

Research Report

Kia hoe tahi i te awa kōwhiria o ako Mobilising whānau commitment to Māori-medium learning pathways

Nichole Gully and Margie Kahukura Hohepa
November 2021

He rauemi, he rangahau nā

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Foundation



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He mihi maioha

Papaki kau ana ngā tai o mihi ki ngā ringa katoa i raupī nei, i eke tahi nei i tēnei waka rangahau. I whakarewahia te waka i ngā haehae moana, i ngā awa e kōwhiriwhiri ana iKā-pākihi-whakatekateka-o-Waitaha. I hoea ōna ara haere, he wā anō i whāngaihia e ōna mahinga kai, nō Ngāi Tūahuriri, nō Ngāi Tahu whānui. Ka puta hei waka hourua ki Te Tai-o-Mahaanui i kawea tahitia ai ngā kaumoana o ngā kōhanga reo, ngā kura, ngā whānau me ā rātou tamariki mokopuna. Mei kore ake koutou, kīhai i neke te waka nei i tana tumu. Nā koutou, mā koutou te mahi, mā te kaupapa. Kotahi te waka, kotahi te haerenga, ko te mahi ngātahi tōna whāinga, tōna whakatutukinga. E kore e mimiti ngā mihi ki a koutou o te Rātā Foundation, te hau i pūhia ai i te rā kia whakatehawaiki te hautū. Te tira waka i whakaterea tahitia ai, arā Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga ki Waitaha, ngā kaihautū me ngā kaiurungi o Te Kōhanga Reo ā-takiwā, ā-motu, nei ngā owaha nui. Ā kāti, ka tahuri ki te mātanga i tohua ai te ahunga o te haere, ki a Mere Skerrett, e kore e mimiti ngā hau o mihi. Ki a koutou katoa ngā ringa hāpai o te uepū rangahau i tōna tīmatanga, tae noa ki tōna mutunga, ki a Charles Rolleston, ki a Verity Tamepo, ki a Alyssa McArthur me te tīma tārai rauemi, tēnei te mihi maioha.

Nā Nichole Gully māua ko Margie Kahukura Hohepa

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Verity Tamepo 2020

Charles Rolleston 2020

Participating settings

Te Kura Whakapūmau i te reo Tūturu ki Waitaha
Te Kōhanga Reo o Ōterepo
Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Whānau Tahī
Te Kōhanga Reo o Te Whānau Tahī

Kia hoe tahi i te awa kōwhiria o ako

Mobilising whānau commitment to Māori-medium learning pathways

1. Te whakaterere – navigating our project (Executive summary)

In early 2018, CORE Education was invited by the Rātā Foundation to submit an action research proposal with a focus on transition to school. Our proposal had two streams; one for English-medium (Te hautū i te awa whiria o ako - supporting pathways to lifelong learning for English-medium schools) and this one Kia hoe tahi i te awa kōwhiria o ako - Mobilising whānau commitment to Māori-medium pathways.

International findings on effective bilingual education highlight the importance of transitions that support continuity of learning. Indications are that in order to experience the benefits of high quality Māori-medium education, tamariki and their whānau need to remain on a Māori-medium learning pathway for a minimum of 6 years, ideally 8 years¹. National schooling outcomes provide further support for a continuing Māori-medium learning pathway, showing that Māori-medium learners are more likely to leave compulsory schooling

with NCEA and university entrance qualifications at least on par with non-Māori learners and at much higher levels of success than those experienced by Māori learners in English-medium.

In this project we set out to explore the transition of tamariki and their whānau from kōhanga reo to kura kaupapa Māori with two kōhanga reo and two kura kaupapa Māori settings in Christchurch. We wanted to find out what whānau need to make informed decisions about a Māori-medium pathway and how kaiako, kōhanga reo and kura can effectively support tamariki and their whānau to make this transition. We were driven by the significance that Māori-medium education pathways have for te reo Māori regeneration as well as Māori education success and we sought to affirm the fundamental role of whānau in the emergence and development of Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori.

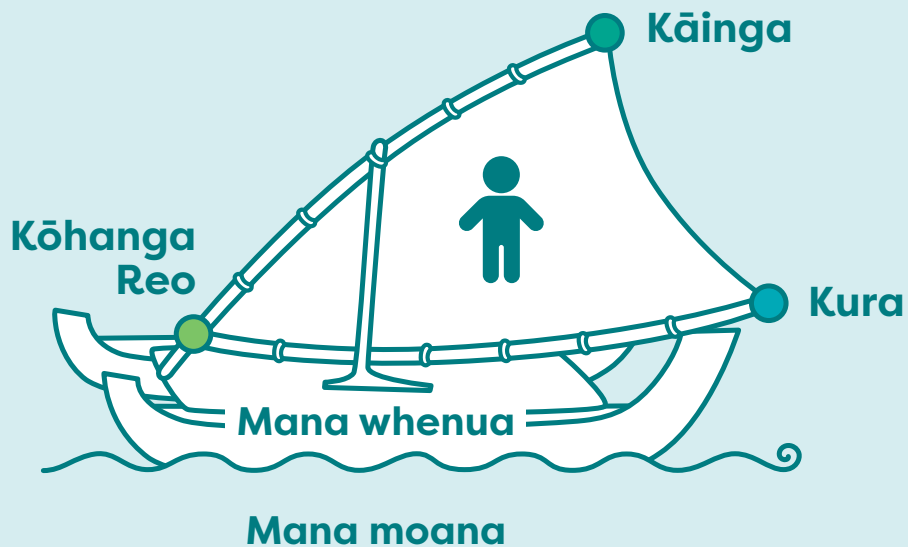
1. May, S., Hill, R., & Tiakiwai, S. (2004). *Bilingual/Immersion education: Indicators of good practice*.



The waka revealed itself early as the guiding metaphor for our project, along with *Te Hawaiki* representing whānau aspirations and dreams, goals and desired outcomes.

Te Hawaiki - Te Pakirehua:

Me pēhea te whakakaha i ngā hononga kia ngātahi ai te haere
kia māia te whānau me ā rātou tamariki mokopuna kia ū ki te arareo Māori.

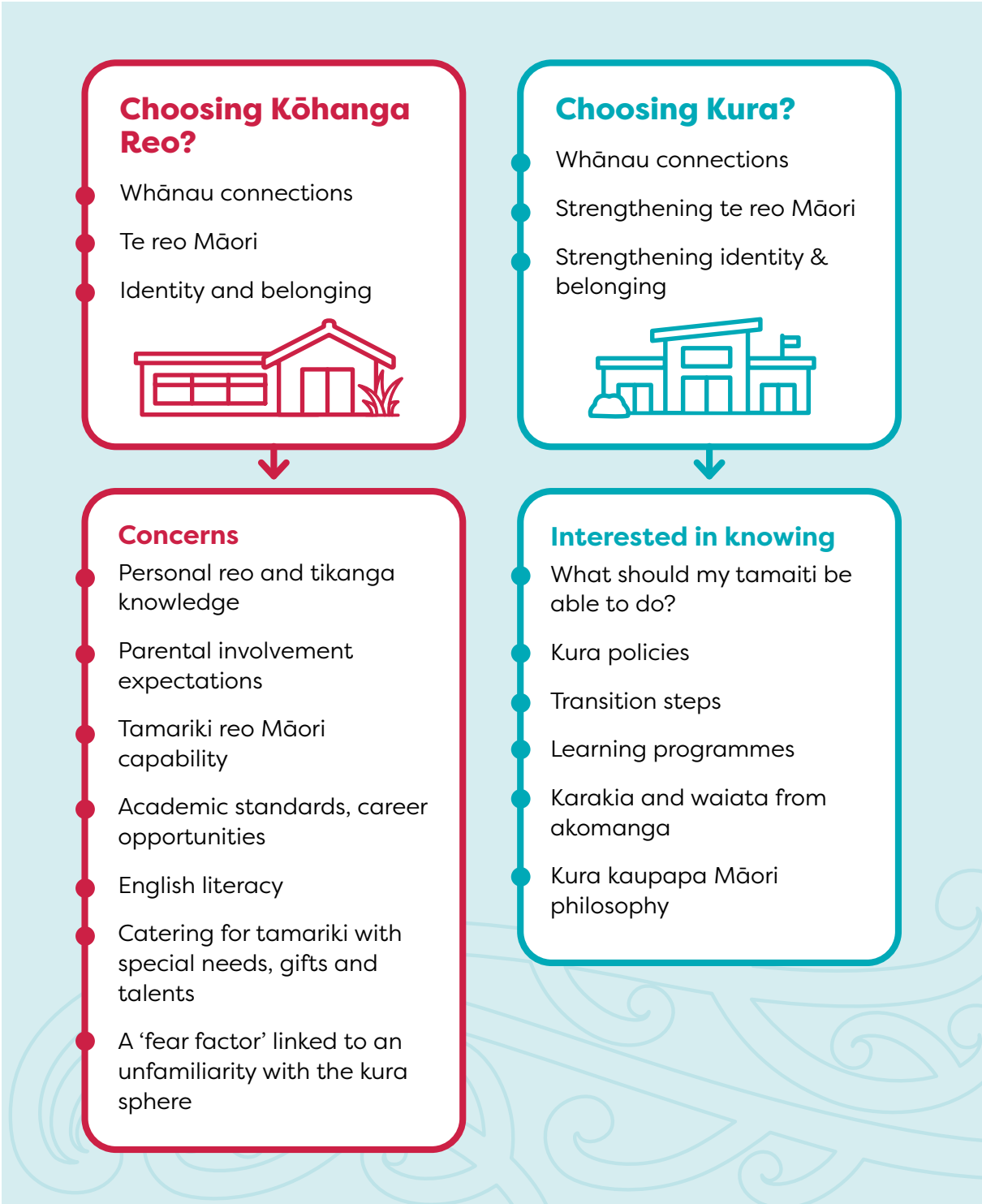


We recognised the importance of keeping a holistic and inclusive view of whānau and realised that kāinga (home) was invisible as a significant setting alongside the kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori. The three settings ‘kāinga-kōhanga reo- kura’ came together as Te Rā - the sail needed to ensure that tamariki along with whānau in all settings experienced successful Māori-medium journeys to ‘Hawaiki’.

Using a collaborative participatory action research approach underpinned by kaupapa Māori we began by listening to the voices of kōhanga reo whānau. In wānanga they shared reasons and aspirations behind choosing kōhanga reo for their tamariki as well as their intentions for them to continue on to kura kaupapa Māori when the time arrived. They discussed their knowledge and understandings, along with their questions and concerns, about kura kaupapa Māori.



The table below synthesises key messaging from whānau around choosing kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori for their tamariki and whānau.





We explored through wānanga, the knowledge, beliefs and practices of kaiako who work with tamariki just before and just after they make the move from the participating kōhanga reo to kura. They talked about transition-related challenges they had observed parents and whānau dealing with and identified ways they thought might help to address these.

Opportunities for greater:

- connection and collaboration across kōhanga reo, kura and with whānau
- curriculum and programme design sharing awareness
- clarity and communication of transition process and roles
- continuation and sharing of effective practices



Challenges facing whānau:

- whakamā and personal knowledge of te reo, tikanga
- apprehensions about the kura system and their role
- navigating the enrolment and pre-entry processes



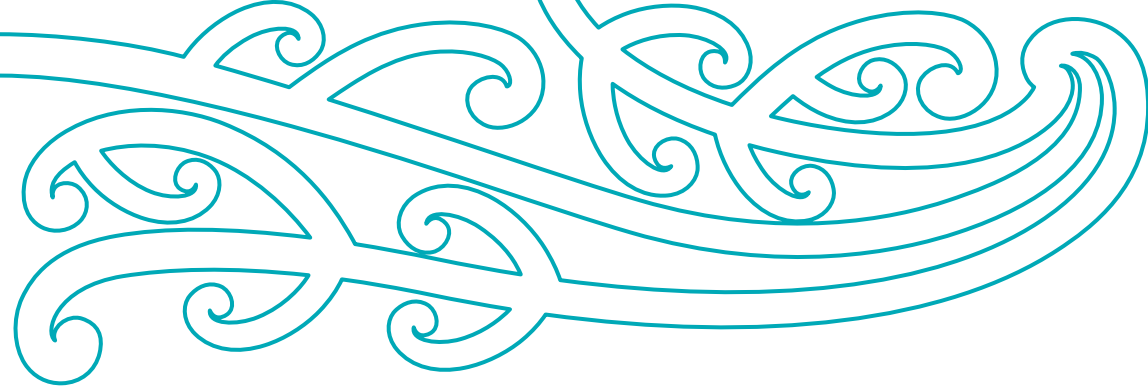
Bringing together the learning from Wānanga Whānau and wānanga kaiako, kaiako then set out on their collaborative journeys, to deeply understand the experiences and views of whānau and tamariki in developing and implementing *pakirehua pūrua* (collaborative inquiries) with their kōhanga reo and kura. While each *kaiako pūrua* (paired kaiako) came up with similar kaupapa for their pakirehua, the respective kaupapa differed in form and function. All kaupapa focused on ways to strengthen connections across kāinga-kōhanga-kura.

