Māori and Pacific communities is that, first and foremost, their young people are able to go out into the world, standing strong and confident in who they are.

The affirmation of identity, as Māori, as Samoan, as Tongan, as Kiwi-born Niuean, as Māori-Samoan, as ... , is considered to be the vital enabler of young people, so that they may proudly know their place in the world.

Fundamentally, these communities aspire to produce young people of good character who demonstrate care, respect and aroha for whānau, aiga and community, and who exemplify the legacy, hopes and aspirations of their people. These aspirations include demonstrating leadership with integrity, service as well as high achievement, but not to the exclusion of the other attributes of success.

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Appendix A:

MPEI project summaries

In **Table 2** are brief summaries of the MPEI projects, in alphabetical order for ease of reference. Please refer to the Foundation North website (www.foundationnorth.org.nz/how-we-work/maori-pacific-education-initiative/) and project provider websites for information beyond these short introductions.

Table 2: Māori and Pacific Education Initiative project summaries

Project name	Brief outline
<i>C-Me Mentoring Trust: Trades At School</i> <i>Oceania Career Academy</i> www.oca.nz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Māori and Pacific Year 11-13 students are assessed and selected for engineering trades career ✘ supported by mentors to work on NCEA at secondary school and Level 2 Mechanical Engineering (a study pathway to 10 apprenticeship options) at Manukau Institute of Technology ✘ personal development programme and pastoral care support from mentor to connect with family, tutors, school and industry ✘ aims to offer high quality, culturally responsive career education and guidance; and through partnerships with employers, students gain work experience and support to find employment that uses their skills ✘ has a vision of arresting poverty and youth underachievement, enabling youth to serve their communities and be future leaders.
<i>High Tech Youth Network (HTYN)</i> www.hightechyouth.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ targets under-served young people, aged 8 to 25, to link cultural knowledge and values with technology, and encourage positive identity and belief in their potential ✘ network of community-based High Tech Youth Studios with digital capital (broadband, community wi-fi, cloud technology); connected across NZ and the Pacific to foster a digital and social learning community ✘ personal development plans to track, mentor and credential young people through to graduation ✘ supports value of technology within the home and family, lifelong learning, and higher learning pathways.
<i>Ideal Success Trust: Ngā Huarahi Tika</i> www.foundationnorth.org.nz/stories/catalysts-for-change/ideal-success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Ngā Huarahi Tika (“the right pathway”) is a needs-based, strengths-based programme for Māori 10-year-olds (Year 6-7) identified by local schools as facing challenges ✘ staff work with the child and whānau to develop learning plans and goals; literacy/numeracy support; health/wellbeing plans; cultural connectedness; finances; and strengthened relationships ✘ each whānau establishes own goals with youth mentors/whānau support workers who also provide advice, advocacy and referral to other services; whānau wellbeing is seen as critical to ensuring a child’s educational success.
<i>The Leadership Academy of A Company: He Puna Marama Trust</i> www.mokonoz.co.nz/a-company.php	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Whangarei-based He Puna Marama Trust draws on core values of the 28th Māori battalion to build resilience and self-confidence in Māori boys ✘ each intake of cadets is named after a respected member of “A Company” men from the north ✘ uses military-style training and Mātuaranga Māori (Māori understanding, knowledge and skills) around three pou (platforms): Be Māori - by graduation, cadets will demonstrate excellence and confidence in all areas “o te ao Māori”; Be Rangitira - have the core virtues and character to model excellence in their chosen field and lead a new generation of Māori; and Be Educated - achieve excellence in education and in their chosen pathway.