Pukapuka and rauemi

Kaiako developed pukapuka and rauemi that help to familiarise kōhanga reo mokopuna and whānau (which includes kaiako) with kōhanga reo and kura settings; identify skills and behaviours that support preparation for kura; explain key philosophies underpinning kōhanga reo and kura; and provide opportunities to learn karakia and waiata used in both settings. Kaiako committed to whānau and tamariki input into the pukapuka and rauemi.

Hononga - connections

Many themes have emerged along the project journey, which we illuminated under the significance of hononga - connections spanning identities,

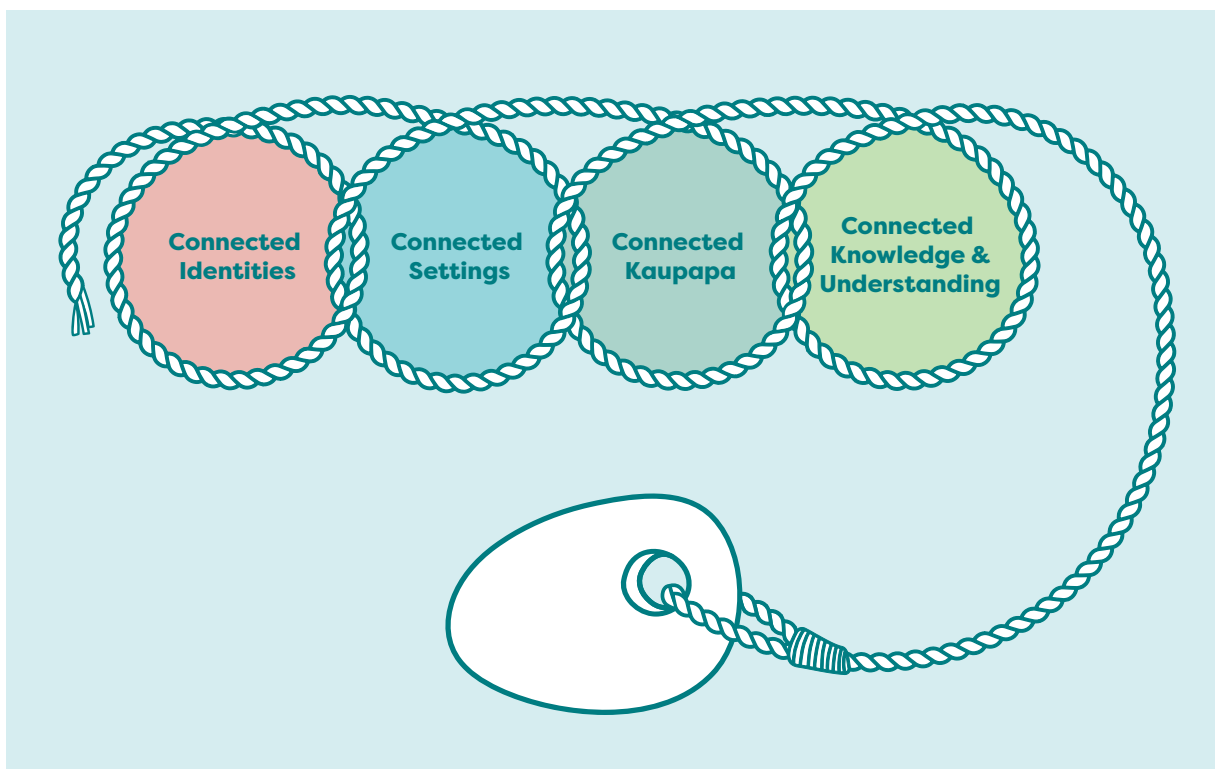


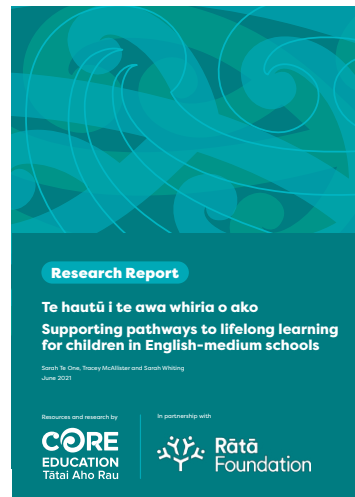
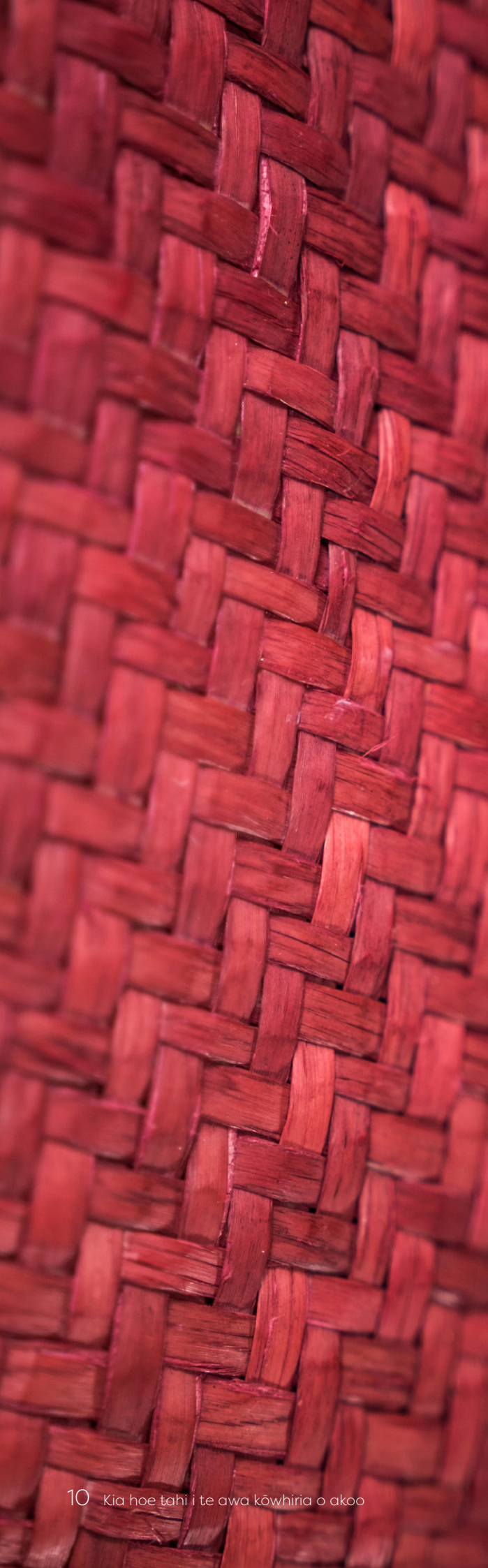
settings, kaupapa, and developing knowledge and understandings:

- diverse yet connected identities, strengthening *kōhanga reo* and *kura kaupapa* Māori *whānau* - *whānau kaupapa* Māori
- connecting settings through *kanohi kitea* (seen faces), *mahi ngātahi* (working together), sharing planning approaches, and producing and distributing *rauemi* across *kāinga-kōhanga reo-kura*
- connecting kaupapa - *kōhanga reo* and *kura kaupapa* Māori are more than sites for early learning and schooling but part of a cultural-political-educational movement, or kaupapa, encompassing transformative action and long term vision, aspirations and commitment
- connecting knowledge and understandings, which occurred at *wānanga*, through the *pukapuka* and resources *kaiako* and *tamariki* have produced, during visits between *kōhanga reo* and *kura*, and in the networking that took place, all point to the power of connecting.

“Transition is not the focus, it is the outcome. The focus instead needs to be on creating connections and engagement, hononga, across the *whānau* through incremental deliberate acts enabled by the *kōhanga reo* and the *kura*.”

(Researcher-facilitator reflection)





In line with our sister project, *Te hautū i te awa whiria o ako – Supporting pathways to lifelong learning for children in English-medium schools*, knowledge mobilisation across the participating kōhanga reo and kura whānau was built into the design. The kōhanga reo and kura have shared rauemi from their mahi pakirehua with their whānau and are now considering how best to share these more widely.



Hei taunaki - Recommendations

Making the invisible visible - what kōhanga reo and kura can consider

Sustained connections can support effective transition, and so much more. We invite kōhanga reo and kura whānau to explore the quality and level of their connection to the kaupapa to effectively support tamariki and their whānau to transition to kura

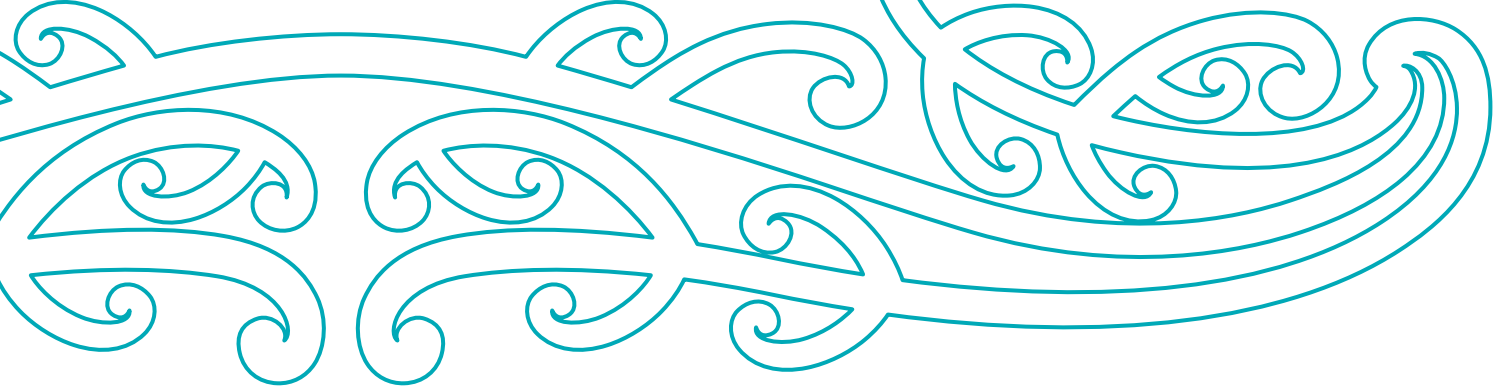
Learnings we can take from this mahi include:

- Ensuring Kaiako are resourced to undertake a transitions project for their setting to deeply understand their kāinga-kōhanga reo-kura needs and have time to explore what do effective connections look like, sound like and feel like in kaupapa Māori settings:
 - » How might connections be strengthened?
 - » What needs to happen to sustain connections?
 - » How will whānau voice be included?
 - » How will tamariki voices be included?
- Transition rauemi and pukapuka should be tailored and targeted to each kōhanga reo and kura
- Consider how whānau might be supported to unpack and use resources so they are not just for information.

- Consider what supporting resources may be appropriate

This mahi sheds light on the stress Māori-medium education is under. Beyond the kaupapa of successful transitions for tamariki to kura we note the:

- importance of the Ministry of Education's (Ministry's) fixed-term whānau transitions role in Canterbury and recommend bedding this in and exploring the potential of such roles on a national scale
- long waiting lists for whānau wanting to access kōhanga reo and the implications of this for Māori-medium education pathways for whānau and for Government
- importance of the relationship between Te Kōhanga Reo Trust and the Ministry, and that this affirms rangatiratanga and self-determination drivers underpinning Māori educational movements.
- ways in which national and organisational policy can positively impact on Māori-medium whānau and their tamariki by:
 - » providing equitable resourcing
 - » supporting ongoing kaupapa Māori research activities to continually strengthen practice and policy
 - » understanding whose voices are needed in the Māori-medium education ecosystem and strengthen those relationships



2. Ekea te waka – getting on board the project (Background)

How the research began

During 2017, conversations between CORE Education, Rātā Foundation, Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga (Ministry of Education) coalesced around concerns about learning pathways between early learning services (ELS) and schools.

The 2017 discussions landed on the importance of enabling systems level change within and across learning networks for English and Māori medium learning pathways. This required a deep dive into the issues via research that was real, relevant and meaningful, and where findings would result in shifts in pedagogy (teaching and learning practices) and learning success for tamariki.

In early 2018, CORE Education was invited by the Rātā Foundation to submit a research proposal about transitions to school with a focus on transition to school. Our proposal had two streams; one for English-medium (Te hautū i te awa whiria o ako - supporting pathways to lifelong learning for English-medium schools) and this one Kia hoe tahi i te awa kōwhiria o ako - Mobilising whānau commitment to Māori-medium pathways.

This report is about the Māori -medium project. In brief, this project we set out

to explore the transition of tamariki and their whānau from kōhanga reo to kura kaupapa Māori with two kōhanga reo and two kura kaupapa Māori settings in Christchurch. We wanted to find out what whānau need to make informed decisions about a Māori-medium pathway and how kaiako, kōhanga reo and kura can effectively support tamariki and their whānau to make this transition.

The Early Learning Steering Group

The proposal was accepted and became an integral part of Rātā Foundation's strategic Early Years Project. A Steering Group was established to ensure fidelity with the community so the group members included representatives from Ngai Tahu, the Pacific community, the Ministry of Education, and whānau as well as CORE Education, University of Canterbury and Rātā Foundation personnel. The role of this group was to both guide, inform and make connections to the wider education system and communities. As well as listening to short presentations about the projects delivered at hui, ideas and proto-type resources were shared for feedback.

Contextualising the Māori medium project

The first Kura Kaupapa Māori sites were born out of kōhanga reo whānau desires for their tamariki mokopuna (children, grandchildren) to experience an ongoing kaupapa Māori learning pathway through te reo Māori. Kura whānau and kōhanga reo whānau were essentially one and the same, and ‘transition’ could be relatively seamless because of shared kaupapa, vision and, in some cases, close proximity. Transitions between kōhanga reo and kura settings were less a case of “crossing the borders², and more of staying on the kaupapa.

International findings on effective bilingual education highlight the importance of transitions that support continuity of learning. Indications are that in order to experience the benefits of high quality Māori-medium education, tamariki and their whānau need to remain on a Māori-medium learning pathway for a minimum of 6 years, ideally 8 years³. National schooling outcomes provide further support for a continuing Māori-medium learning pathway, showing that Māori-medium learners are more likely to leave compulsory schooling with NCEA and university entrance qualifications at least on par with non-Māori learners and at much

higher levels of success than those experienced by Māori learners in English-medium⁴.

Since the emergence of the first te kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori a range of changes, including policy, curriculum and strategies, have impacted on how transitions between the two are playing out in Māori-medium today. Transition has been identified as a critical issue in Māori-medium education⁵ and indications recently have been that less than half of kōhanga reo mokopuna transition to Māori-medium school contexts nationally⁶. Parents and whānau make key decisions on learning pathways for their tamariki and in Māori-medium these decisions impact not only on continuity of learning and bilingual benefits for an individual tamaiti, but also on the continuity of te reo Māori for the tamaiti, their whānau and for te ao Māori more widely. The project sits in a wider context of Government driven initiatives for te reo Māori under the Maihi Karauna⁷ and Māori-Medium education growth programmes⁸ that aim to:

- increase the number of speakers of Māori to 1 million by 2040
- grow the number of Māori medium learners to 30%
- expand the pool of Māori-medium kura and kaiako.

2. Hartley, C., Rogers, P., Smith, J., Peters, S., & Carr, M. (2012). *Crossing the border. A community negotiates the transition from early childhood to primary school*. Wellington, N.Z., NZCER Press.

3. May, S., Hill, R., & Tiakiwai, S. (2004). *Bilingual/Immersion education: Indicators of good practice*.

4. Te Kura Huanui: The Treasures of Successful Pathways <https://ero.govt.nz/our-research/te-kura-huanui-the-treasures-of-successful-pathways>; NCEA attainment rates fall, Māori schools buck trend <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/115874781/ncea-attainment-rates-fall-mori-schools-buck-trend>

5. See eg: Bright, N., Barnes, A., & Hutchings, J. (2015). *Ka whānau mai te reo—Kia rite! Getting ready to move, te reo Māori and transitions*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for

Educational Research; Hohepa, M., & Paki, V. (2017). Māori medium education and transition to school. In N. Ballam, B. Perry, & A. Garpelin (Eds.), *Pedagogies of educational transitions: European and Antipodean research*. (pp. 95–111). Switzerland: Springer.

6. Ministry of Education. (2016). *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga: Annual report on Māori education 2015–2016*. Wellington: Author. Retrieved from https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/172060/Nga-Haeata-Matauranga221116.pdf

7. <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/a-matou-kaupapa/te-ao-maori/maihi-karauna>

8. <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-invests-grow-m%C4%81ori-medium-education>

There are also links to the National Education and Learning Priorities⁹ with its objectives regarding the centrality of learners with their whānau, barrier free access to education opportunities and quality teaching and leadership.

The Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) & Tertiary Education Strategy (TES)

The Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) are issued under the Education and Training Act 2020. The NELP must be consistent with the objectives for education. These are: helping children and young people to attain their educational potential; preparing young people for participation in civic and community life and for work, and promoting resilience, determination, confidence, creative and critical thinking, good social skills and the ability to form good relationships; and helping children and young people to appreciate diversity, inclusion and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The TES must set out the Government's long-term strategic direction for tertiary education, including economic, social, and environmental goals, and the development aspirations of Māori and other population groups. One of the purposes of the Act is to establish and regulate an education system that honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi and supports Māori-Crown relationships. Section 9 sets out the main provisions of the Act in relation to the Crown's responsibility to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. These provisions include obligations in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi for school boards, tertiary education institutions and education agencies.

OBJECTIVES	1 LEARNERS AT THE CENTRE Learners with their whānau are at the centre of education	2 BARRIER FREE ACCESS Great education opportunities and outcomes are within reach for every learner	3 QUALITY TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP Quality teaching and leadership make the difference for learners and their whānau	4 FUTURE OF LEARNING AND WORK Learning that is relevant to the lives of New Zealanders today and throughout their lives	5 WORLD CLASS INCLUSIVE PUBLIC EDUCATION New Zealand education is trusted and sustainable
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The project was concerned with the significance of the continuity of a Māori-medium education pathway for lifelong learning within a te reo Māori regeneration agenda. It centred on whānau as decision maker and key influencer who continue to drive transformation in and between Maori-medium education settings. It sought to affirm the fundamental role of whānau in the emergence and development of Te Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori, both of which continue to view parents and whānau of tamariki as key members in these settings.

Ehara i te mea mō ngā tamariki anake te kura.
The kura is not just for tamariki.
Te Aho Matua: Ngā Iwi 3.9

In contrast to our sister project *Te hautū i te awa whiria o ako – Supporting pathways to lifelong*

learning for children in English-medium schools, although our project had a focus on kaiako practice, we were keenly interested in parents and whānau as they travel alongside their tamariki on their Māori-medium learning journey.

This project sought to explore:

-  the transition of tamariki and their whānau from kōhanga reo to kura kaupapa Māori
-  what whānau need to make informed decisions about a Māori-medium pathway
-  how kaiako, kōhanga and kura can effectively support tamariki and their whānau to make this transition.

9. The Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES)

Te tārei waka – designing our project

The seed for *Kia hoe tahi i te awa kōwhiria o ako* was planted by CORE Education¹⁰ and Rātā Foundation alongside the Ministry of Education in 2017. Shared concerns about learning pathways between early learning and schools led to CORE Education submitting a proposal to Rātā Foundation about transitions that consisted of a Māori-medium and an English-medium stream. In August 2019 a meeting of what would become the CORE project team at the CORE Education Ōtautahi office resulted in the concept design that guided our proposal writing. At the end of that very same week Christchurch was rocked by a terrorist attack that shook Aotearoa to its core. While grief was still heavy in many, the Māori-medium stream proposal was completed and submitted to the Rātā Foundation. On acceptance at the end of 2019, the ‘tree’ that would take the form of our project ‘waka’ started to reach maturity.

Kia hoe tahi i te awa kōwhiria o ako drew its name from the braided rivers of the Canterbury Plains mapping the project onto the local landscape and a feature that is significant to the local mana whenua of Ngāi Tūahuriri. It also references ‘Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo’ - the curriculum document for kōhanga reo, in particular from its explanation of the fundamental and unique connection between kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori, “Te hono ki te kura”, and the role whānau has alongside tamariki as they navigate their journey through education.

**Ka whakawhitingia
ana e te whānau ā
rātou tamariki ki te
kura, e haere tonu
ana tā rātou hoe tahi
i te ara ako o ngā
tamariki.**

*When families transition
their children to kura,
they continue paddling
together along the
children’s learning
pathway*

(Te Whāriki a Te Kōhanga
Reo, p. 36)



10. See Te One, S., McAllister, T., & Whiting, S. (June 2021). *Research report Te Hautū i te awa whiria o ako*.

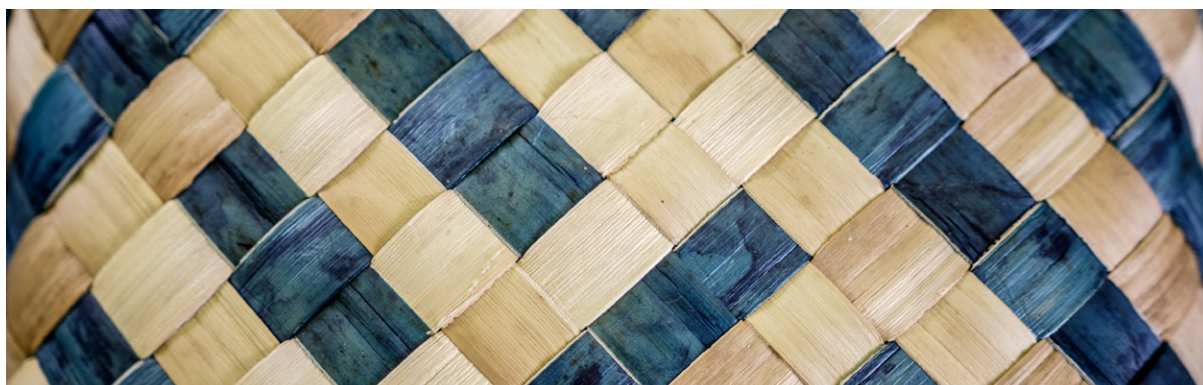


In keeping with a kaupapa Māori approach, researcher-facilitator Nichole Gully began conversations with prospective Māori-medium early learning and school settings in Ōtautahi (Christchurch) and iwi/mana whenua organisations during proposal writing and design phase. The regional Kōhanga Reo Trust office was also contacted to let them know we would be making contact with kōhanga reo in the region. She sought to gauge interest in the proposed project and gather any suggestions and feedback they might have. She also ran the project idea past parents and whānau of tamariki in Māori-medium early learning settings.

An initial scan of Ngāi Tahu education and te reo Māori plans and reports indicated support for bilingual pathways (Level 2 51-80% immersion) as well as Level 1 (81-100% immersion). In cognisance of this we initially intended to work with Level 1 and Level 2 Māori-medium pathways. As we responded to feedback from Māori-medium settings and whānau, there was a small but significant shift to working with two kōhanga reo-kura kaupapa Māori pathways (Level 1) only.

Te whakarewa waka - preparing to start

The arrival of Covid-19 to Aotearoa saw conditions change markedly here as well as across the globe. We had to delay our Term 1 2020 intended launch as the country went into lockdown. Settings that had agreed in principle to be part of our project expressed concerns for their whānau, should the project continue as planned in the short term. To support the wellbeing of our intended participants, the project team suspended our active engagement until they felt ready, and the project team continued planning, preparation and resource development, and held online advisory meetings with our lead research and external experts. This helped to ensure we were well placed and ready to start work alongside settings when they were ready to recommence formal discussions in November 2020, when the ultimate design for our waka was launched at hui with the two kōhanga reo and two kura kaupapa Māori with presentations of the final project plan.



Ngā Kaumoana - Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori whānau



Te Kura Whakapūmau i te reo Tūturu ki Waitaha



Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Whānau Tahī



Te Kōhanga Reo o Ōterepo



Te Kōhanga Reo o Te Whānau Tahī

The kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori are based in the Ōtautahi area in suburban settings. While the whānau of each are multi-iwi all recognise and acknowledge mana whenua and Kāi Tahu tika.

Te Kōhanga Reo o Ōterepo opened its doors in 1987 and serves up to 48 mokopuna (enrolled tamariki) and their whānau. The kōhanga had been housed in temporary buildings since the 2011 earthquake and moved into new, permanent buildings during the project. They are now situated alongside Te Kura Whakapūmau i te Reo Tūturu ki Waitaha. Te Kōhanga

Reo o Te Whānau Tahī began in 1982, and is currently situated on the grounds of an English-medium primary school. The kōhanga serves up to 25 mokopuna and their whānau. Mokopuna in both kōhanga reo are mostly, if not all, Māori.