Project name	Brief outline
<i>Manaiakalani Education Programme</i> www.manaiakalani.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Manaiakalani (“the hook from Heaven”) aims to “hook” children into learning for life as fully engaged digital citizens ✘ based in a cluster of 12 schools (covering Year 1 to 13) in the low-income, predominantly Māori and Pacific communities of Tāmaki ✘ uses netbooks, wireless and cloud technology to give young learners access to the worldwide web, engaging them as they “learn, create and share”; parents can pay off the devices over 3 years ✘ a focus on family/whānau engagement offers training modules for parents to confidently engage with their children’s digital learning ✘ there is also professional development for teachers and ongoing university research into programme outcomes.
<i>MITE: Māori into Tertiary Education</i> <i>Refer to tertiary institution websites for information on Māori programmes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ builds on an Auckland-wide collaboration of high schools, tertiary institutions and employers to provide pathways from high school to tertiary study to jobs, apprenticeships, and internships for Māori ✘ the MITE Pipeline Project targets the steps from tertiary study to employment, in order to bridge the “education to employment” divide; gain greater employment success for Māori; promote the benefits for corporate business to recruit and retain Māori employees; and support Māori business and enterprise to grow and employ Māori students.
<i>Mutukaroa: Sylvia Park School</i> www.mutukaroa.org.nz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ Mutukaroa School and Community Learning Partnership began at Sylvia Park Primary School, based on research showing children achieve better when schools and families work together ✘ from a 5-year-old’s intake into primary school, progress and needs are tracked, and the Mutukaroa Coordinator works with teachers and family/whānau on child’s learning journey ✘ a School Coordinator also works with parents/whānau to support learning at home, including literacy and numeracy resources (available in Pacific languages and te reo Māori), and to set learning targets with regular follow-up and interpreters available for parent meetings ✘ aims include empowering children and parents to understand student learning; to enhance student learning at home; and for schools to be more responsive to learning inquiries from parents.
<i>Rise UP Trust</i> www.riseuptrust.org.nz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ charitable trust educators and volunteers support South Auckland parents to engage with their children’s learning at school and at home, through programmes for parents, families, and children aged 6 to 12 ✘ 4Es approach - Engage with whānau; Establish relationships; Equip them with keys for learning; Empowered whānau ✘ focus on culture and identity to build confidence for Māori, Pacific and other families and children ✘ tools to help families understand one another and their children’s learning style, language and personality ✘ develop 21st century lifelong learners; set whānau up for success in learning and relationships; “Truth in Love” - knowing who we are, applying universal human values and Biblical principles; connecting hearts and minds through families and communities learning together.
<i>Unitec Graduate Diploma in Not-for-Profit Management</i> www.unitec.ac.nz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✘ the Unitec Graduate Diploma in Not-for-Profit Management has run for 15 years, aiming to strengthen the management, leadership and organisational capacity and capability of the not-for-profit sector with a Level 7 course that is interactive, practice-based, and taught by tutors who work in the field ✘ MPEI funding provided scholarships for Pacific students working in the early childhood sector (in management or governance) to complete the diploma in 5 years ✘ the funding also covered individualised pastoral care with tailored academic advice, tutorial support and supervision to support student retention and educational achievement ✘ funding supported networking with Pacific communities to encourage community support for those entering academic training.

Appendix B:

Educational outcomes as defined by the MPEI evaluation

Table 3: Educational outcomes framework

In this evaluation, educational outcomes²⁷ include improvements in ANY of the following:

Cultural confidence and identity

For example, students are confident in the Māori/Pacific world as well as the mainstream worlds of education and work; students feel good about being Māori/Pacific at school and in other educational settings; teachers and students incorporate Māori and Pacific culture, knowledge and understandings into different subjects and connect learning activities to students' family and community.

Whānau/family understanding and engagement

For example, family are made to feel welcome in the school; have an increased presence at school; are participating in school committees and activities; engaging with teachers about their children's education.

Attitudes and aspirations of students, teachers, whānau

For example, teachers pronounce students' and families' names correctly; increased rapport and trust between students and teachers; students actively participate in school activities; are being offered and taking up more extra-curricular or leadership opportunities; lift in career aspirations; and researching career options.

Student engagement and retention

For example, staying in school longer; reduction in unexplained absences; students want to be at school; are happy to be at school; come to school prepared for learning; are leading their own learning such as proactively pursuing further learning over and above the basic course, or doing additional work to grow their own knowledge in support of their interests.

Literacy and numeracy

For example, improved AsTTle, SAT, PAT results; students', teachers' and parents' observations.

Academic achievement

For example, NCEA/Cambridge results; AsTTle, SAT, PAT results; awards; entry to tertiary education or other opportunities.

Employment, training and further education

For example, MPEI enables students/family members to progress to employment, training or further education opportunities that would not otherwise have been possible.





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