The first kura kaupapa Māori in the South Island, Te Kura Whakapūmau i te Reo Tūturu ki Waitaha (Kura Whakapūmau) opened its doors in 1987. Moving location a number of times, it took on its current name in 1990. Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Whānau Tahī was established in 1991. Both kura provide Māori-medium education across years 1 to 13,

respectively for over 100 and over 150 tamariki and their whānau.

The project information documents and consent forms were shared with kōhanga reo and kura tumuaki and possible dates for *Wānanga Whānau* were identified. The rangahau team met with the Kōhanga Reo Trust Purapura (regional cluster) to reaffirm the intent of the project. A team of two along with administration support, began work with kōhanga reo whānau at the end of December.

About this time Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga also had a transition project working alongside Māori-medium kura in consultation with the regional Te Kōhanga Reo Purapura. The Ministry's focus was more on identifying and strengthening the transition process itself and developing policy. Our shared interests culminated in relationship building with the regional and national offices of Te Kōhanga Reo Trust and with the regional Ministry office. Their focus was seen as a complementary aspect to the whānau centred focus of this research and as the projects unfolded kaiako naturally integrated both projects to positive effect.

Te whakamahere i te whakaterenga - charting our course

Our research design and methodology is framed by kaupapa Māori. The genesis of Kaupapa Māori as praxis¹¹. (theory and action) has an inextricable relationship with initiatives driven by Maori, including kōhanga reo

and kura kaupapa Māori¹². Kaupapa Māori principles have guided our work in this project, namely: tino rangatiratanga; taonga tuku iho; ako Māori; Kia piki i ngā raruraru o te kāinga; whānau and kaupapa (self-determination; cultural aspiration; culturally preferred pedagogy; socio-economic mediation; extended family structure; and collective philosophy)¹³. Within a kaupapa Māori framework, mātauranga Māori, tikanga Māori, and te reo Māori provided appropriate touchstones for the initiation, development and implementation of this project, including methods of data collection and analysis.

A kaupapa Māori research approach behoves that findings are of benefit to those participating, and that they are ideally involved from the outset of a project, which we tried to ensure through our initial engagement with Māori-medium settings in Ōtautahi as we began designing this project. The approach taken was also underpinned by recognition that parents and whānau with kōhanga reo and kura are key to asking and answering questions related to learning pathways.

In this project we drew on a kaupapa Māori action research approach, “te takarangī” taken in a recent Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) transitions project¹⁴. Te takarangī encompasses the view of action research involving cycles or “spirals on spirals” of planning, action, monitoring and reflection and aligns with collaborative participatory action research processes.

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11. Smith, G. H. (1997). *The development of Kaupapa Māori: Theory and Praxis*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Education, University of Auckland.
 12. Pihama, L. (2010). *Kaupapa Māori theory: Transforming theory in Aotearoa*. *He Pukenga Kōrero: A Journal of Māori Studies*, 9(2), 5–14. 12. Smith, (1997)
 13. Hohepa, M. with V. Paki, S.Peters, T. Gilbert, L. Hawksworth, D. Olliver, T. Anderson & T. Hakaraia. (2017). *Riariakina ō Rongo Hirikapo: From Kōhanga Reo to Kura*. Wellington, New Zealand: TLRI. http://www.tlri.org.nz/sites/default/files/projects/TLRI%20Summary_Hohepa%28v4%29.pdf
 14. McNiff, J. (1988). *Action Research: Principles and Practice*. Basingstoke, England: Macmillan.



This tauihu (waka prow) carved by Ngāi Tahu master carver Fayne Robinson illustrates the use of takarangi in the photo he gifted to this research project.

The takarangi approach resonated well with the waka (canoe) that revealed itself as the guiding metaphor as we designed and named our project.

Our project covered five phases.

Approach and Timeline





Approval for our project was gained from CORE Education's Human Ethics Committee in phase 2. Information sheets and consent forms were developed in English and te reo Māori and provided to the participating kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori, kaiako, tamariki and their parents/ caregivers.

We used a range of Māori concepts and practices as data collection techniques in ways that reflected relational, collective and empowering dimensions of a kaupapa Māori approach. Information and data collecting methods were discussed with kōhanga reo and kura whānau members (i.e. parents, kaiako, tumuaki). Kaiako also had conversations with tamariki about techniques they used to collect information and images with, and from them.

Wānanga was the principle technique used in the project. Wānanga has layered meanings as concept, as place and as practice, we drew on wānanga as a forum for discussion, deliberation and theorising. Wānanga are viewed as important sites of learning and development by both kōhanga reo¹⁵ and kura kaupapa Māori¹⁶. At the *wānanga ngātahi* held in May 2021 we dove deep into the significance of wānanga with kaiako, which resulted in further development and articulation of our use of wānanga to gather information and data, to present and analyse findings, to plan next steps, and to share outcomes:

- *Wānanga Whānau* involved kōhanga reo parent and whānau members.
- *Wānanga Kaiako* involved kōhanga reo and kura kaiako and tumuaki.
- *Wānanga Ngātahi* involved kaiako, researchers and project advisor.
- *Wānanga Tīma Rangahau* involved researchers and the project advisor.

We also drew on hui (gatherings, meetings):


- *Hui pūrua* involved kaiako pūrua (paired kōhanga reo-kura kaiako) and researcher/s and focused on collaborative pakirehua (inquiries).
- *Hui kaiako takitahi* involved individual kōhanga reo or kura kaiako and researcher/s and focused on setting-related aspects of pakirehua.

The following information and data collecting techniques were used alongside and inside wānanga and hui:

- *Mātakitaki* - observing and recording at wānanga, hui, kōhanga reo and kura sites.
- *Uiuinga* - surveys for kōhanga reo and kura lead kaiako/tumuaki, interviews / conversations with kaiako, tumuaki, parents.
- *Pukapuka kōrero* - collaborative journaling of hui as well as reflections, activities, resource developments via google drive, using word documents, powerpoint presentations, excel spreadsheets, and also via Facebook to a more limited extent.

15. Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga. (2017). *Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo*. Ministry of Education, Wellington, NZ, pp. 32-35.

16. Te Aho Matua o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori



The project team endeavoured to meet regularly, usually on a weekly basis using Google Hangouts. This helped to maintain passion and excitement for the kaupapa as we navigated Covid, membership changes, and responded to the reality of members based in different cities, not to mention different islands.

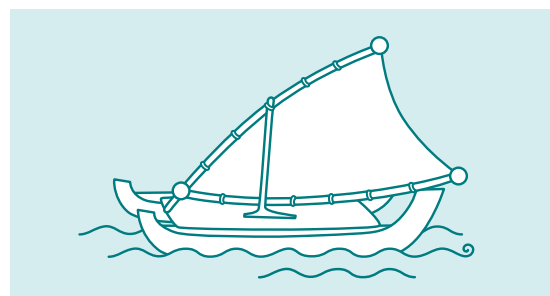
We also drew on methods used successfully in recent research¹⁷ to gather data and information with tamariki including:

- *tuhituhi* - tamariki recording reflections of experiences in writing
- *tāpoi tamariki* - tamariki leading a tour of their kura setting
- *hopu whakaahua* - tamariki collectively making photographic records of places, activities, people of significance.

Drawing on te takarangi, analysis also proceeded in cycles and spirals. Whenever possible we cycled back to discuss and critique our emerging analyses with kōhanga reo whānau, and with kaiako and tumuaki. We discussed our analysis of the first *Wānanga Whānau* as part of the second *Wānanga Whānau*. We presented our analyses of *Wānanga Whānau* and *wānanga kaiako* at the first *wānanga ngātahi* for further discussion and critique, and to inform the development of *pakirehua pūrua* (collaborative inquiries). Hui with kaiako during the inquiry phase involved discussion, feedback and feedforward. We had hui with tumuaki to discuss *pakirehua* developments

during the mobilisation phase, and we shared draft sections of this report with kaiako, for comment, corrections and suggestions.

We also drew on a *pūrākau* approach (Lee, 2009) for analysis and reporting and continue to do so as part of dissemination. *Pūrākau* is a culturally responsive, kaupapa Māori narrative approach enabling Māori researchers and participants to gather, develop and present narratives keeping our cultural identity and worldviews as Māori intact.









He waka eke noa - we are all in this canoe together

The waka revealed itself early as the guiding metaphor for our project. Waka not only carry travellers on journeys to places of importance, but also carry layers of meaning, expressed in whakataukī (proverb) such as the one above that heads this section. Waka are symbols of identity, as reflected in pepeha (tribal mottos/proverbs). Waka contain important lessons about working together for a common goal, and on successful waka journeys travellers look after themselves and each other.

17. Hohepa et. al., 2017 Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga. (2017). *Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo*. Ministry of Education, Wellington, NZ, pp. 32-35.



The waka has proved to be a moving metaphor in more ways than one in this project. It initially began as a waka hoe (paddling canoe), in which parents travelled with their tamariki along Māori-medium pathways. It transformed into a sailing waka hourua (double-hulled canoe) in the He aha te Hawaiki? (What is the ideal destination?) approach Nichole introduced at the May 2021 wānanga ngātahi to guide the preparation of *pakirehua pūrua*.

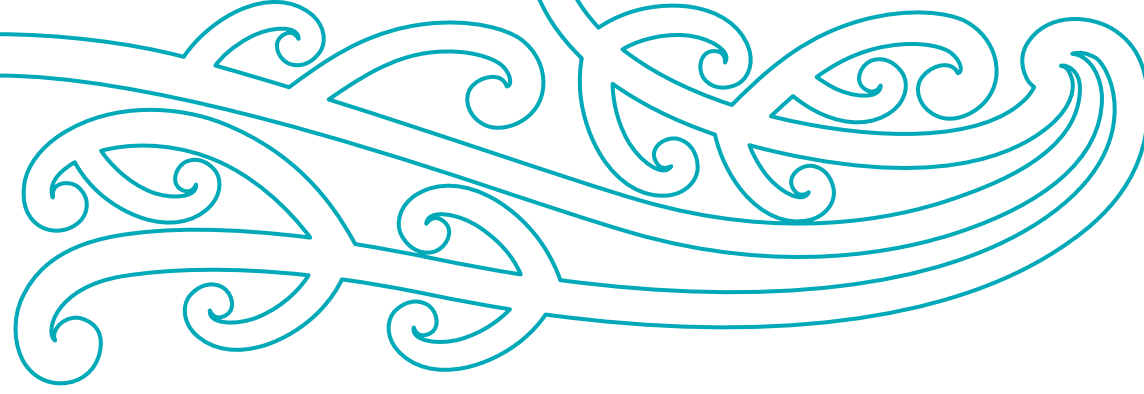
Te Whakatakoto Pakirehua 		
He aha te Hawaiki? What is the ideal? How do we want it to be? 	He aha ngā painga? What is working? 	He aha ngā whakapātari? What needs work? 
He aha ngā tino wero/ariā matua? What are the key pain points / insights? Kōwhirihia tētahi	Me pēhea mātou e ... ai ... kia ... ai? How might we...so that...? 	Huatau huhua? Possible solutions 

Pakirehua development template

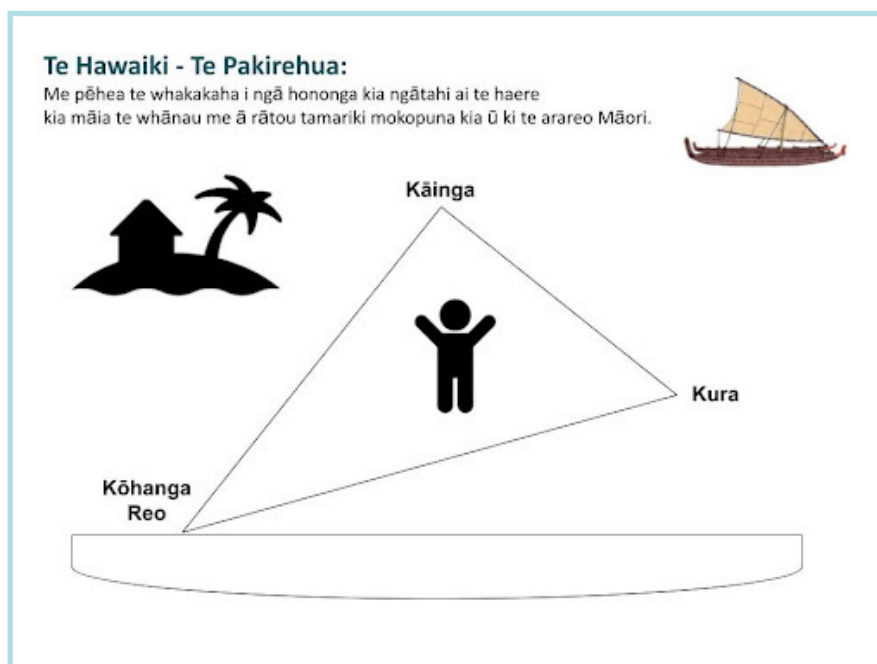
Hawaiki holds great significance in Māori worldviews and traditions. It is significant in the journeys our tūpuna took to and from Aotearoa. It holds importance in Māori life journeys, not only in terms of where our whakapapa may start from, but also in terms of the birth-death cycle¹⁸. Its importance is reflected in both formal and colloquial expressions such as Haere e ngā mate ki Hawaiki nui, ki Hawaiki roa, ki Hawaiki pamamao (Depart oh deceased ones, to the great, to the long, to the distant Hawaiki), and Turou Hawaiki (Greetings/Blessings upon you/May the force be with you)¹⁹.

18. Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal, 'Hawaiki', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/hawaiki> (accessed 24 May 2021)

19. <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>



Kaiako contributed invaluable feedback and insights on the pakirehua template during the wānanga ngātahi. Their contributions led to the template approach transforming into the first iteration of our whānau-centred project's model - Te Hawaiki the following day, at our first wānanga tima rangahau. As we revisited the rich thoughts and responses gathered during the Hawaiki exercise with kaiako, we started developing a Hawaiki model for supporting and strengthening Māori medium journeys, which resonates well with Māori ecological models of development²⁰. We reflected on the importance of keeping a holistic and inclusive view of whānau and realised that kāinga (home) was invisible as a significant setting alongside the kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori. The three settings 'kāinga-kōhanga reo-kura' came together as Te Rā - the sail needed to ensure that tamariki along with whānau in all settings experienced successful Māori-medium journeys to 'Hawaiki', representing whānau aspirations and dreams, goals and desired outcomes.



Te Hawaiki model: first iteration

20. Royal Tangaere, A. (1997) *Māori human development learning theory*. In P. Te Whaiti, M. McCarthy & A. Durie (Eds) *Mai i Rangiatea: Māori wellbeing and development*. Auckland University Press with Bridget Books.



3. Eke panuku, eke Tangaroa (Learnings from the project)

Acknowledging energies of the land and sea, mana whenua, mana moana, mana tangata.

On paper Māori-medium transition looks good across Ōtautahi in Waitaha (Canterbury region). Quantitative data available for 2020 indicates that higher percentages of Māori-medium early learning graduates are continuing on to Māori-medium school settings compared with the national picture. This was also reflected in the qualitative narratives gathered during wānanga in this project. All of the participating kōhanga reo parents/caregivers told us that they were choosing Māori-medium schooling options for their tamariki. Some parents, however, also voiced concerns and anxieties about their choice, which stemmed particularly out of knowledge and understanding gaps including their own te reo Māori fluencies, knowledge of tikanga, and what might be termed a lack of familiarity with the kaupapa and philosophy of kura kaupapa Māori.

Key here is that although the transition from kōhanga reo to kura kaupapa Māori was strong, it was not without challenges for the whānau. The assumption in this research was that highlighting and addressing challenges and augmenting effective practices with whānau would support them to feel more confident and informed in their decisions and in their

ongoing commitment to a Māori-medium pathway.

Te whakaterenga - Our journey

Wānanga Whānau

This project focused on parents and whānau as informed decision makers and data collection fittingly began with *Wānanga Whānau* at the two kōhanga reo settings. We co-planned with kōhanga reo to incorporate the wānanga whānau into their regular monthly whānau hui. This worked really well, resulting in good attendance and highlighting the potential of regularly provided opportunities for whānau to wānanga important kaupapa and take (topics, plans, issues) without loading them with further commitments by calling additional or extra-ordinary hui.

Attendance across the wānanga whānau reflected our position that we laid out in the project proposal - that kōhanga reo and kura 'whānau' not only encompass tamariki and their immediate whānau, but also staff, who often have their own tamariki-mokopuna attending their setting, and supporting members from the wider community, hapū and iwi. The attendance of members from a non-participating kōhanga reo setting at one of the wānanga further illuminated the inclusive nature of whānau. They attended

at the invitation of the participating kōhanga reo, reflecting the view that a wānanga focused on strengthening transitions would resonate for other kōhanga reo in their rohe (area) and could, and should, benefit the movement more widely.

The wānanga created a space for parents and whānau members to reflect on why they chose a Māori-medium education pathway and what they expected to happen leading up to and starting kura. They discussed what they thought they knew and didn't know about kura, and what they thought they needed to know about the next part of the journey.



What we learned from parents and whānau members

Reasons for choosing kōhanga reo that came out most strongly and consistently across the different wānanga were:

Whānau connections:

“Kī mai tōku māmā [my mother said] it's a choice that was never offered before, kōhanga, years ago, so that's what she wanted for her mokopuna!”

(Kōhanga reo pīrere/graduate, now a kōhanga reo mother)

“There were kōhanga out there, but I didn't know them. If you were not in that realm you just didn't know. I only found out, 30 years ago, that it was in my own back yard. That was with my baby.”

(Mother of above, now a kōhanga reo grandmother)

For some parents the driving force was that they had attended kōhanga reo and they and their whānau wanted the same for their tamariki. Whānau connections with kaiako or other whānau at the kōhanga were important for others in choosing the kōhanga reo. For those who were kōhanga reo kaiako or kaimahi, the opportunity to learn together as a whānau with their own tamariki was key.

Te reo Māori:

“Trying to revive [te reo Māori] in my whānau and my extended whānau too. I've been living through my kids, they carry me, they can carry me. You didn't have it growing up so you wanted for your baby. Yeah. And knowing when you turn up to your marae, te reo me ngā tikanga.”

(Kōhanga reo parent)

Kōhanga reo was viewed by many as vital for language regeneration; it was a successful te reo Māori learning pathway, and supported efforts to revive te reo Māori in their home.

Identity and belonging:

“I was [in] the first intake of my kōhanga reo at home. So I knew identity was never an issue for me till I got here. And that was a connection to home, that was the kōhanga.”

(Kōhanga reo parent)



“We want to get a greater understanding of te ao Māori and Māori tikanga, knowledge.”

(Kōhanga reo parent)

Kōhanga reo was seen as a place of belonging where being Māori and Māori culture are normal. It supported whakaaro Māori (thinking Māori) and wairua Māori (Māori spirit). It also helped rāwaho (members who come from outside the region and different iwi) to maintain a sense of connection and belonging to hau kāinga (tribal homelands).

Many reasons for intending to send tamariki to Māori-medium school settings after kōhanga reo were similar to those for sending them to kōhanga reo:

- Te Reo Māori was paramount, along with their tamariki being with other Māori speakers - “*kia haere tonu te reo*” - so that te reo Māori would continue to be maintained and developed.
- Māori identity continued to be of great importance, alongside tamariki continuing on in settings where belonging, culture and being Māori is normal.

Parents and whānau saw moving to kura kaupapa Māori as a natural progression, not only as an educational

pathway but also a life pathway spanning generations. For some whānau a Māori-medium pathway for their tamariki was a process of connecting and strengthening their whānau identity as Māori. It was seen as a ‘natural transition’ from te kōhanga reo and that it was critical to “not waste time there [at kōhanga reo]” by sending tamariki on to English-medium schooling. We also heard about whānau who initially changed streams and sent their 5-year-olds to English-medium, struggled, and then returned, moving their tamariki to kura.

Some parents talked about how they had “dreamed of going to kura kaupapa Māori”, and wanted to ensure that their tamariki were able to have “the kura experience” they had missed out on. They viewed going to kura kaupapa Māori as an opportunity for their tamariki to experience the educational success they saw their kura peers have.

As whānau kōhanga reo proceeded to wānanga the potential for building collective knowledge and understanding about the kura that most tamariki would move to after kōhanga reo was increasingly obvious. What was needed, and what the wānanga helped provide, was opportunity to share, discuss

and critique what was known and not known, understood, and at times misunderstood. This was never more obvious than during one of the *Wānanga Whānau* when the researcher-facilitator had an unexpected whānau emergency and had to leave. One of the parents took over facilitating and recording the session, reflecting the collective and empowering dimensions noted above. The high quality of the discussion and information sharing that was recorded indicated deep and continued engagement of the whānau with the kaupapa. What was also very obvious across all wānanga was that kaiako (many of whom were parents of kōhanga reo or kura tamariki) were extremely interested in hearing from (other) parents about what they knew, what they wanted to know and any concerns they had about tamariki moving on to kura.

Through wānanga the following kura-related knowledge and understandings were revealed:

- kura enrolment and interview processes
- kōhanga reo poroporoaki (farewell) and kura pōwhiri (welcome)
- the shape of visits to kura.

While all wānanga attendees appeared to be aware that these processes occurred as their tamariki moved from kōhanga reo to kura, there were different descriptions about what happened and what expectations were of parents and whānau, including enrolment and interview arrangements, poroporoaki and pōwhiri. Some noted that they would like more or clearer information about kura pōwhiri arrangements and their role in these.

“We have a pōwhiri to welcome and with the powhiri I added that to the ‘like to know more about’ so I didn’t really know if that was going to happen. ...”

(Kōhanga reo mother)

Descriptions about what visits might entail varied widely across parents and whānau members. Uncertainty was expressed about whether all parents were aware that visits to kura occurred, and about what information was provided to parents, and when.

Parents expressed interest in knowing what kura expected a tamaiti to be able to do when they started kura, one noting this could be something that kōhanga reo and kura worked on together to provide information to parents.

“As a parent I would really like to have a list of what my kid is going to be expected to be able to do when they get to school ... like to see that worked

out between the kōhanga and the kura so that we have a bit of a guide as parents.”

(Kōhanga reo parent)



Other areas attendees wanted to know more about included kura policies, learning programmes and timetables, and karakia and waiata used in kura new entrants settings.

This table summarises some key reasons that influenced whānau to choose kōhanga reo and kura for their tamariki along with concerns.

Choosing Kōhanga Reo?

- Whānau connections
- Te reo Māori
- Identity and belonging



Concerns

- Personal reo and tikanga knowledge
- Parental involvement expectations
- Tamariki reo Māori capability
- Academic standards, career opportunities
- English literacy
- Catering for tamariki with special needs, gifts and talents
- A 'fear factor' linked to an unfamiliarity with the kura sphere

Choosing Kura?

- Whānau connections
- Strengthening te reo Māori
- Strengthening identity & belonging



Interested in knowing

- What should my tamaiti be able to do?
- Kura policies
- Transition steps
- Learning programmes
- Karakia and waiata from akomanga
- Kura kaupapa Māori philosophy

Wānanga kaiako/tumuaki

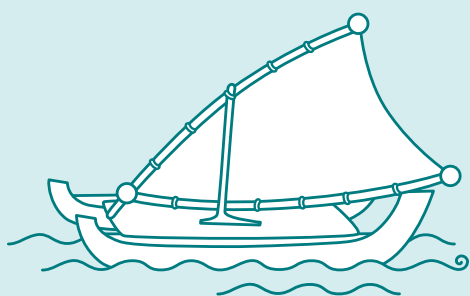
The second tranche of information and data collection occurred via *Wānanga Kaiako* and a survey completed by kaiako and/or tumuaki. In each of the four settings kaiako, often along with tumuaki, explored their knowledge and beliefs about effective support practices for transition and identified aspects that they thought needed strengthening. The survey collected information about tamariki transition demographics, current enrolment and transition policies and practices, and transition-related expectations the kōhanga reo and kura had of parents and tamariki.

What we learned from kaiako and tumuaki

He moana pukepuke e kengia e te waka

A choppy sea can be navigated by a waka

Whakataukī/Proverb



Kaiako and tumuaki shared ideas about how the connection across kōhanga reo and kura whānau could be improved. Many were things that kōhanga reo and/or kura had done previously and that they knew were good practice. This was similar to

reflections from the ‘Riariakina ō rongo hirikapo’ project²¹, where the kōhanga reo and kura tumuaki observed that the project had encouraged a return to ways of doing things that had occurred more or less “organically” in the past, especially during the early years.

Kura staff reflected on how some practices and connections between kōhanga reo and kura had been impacted in the past, including the ongoing effects of the Christchurch earthquakes. Then the terrorist attack and Covid-19 hit while we were trying to get the project underway, reinforcing the impact big external events can have on how kōhanga reo and kura run and on their ability to take on extra activities like this. Kura staff acknowledged having to focus inward as these new events were navigated. Past practices included: return visits by kura new entrants to the kōhanga reo; kura kaiako carrying out learning observations at the kōhanga reo; new entrant kaiako attending whānau hui to meet prospective parents in their kōhanga reo comfort zone; and shared new-entrant and kōhanga reo waiata sessions.

Current effective practices identified by kōhanga reo included encouraging mātua to stay on the Māori-medium pathway, discussing the reasons and benefits. That, most if not all, were choosing to do so attested to this.

“For whānau, the most challenging thing is whakamā, they are unsure of how things roll at kura and the ones who don’t have reo, it is worse. Most still choose to send their tamariki. Only one recently chose not to ‘cos they didn’t have reo but they saw how much their tamaiti was losing and sent them to kura eventually.”
(Kōhanga reo kaiako)

21. Hohepa, M. with V. Paki, S.Peters, T. Gilbert, L. Hawksworth, D. Olliver, T. Anderson & T. Hakaraia. (2017). *Riariakina ō Rongo Hirikapo: From Kōhanga Reo to Kura*. Wellington, New Zealand: TLRI. http://www.tlri.org.nz/sites/default/files/projects/TLRI%20Summary_Hohepa%28v4%29.pdf



Kōhanga reo staff discussed reasons and benefits with individuals and groups of parents and provided support at kura enrolment interviews and hui, when possible.

Kura kaiako identified pre-entry visits as critical in order that kōhanga reo mokopuna become familiar with and enthusiastic about starting kura, and viewed whanaungatanga as the fundamental value and practice underpinning this.

“ Me mauritau te wheako tuatahi ki te ao Aho Matua nei, mena he wheako whakamataku he uaua ki te whakatika te pūmahara ki te tamaiti, ka maumahara anō he arewhana. Me kua e puku te rae i te urunga mai o te kura. Me tino rongu i te tauawhi i te tuatahi. (Kura tumuaki)



(Make the first experience of the world of Te Aho Matua relaxed and enjoyable, if it's a frightening experience it's hard to change a child's first memory, like an elephant's. Don't let anger or annoyance be part of starting kura. What should be felt from the start is support and care.)

Areas identified for further strengthening encompassed communication; clarifying transition-related expectations - who is responsible to do what - between kōhanga reo, kura and the home; information sharing, including kōhanga records of mokopuna learning and development, and kura processes and practices that contrasted with those of the kōhanga reo.

o Aotearoa, Te Aho Matua). An observation made was that kaiako at the kura do not necessarily understand Te Whāriki or what tamariki are capable within the kōhanga environment and that kōhanga reo kaiako are not very familiar with Te Aho Matua.

Many challenging aspects of transition that kōhanga reo and kura identified mirrored those discussed in Wānanga Whānau, including:

“Communication is definitely something we need to work on. We get the process started with whānau and then whānau start asking us when their hui is and if we have heard from the kura. There are mixed messages.” (Kōhanga reo kaiako)



- Whānau apprehensions about the schooling system, along with their perceptions of kura, kura staff and kura expectations.
- Te reo Māori levels of parents, whānau, and homes, especially parents who are early on in their reo learning journeys. They noted the importance of parents learning te reo Māori for their own sake as well as for their tamariki.

Kaiako and tumuaki saw value in increasing understandings of philosophical documents (Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo; Te Marautanga

This table summaries some key ideas from the wānanga with kaiako and tumuaki.

Opportunities for greater:

- connection and collaboration across kōhanga reo, kura and with whānau
- curriculum and programme design sharing awareness
- clarity and communication of transition process and roles
- continuation and sharing of effective practices



Challenges facing whānau:

- whakamā and personal knowledge of te reo, tikanga
- apprehensions about the kura system and their role
- navigating the enrolment and pre-entry processes



Bringing the learning together - Wānanga ngātahi and Hui pūrua

The hua (findings) from the *Wānanga Whānau* and *Wānanga Kaiako* were presented, discussed and analysed at our first *Wānanga Ngātahi*. Using the pakirehua development template, we worked first as a whole group, then kaiako worked in pairs to frame up pakirehua pūrua (collaborative inquiry).



The overarching question for the pakirehua pūrua went through a number of iterations before settling on the following:

Me pēhea te whakakaha i ngā hononga kia ngātahi ai te haere, kia māia te whānau me ā rātou tamariki mokopuna kia ū ki te arareo Māori?

How might we strengthen connections across the learning ecosystem, so that whānau are confident to commit to a Māori-medium pathway for their tamariki-mokopuna?

At the first *Wānanga Ngātahi* kaiako enthusiasm and passion was palpable, their ideas for pakirehua pūrua were creative, ambitious and multi-dimensional. The project's advisor Associate Professor Mere Skerrett²² contributed invaluable insights from her research on transitions in Māori-medium education, and her work in the Kāi Tahu te reo Māori arena.

Our challenge at this point was how to avoid potential overload on the part of kaiako. We also had a concern that the major focus tended to be on the 'what' - activities and resources, rather than the 'why' and 'how'. We kept this in mind while framing up the approach and content for the three *Hui pūrua* that we planned to hold across terms two and three as kaiako undertook their pakirehua pūrua.

Kaiako honed their initial ideas with the researcher-facilitator at the first *Hui pūrua*. The emphasis was on the why and how of their proposed pakirehua, including how tamariki might have a voice and how to include 'kāinga' - parents and whānau of tamariki.

22. Hill, R., Rameka, L., & Skerrett, M. (2017). *Māori Medium Transition: Māori Medium Transition*. Final Report. Ministry of Education.

While each kaiako pūrua came up with similar kaupapa to develop and implement over terms two and three - designing pukapuka and visits - the respective kaupapa differed in form and function. All kaupapa, however, focused on ways to strengthen connections across kāinga-kōhanga-kura. The remaining *Hui pūrua* and *Hui kaiako takitahi* were designed to find out how inquiries were progressing and support next steps.

“The constant challenge here was how to take whānau on the journey also. Kaiako could quickly see how they could strengthen practices across kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori and how tamariki support might be improved. Designing with whānau in mind and communicating with whānau was more of a challenge.” (Researcher-facilitator)

The table below highlights some of the key agreed upon activity over the pakirehua period and the intention and assumptions of impacts they were exploring.

What?	Why? Intention/Assumption
<p>Toronga</p> <hr/> <p>Kaiako kura visits to kōhanga reo</p> <p>Kaiako kura visits to kōhanga reo whānau hui</p> <p>Shared trip to Chipmunks (Unable to carry out)</p> <p>Kōhanga reo mokopuna visits to kura, akomanga and wider kura gatherings</p> <p>Kaiako sharing programme planning and awareness of curriculum</p>	<p>Build whanaungatanga and understanding of tamariki before the transition process. Tamariki would become familiar with kaiako in their own known space.</p> <p>Build whanaungatanga with parents and whānau and be available to clarify whānau transition questions.</p> <p>Strengthen whanaungatanga between tamariki at kōhanga reo and kura.</p> <p>Familiarise mokopuna with the kura kaiako and gain a greater understanding of the kōhanga reo programme</p> <p>Familiarise mokopuna with the kura, prior to pre-entry visits in the safety of their kōhanga reo whānau</p> <p>Create awareness of how each setting plans, how their curricula may align and how this might impact on future sharing and collaboration.</p>



What?

Pukapuka

Co-design and share pukapuka for tamariki and whānau of the kōhanga reo

Transition information for whānau

Reinstate a 'preparing for kura - what whānau need to know' space in the kōhanga reo. (in process)

Design a pukapuka for kōhanga reo whānau

- introducing *Te Aho Matua*, the philosophy that guides learning at kura
- Sharing waiata and karakia used commonly at kura (aspects still in progress)

Why? Intention/Assumption

Pukapuka

Support tamariki and their whānau to get insights into the daily life at kura for new entrant tamariki from a tamariki perspective.

For whānau to access information that sets out the process of transition, who to contact as well as other helpful information.

Support kōhanga whānau to build familiarity with

- *Te Aho Matua* and how it links to kōhanga reo
- Waiata and karakia that kura use



4. Ki te wheiao, ki te ao mārama (Activities and Outcomes)

Informed by learnings from wānanga during the whanaungatanga phase of our project, kaiako pūrua embarked on their collaborative pakirehua. This section presents the activities and outcomes coming out of their work on pukapuka (books and information documents) and toronga (visits) as pūrākau.

Pukapuka tamariki

“**He kohinga whakaaro mō ngā rangi tīmata ki te Kura nō ēnei Raukura o ngā kōhanga reo. He kohinga whakaaro kia hanga pukapuka.**”

(Kaiako) A collection of thoughts about the first days of school from these Kōhanga reo graduates. A collection of ideas from which to make books.

The kaiako pūrua from Te Whānau Tahī Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori thought about how they might develop pukapuka to help familiarise te kōhanga reo mokopuna and their whānau with the adults they would meet as they moved to kura. They wanted to make sure tamariki voices were central to the book-making process. They wanted to find out what tamariki who had recently started kura thought were the most important things and people for their teina at kōhanga reo to know about and why.

The kura kaiako integrated the development of a pukapuka series

into her new entrant te reo Māori programme. The topic for the first pukapuka came out of wānanga with tamariki during te reo Māori sessions.



When the tamariki talked about who they saw on their first days of kura, it was mainly about tuakana (older students) from te kōhanga reo. Tamariki only referred to the adults they met when prompted by the kaiako.

“**One of the main ideas that has come through is that their tuakana and other tamariki are the first that they think about when they come to kura, so I have included this in most of the [first] pukapuka.**” (Kura kaiako)



The kaiako described the key learning and mindshift occurring from co-writing the first pukapuka with her tamariki. She now understands the central importance of tamariki relationships in the move from kōhanga reo to kura. Her earlier belief was that the kaiako-tamariki relationship was the critical element in children ‘transitioning’ successfully into her classroom. But given the kōrero from tamariki during the wānanga she now sees that the tamariki-tamariki relationships are even more important and it is her role to facilitate this between tuakana at kura and their teina at the kōhanga reo, as well as to maintain the links between cohorts of tamariki coming through. The first pukapuka *Ki te kura* (To school) thus centered on tamariki who had just started kura. The language used was simple with a high level of repetition. The kōhanga reo kaiako shared the first pukapuka with mokopuna and gathered their reactions. Their thoughts and responses reflected the key learning for the kura kaiako - they were excited to see photos of their tuakana - older friends who had started kura.

“ **Kaiako:** Pēhea tēnei pukapuka, koutou? Ko tēnei pukapuka mō te kura? What about this book, this book about school?

Mokopuna: He pai! Good!

Ngā Mokopuna: Āe! Āe! Āe!
Talking at once - Yes, yes!

Kaiako: Oo, he aha ngā mea pai? Okay, what’s good about it?

Ngā Mokopuna: [all excitedly talking at once] Ko[name]!..... [name]! ko ngā kotiro!..[name]... pūkana! All excitedly talking at once, naming children

Kaiako: Āe, ō hoa i te kura. He aha atu? Yes, your friends at school, anything else?

Ngā tuakana...Kua pai tēnei!... [name]! The older kids.... good.... [name]!

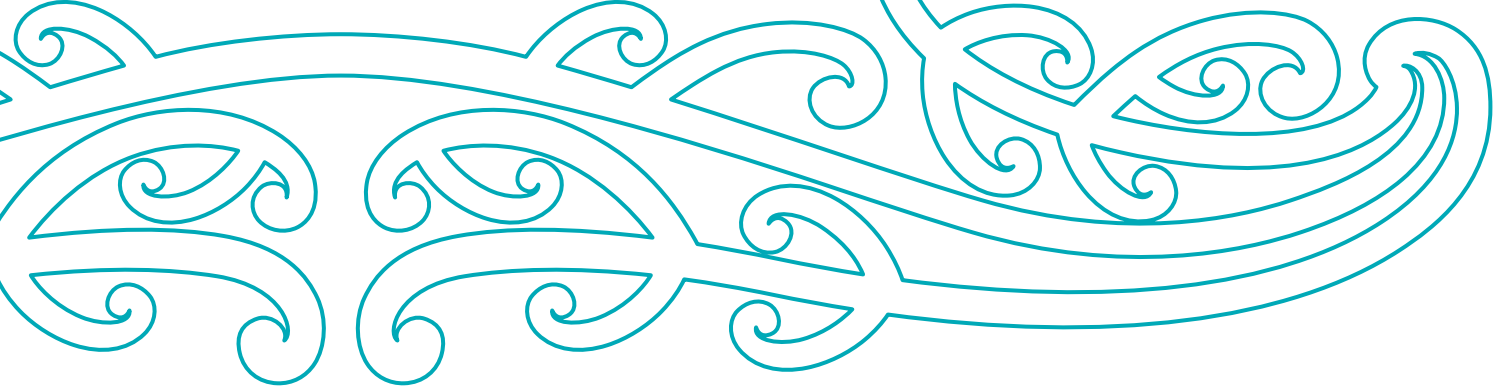
”



Ka pūkana me te haka.



Ka peita a Aynna ki te kura.



The kura kaiako developed the second pukapuka continuing the focus on who mokopuna would see when they started kura. In line with mokopuna responses to the first pukapuka, lots of the images were of tuakana doing things they enjoy, this time both inside and outside of the classroom, and expanding on relationships to include wharekura (secondary school) students at the kura.



“In reflection with [other kaiako] at kura, I thought the reo in the first pukapuka was very basic, which is good. However I think we can encourage the use of other sentence structures and other kupu through this pukapuka. This one [pukapuka 2] is a bit more wordy but still relevant to the tamariki at this level.”
(Kaiako)

The content extended to include adults that the tamariki talked about meeting when they started kura.



As was the case in *Riariakina ō rongo hirikapo*, the importance of building on existing whanaungatanga (relationships, sense of family and belonging) to support the move from kōhanga reo and kura was evident in this project. Mere Skerrett's work also highlights the importance of promoting whanaungatanga strategies (tuakana/teina, academic and social relationships) to support effective transitions²³.

The meanings of whanaungatanga are generated in contexts of action. They include relationships developed through shared experiences of meeting, of working together, and of undertaking interconnected roles and responsibilities²⁴. What was reinforced for us here is the fundamental importance of tuakana-teina in whanaungatanga practices and the meaningful 'roles and responsibilities' tamariki can play for, and with, each other along a kaupapa Māori-driven journey. *Te Aho Matua* highlights the significance of such relationships:

Ko roto i tōna ake hunuku te tīmatanga o te whanaungatanga o te tamaiti, arā, ki ōna tungane/tuahine, tuakana/teina²⁵.

Healthy relationships between brothers and sisters, younger and older; encourage older children to care for the young ones and to occasionally assist in their learning activities and younger children to accept the guidance of their older peers²⁶.

Whanaungatanga in kaupapa Māori settings obviously extends beyond the tamaiti and into their immediate

whānau. The pukapuka were also developed with parents in mind and as they have been produced they have been made available to them. The pukapuka provide at least three types of support for parents. One, they give parents an opportunity to see what it might be like starting kura through tamaiti eyes. Two, they give some information about what their tamaiti might do when they first start kura – the potential significance of this is discussed more below. Three, they provide opportunities to read with and/or learn from their tamaiti some simple te reo Māori phrases and sentences that draw meaning from the kura context.

The first two pukapuka, of a set of four, have been shared with parents and whānau at kōhanga reo hui whānau (held face to face as well as online when Covid restrictions came back into force). We followed up a few parents after the hui to ask what they thought about pukapuka as whānau preparing tamariki for kura - what did they like about the pukapuka? What do they help whānau and tamariki see and know?

“I like the books as they are short, the language is easy for kids to understand. The puka help [kōhanga reo] tamariki understand what they might expect at kura [pukapuka 1] and introduce new people to them prior to visits [pukapuka 2].”
(Parent)



23. Skerrett, M. (2010). *Ngā whakawhitinga! The transitions of Māori learners project: Milestone 3*, University of Canterbury, Christchurch.

24. Bishop, R., Ladwig, J., & Berryman, M. (2014). The centrality of relationships for pedagogy: The whanaungatanga thesis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 51(1), 184–214. doi:10.3102/0002831213510019; Smith, G. (1995). Whakaoho whānau: New formations of whānau as an innovative intervention into Māori cultural and educational crises. *He Pukenga Kōrero*, 1(1), 18–36.

25. *Te Aho Matua*, Āhuatanga Ako, 5.8

26. *Te Aho Matua* - explanation in English, Āhuatanga Ako.

We also asked what other resources might be useful.

“Another book to help tamariki navigate the school and where things are such as wharepaku, tari, papa tākaro. [toilets, office, playground].” (Parent)

The two pukapuka have also been shared with a worker from the regional Kōhanga Reo Trust office who was contracted via Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga part-way through this project to support whānau transitioning from kōhanga to kura.

She also liked the kaupapa of the pukapuka and reference to everyday activities and people, and suggested places around the kura could be added in time. She could see whānau reading the pukapuka and using it as a way to talk to their tamaiti about

the transition process, and what they might see and experience.

“I think it is good ... The whānau know, and explain to their tamaiti, that this is the next, this is the step that is going to happen. It might happen at kura at their pre-entry ...” (Kōhanga Reo Trust worker)



She thought that language scaffolding might be needed for parents and whānau with limited te reo Māori, but could also help to encourage their own learning journey. She thought whānau might benefit from some guidance on how to amplify learning and discussions with tamariki using the books²⁷.

 He kaha nōna ki te āwhina atu.	 Ka tātari ia ki te kōrero.	 E mōhio ana ia ki te noho mariri tau.	Te ākonga: _____		
			Pūrongo Whakawhiti ki te Kākano.		
 He kaha nōna ki te kōrero Māori.	 Ka mōhio ia ki te tākaro ki roto i te Rangimārie.	 Ka taea e ia te haere ki te wharepūta me tōna kōtahi.	 E mōhio ana ia ki pupuri peni.	 E mōhio ana ia ki te tauau 1-10.	 Ka taea e ia te kōwhiri i ngā mahi pai mōna.
 Mōhio ia ki te manaaki.	 He kaha nōna ki te whakarongo ki tōtahi atu.	 Ka mōhio ia ki te āta tūki i āna taputapu.	 He tere ia ki te aro atu ki tōna mahi.	 He tamariki kaha, he tamariki toiora.	 He koingākau ki a ia ki te mahi kori tinana.
Ngā Pūmanawa e toru o te tamaiti: He aha ngā mahi tino pai ki te tamaiti?			Kōwhiri āpōi:		

27. A similar approach was taken to support whānau in Hohepa, Margie K. (1998). 'Hei Tautoko te reo': Māori language regeneration and whānau bookreading practices. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis (Education), University of Auckland.

Pukapuka mā ngā mātua

In response to requests from parents, and findings from the *Wānanga Whānau* at the two kōhanga reo, the kura kaiako developed two simple tools to help identify skills and behaviours that kāinga could support in preparation for kura. The first looks at the development of skills like turn taking, toileting, holding a pen etc. The other includes knowledge and use of fundamental language concepts. There is also space for parents and whānau to share the talents and skills of their tamaiti.

There has been a discernible shift away from getting children ready for school and towards schools getting ready for children, described in our English-medium sister project as “flipping the script”²⁸. One could reasonably argue that what happened here is a parent push-back – parents and whānau wanting to know what knowledge and skills would help their tamaiti ‘get ready’ as they move into the compulsory schooling leg of a Māori-medium education journey.

It is not unusual for parents to have some anxiety about academic and skill-related learning and what their tamariki might need to know as they approach school entry. For parents in Māori-medium there are other dimensions that may interact with this anxiety. First-time parents in kaupapa Māori education may have chosen kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori for their tamariki because of their own dismal experiences in the schooling system²⁹. They may not have the ‘cultural capital’ of which other, often middle-class, parents have implicit, taken for granted understandings. They may also carry a level of anxiety about whether they are making the right

choice – will their tamaiti have similarly negative experiences albeit in Māori-medium, and what do they need to know and do in order to avoid this?

Parents who are graduates of kura kaupapa Māori have also voiced concern about their tamariki accessing knowledge and skills that will ensure they experience academic success that will serve them well in the wider world³⁰.

These kinds of anxieties are not stand-alone, they may be coupled with language-related anxieties that span both te reo Māori competencies and English language competencies. In this project kaiako have respectfully acknowledged and responded to parents’ requests and anxieties, with some simple and explicit messaging that also encompasses te reo Māori, and recognises that tamariki bring with them their own unique talents, skills and preferences.

Pukapuka whānau

At the *Wānanga Whānau* parents expressed anxiety about moving into a *Te Aho Matua* environment when their tamariki started kura.

“I underestimated the anxiety that some whānau have moving into the school system even if it was a kaupapa Māori system, because of things like knowledge of reo and tikanga for themselves and their tamariki.”

(Researcher-Facilitator reflection after *Wānanga Whānau*)

Kōhanga reo kaiako believed that, on the whole, parents and whānau were comfortable in the kōhanga reo environment and had some familiarity with *Te Whāriki a Te Kōhanga Reo*.

28. See Te One, S., McAllister, T., & Whiting, S. (June 2021). *Research report Te Hautū i te awa whiria o ako*.

29. Hohepa, 1998

30. Tocker, K. (2002). *He hua pai tā te kura kaupapa Māori* (Masters thesis, ResearchSpace@ Auckland).



They thought some anxieties about *Te Aho Matua* kura settings could be allayed by identifying similarities and connections between *Te Whāriki* and *Te Aho Matua*. They worked from the assumption that this could help ensure that all whānau members would be in a stronger position to not only navigate new experiences in their Māori-medium journey, but also continue with an increasing sense of belonging and commitment to the kaupapa Maori / Māori-medium education community.

Taking on board learnings from the *Wānanga Whānau*, the kaiako pūrua from Te Kōhanga Reo o Ōtērepo and Te Kura Whakapūmau envisaged a pukapuka that could span *Te Aho Matua*-related concerns, karakia and waiata as well as provide information about what might be helpful for tamariki to know and do when they start kura.

They wanted to develop a pukapuka that provided a straightforward overview of *Te Aho Matua* as well as its hononga with *Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo*, creating familiarity for parents through kaiako eyes. They wanted to include pages that provided clear and simple information about helpful skills and experiences that tamariki and whānau could be familiar with when they arrive. They also wanted to provide karakia and waiata used in the new-entrant setting, so tamariki would be familiar with a range of these on entry. As the pakirehua unfolded sharing karakia, waiata and tikanga used in the kōhanga reo were also seen as important to strengthening continuity for all whānau members.

Finding *Hui pūrua* times that suited both kaiako and researcher-facilitator timetables was a particular challenge, hence the *Hui kaiako takitahi* involving individual kaiako. A positive development was kaiako pūrua themselves arranging to meet together to advance their pakirehua, especially once the kōhanga reo relocated to the kura grounds.

Each kaiako worked with our project researcher-facilitator, testing and honing their pukapuka ideas. *Hui kaiako takitahi* were held to work intensively on *Te Aho Matua* pages with the kura kaiako and on *Te Whāriki* pages with the kōhanga kaiako. The kura kaiako developed a few succinct pages that provided clear and simple information about the kinds of experiences that would help tamariki when they arrive at kura. Both kaiako curated karakia and waiata from their settings for possible inclusion.

As the pukapuka developed, it soon became obvious that it was becoming too big and complicated and it was unrealistic to expect one pukapuka to carry all the kaiako pūrua desired of it. The pukapuka was re-envisaged as three resources for whānau:

- *pukapuka o ngā mana me ngā mātāpono* about *Te Whāriki* taumata whakahirahira (similar to learning strands), *Te Aho Matua* mātāpono [principles] and the connections between both
- *puka mō ngā mea āwhina i tāu tamaiti i tāna tīmatanga* i te kura [pamphlet about things that will support your child beginning school, which includes tikanga Māori, academic, social and physical]



- *kohinga karakia me ngā waiata* (collection of ritual chants and songs).

The pūrākau below relates to the development of the pukapuka. Development of the two remaining resources is underway and will continue post-project. Indications that work done collecting and sharing waiata did have some impact during the project are noted below in relation to toro mokopuna (kōhanga reo visits to kura).

Pukapuka o ngā mana me ngā mātāpono

Both kaiako reflected on how the development of a pukapuka bringing together information from *Te Whāriki* and *Te Aho Matua* was in itself part of a learning journey for them. Their understanding and appreciation of the two documents has intensified, for the uniqueness of each, but also for the natural synergies that exist between the two. Having these new

insights is helping to think about their programme planning in different, more coherent ways.

One kaiako reflected on the usefulness of the pukapuka for other kōhanga reo and kura.

“In those photos I have tried to use aspects of all those three [local] kōhanga reo, so that it doesn’t matter which kōhanga reo that these books sit in, the parents might be able to see something familiar to them so it will make them read it, that was the method to my madness.”
(Kōhanga reo kaiako)

Near the end of its development the researcher-facilitator had a hui with the kura tumuaki and deputy tumuaki to gather their feedback and suggestions on the pukapuka. Both were really happy with how it was shaping up and identified aspects for addition and revision. The tumuaki was keen to see a te





reo Māori version, which will now be developed as intended from the start. Its initial development in English was because kaiako wanted to make sure to reach parents who currently had little fluency in te reo Māori. The tumuaki also signalled that the kura will be contacting Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Maori o Aotearoa in order to share the pukapuka with them.

The English version of the pukapuka is now complete and has been shared with kōhanga reo whānau and the worker based at the regional Kōhanga Reo Trust.

We asked a group of kōhanga reo parents (some who already had tamariki at kura) for their thoughts about the pukapuka: what they knew about taumata whakahirahira (learning strands) and mātāpono (principles) before reading; what they liked and found useful; and what they thought could make it more useful? Pre-existing knowledge of *Te Whāriki* learning strands ranged from nothing to some strands. They also knew “nothing”, to “not a lot”, about *Te Aho*

Matua mātāpono. Parents said they found the pukapuka very useful.

“Loved learning about the values of both kōhanga and kura kaupapa. Having no background or experience with either, it was great to have access to that information and [it] was communicated in an easy-to-follow manner, he hononga was integral to tie it all together. I like the simplicity of this pukapuka and would’ve found this really helpful when we were looking at school/kura options for our tamahine.”

“Very easy to read. Very informative with just enough information. Good colour and use of whakaahua [photos] of the happy, smiley tamariki. Which made me feel harikoa [happy] when reading it.” (Parent)

Parents gave insightful suggestions for improving the pukapuka, focused on its length, its content, and its distribution.

“Consider the length of the book. It was quite in depth, maybe it’s possible to condense down, making things more concise so whānau will get the main points quicker. I’m a reader but I know not everyone is, so some whānau may not read till the end.”

“Perhaps a short blurb about the history of both kaupapa could be included, with some stats? Since starting out with kura kaupapa I have come to learn of its history and found it really interesting and also felt immense pride to be part of the journey and legacy.”

“Distribution of hard copies around all kōhanga, Māori ECE, kura kaupapa. Whiua ki te ao, [send it out to the world] social media.” (Parent)



The worker based at Te Kōhanga Reo Trust regional office also appreciated the “plain language” used in the pukapuka and thought it would enable the whānau to engage with new reo and curriculum concepts. She saw its potential for kōhanga reo whānau not only to learn more about *Te Aho Matua* but also *Te Whāriki* Taumata Whakahirahira. She thought the pukapuka would be really useful as a learning tool for kaimahi [staff] who were parent helpers without kōhanga reo kaiako qualifications. She also cautioned that providing the pukapuka to read alone was not enough, pointing to the importance of whānau, including kaimahi, being able to wānanga the pukapuka. She thought that if whānau have the concepts explained in ways that are

related to their everyday experiences they might easily understand,

“... it’s just too much because it is outside their square, but when you say to them, well, it’s what we do at home, you do this. So you break it down and go, you know, you do whatever with your whānau with your nanny and your koro and your uncles and aunties and they are like, “oh yes I get it!”

(Kōhanga Reo Trust worker)

When looking at the page that showed how *Te Whāriki* can align with *Te Aho Matua* she appreciated that there was a clear connection between the two documents and agreed that it was important for whānau and kaimahi to know and see that it is one kaupapa - “It’s just different words, that’s all it is”.

“Educators and te reo Māori speakers can make assumptions about what is understood and known by others in Māori-medium spaces. Whānau who are new in their te reo Maori journey and/or not confident in their place in the Māori world can feel intimidated and may not trust the knowledge that they have. The advice from the Kōhanga Reo Trust worker was to make the ‘hard and hidden’ easy and accessible not only through resources but also with wānanga with whānau and making connections to their everyday world.”

(Researcher-facilitator reflection)

The pukapuka has potential to support parents and whānau at any part of the journey, helping to deepen understanding of the history and philosophy of Kura Kaupapa Māori along with *Te Kōhanga Reo*, from which kura emerged. The pukapuka underlines the importance of revisiting the history and kaupapa of both.

It can help strengthen the sense of belonging and being connected to kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori as a significant Māori educational movement.

Toronga - visits

The resources that kaiako have been developing in the project are aimed at supporting tamariki along with their whānau as they move from kōhanga reo to kura. Kaiako also wanted to support mokopuna directly by beginning to familiarise them with the new entrants kura kaiako and/or setting. Both of the kura kaiako also wanted to become a kanohi kitea (seen face) for mokopuna in their kōhanga reo, and to start getting to know them to better support the whakatau (settling) process of the tamaiti as they transitioned to kura. Kura kaiako also wanted to get a deeper understanding of the kōhanga reo programme and what *Te Whāriki a Te Kōhanga Reo* looked like in action.

Kōhanga visits to kura

Ōterepo Kōhanga began sending a group of tamariki about to start kura over to the kura. The aim of the visits was to begin to,

“... whakatau i te tamaiti, kia waia haere ia ki te kura me te akomanga engari kia whai tautoko tonu i tana kaiako kōhanga reo me ana hoa.”

(Kōhanga reo kaiako)

[to start settling the tamaiti in, to become familiar with the kura and classroom, but while they continue being supported by their kaiako and friends]

Although the karakia and waiata resource for whānau was still being developed, the kōhanga reo had already begun introducing karakia and waiata used at the kura into their programme. Te Kura Whakapūmau kaiako noticed very quickly that the tamariki visiting kōhanga had a good grasp of karakia and waiata used in



her classroom. The kura kaiako had also committed to teaching and regularly using kōhanga waiata, karakia and protocols to build richness and familiarity in her programme for tamariki from kōhanga.

“The thing that I love is that they’re coming over and they know all the words for the waiata and they’re standing and singing away, they’ve been taught them at kōhanga. Standing in class and in the hui. It’s good ‘cause it helps them transition better.”

(Kura kaiako)

Kaiako visits to kōhanga

The Kōhanga and Kura o Te Whānau Tahī organised for the kura kaiako to visit the kōhanga as kaiako. Once the kōhanga reo relocated to the Kura Whakapūmau site, the kura kaiako also arranged to visit Ōterepo Kōhanga regularly, at least weekly.

The Whānau Tahī kura kaiako reflected on how up until the Toronga Kaiako her interactions with kōhanga had been as a mother and had involved picking up and dropping off her child and attending whānau hui. Her visits saw her no longer entering Te Kōhanga Reo only with ‘māmā eyes’, but also with ‘kaiako eyes’. She identified positive outcomes of her visits from the outset. The kaiako started getting to know and interacting with mokopuna, in particular those who would soon be starting kura as their ‘kaiako-in-waiting’. She found the mokopuna were far more comfortable to talk to her in the kōhanga reo, contrasting with her experiences in the past, when it was often challenging to get tamariki to talk and to gauge where tamariki were at in their reo Māori development when she first met them at kura. She has already started getting a good sense of who they are, what they like to do, and where their reo Māori development is, through interacting with them in the





more meaningful ‘real-life’ context of kōhanga reo.

At the inception of this research project, the tumuaki tuarua (deputy principal) interviewed whānau and tamariki at the enrolment phase. The new entrants kaiako typically met parents and whānau at pre-entry visits. The kura kaiako at Whānau Tahī is now trying to attend each of the whānau interviews. For the Whānau Tahī kōhanga whānau and tamariki she can now do this as a known face thereby providing a base from which whanaungatanga with kura can grow. Kaiako participation at interviews was a past practice however over time the responsibility went back to leadership in both kura in order to ease the workload for stretched kaiako.

The kaiako at Ōterepo kōhanga reo reflected on the impact the reciprocal visits and opportunities for kaiako to wānanga (meet and discuss) were having. She observed that there was a stronger connection and understanding between the kōhanga reo and the kura now. She described how the kaiako now know how each other plans, their programmes, and about the kaupapa [themes] that are being taught.

“He māramatanga anō mā māua me te tino hono i ngā kaupapa e rua, kia māmā ake ināianeī nā te mea i tino wānanga mātou tahi, me kī, i ngā kokonga katoa o ngā whare ako e rua. Nō reira, he māmā mōku kia hono tēnei ki tērā.” (Kōhanga kaiako)

“We have greater understanding and closer links across the two kaupapa, it’s much easier now because we have discussions together about, you could say, every corner of our two houses of learning. So it’s really easy for me now to connect from here [kōhanga reo] to there [kura].”

She gave examples of how the increased shared understandings can have an impact. When a mokopuna was in the process of moving to kura she was more able to talk with her mother about what and how things happen in Te Rito Hou (the kura new entrant area) and the similarities to kōhanga reo which she believed gave the māmā confidence in the move and her decision. As described above the kōhanga reo is teaching and using kura waiata and karakia from kura, and providing paper copies of these to whānau as they join the kōhanga reo. She has also seen a flow on effect of this with kōhanga reo parents at a wānanga held at the kura.

“Ka tino whakaako ki konei ināianeī i ngā waiata o te kura kia ngawari pai te tamaiti. Me te whānau! I te mea i te wā ka wānanga tahi i te kura, ka pātai te tumuaki, e tū, ka waiata tahi mātou i te waiata!”
(Kōhanga kaiako)

We are teaching kura karakia and waiata as well here now, making things easier for the child. And the family! When we had a combined wānanga at the kura, the kura tumuaki requested us all to stand, and we could all sing the waiata!

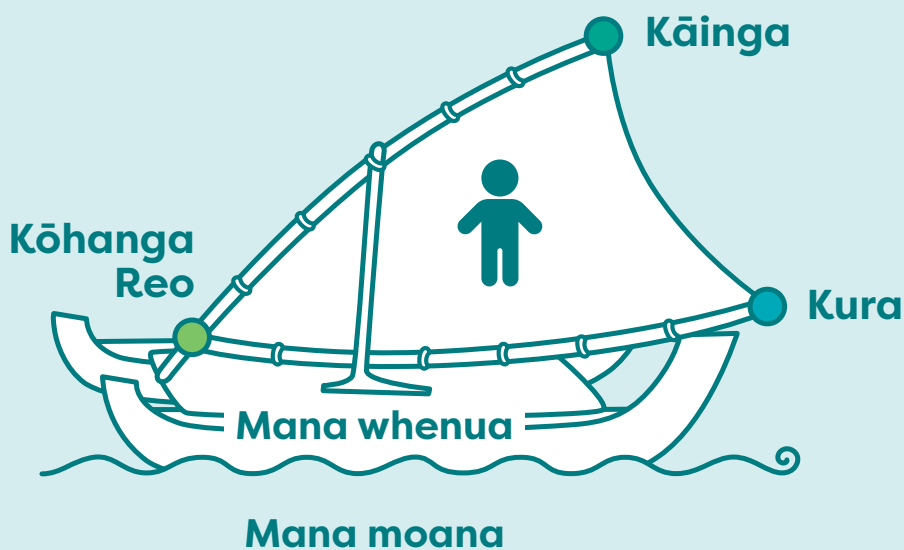
Ko te Hawaiki (Major findings)

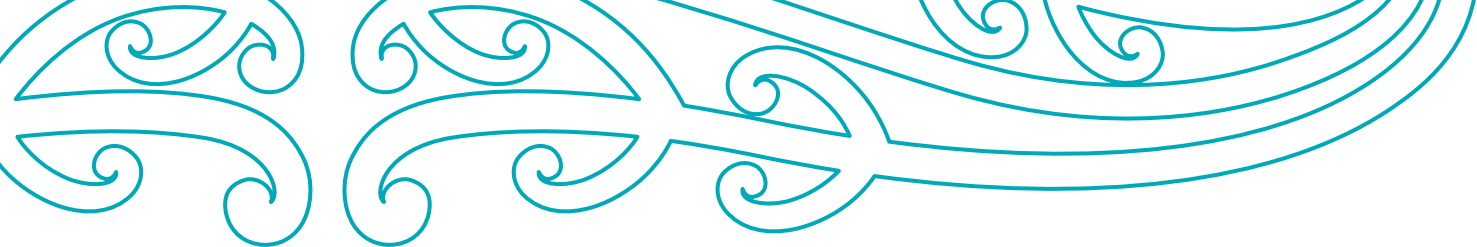
In this project we set out to explore the transition of tamariki and their immediate whānau from kōhanga reo to kura kaupapa Māori and what whānau need to make informed decisions about a kaupapa Māori, Māori-medium pathway. We also wanted to look at how kaiako, kōhanga reo and kura can effectively support tamariki and their whānau to make this transition. We used the waka to signify who we were journeying with and Te Hawaiki to help identify our destination. The model Te Hawaiki also assisted kaiako to both diversify and unify their pakirehua pūrua.

Many themes have emerged along the project journey. Here we have chosen to illuminate these under the significance of *hono*, which has ‘floated to the water’s surface’ as our waka hourua continues on its way to Te Hawaiki.

Te Hawaiki - Te Pakirehua:

Me pēhea te whakakaha i ngā hononga kia ngātahi ai te haere
kia māia te whānau me ā rātou tamariki mokopuna kia ū ki te arareo Māori.





Kia hono - connecting

“Transition is not the focus, it is the outcome. The focus instead needs to be on creating connections and engagement, hononga, across the whānau through incremental deliberate acts enabled by the kōhanga reo and the kura.”

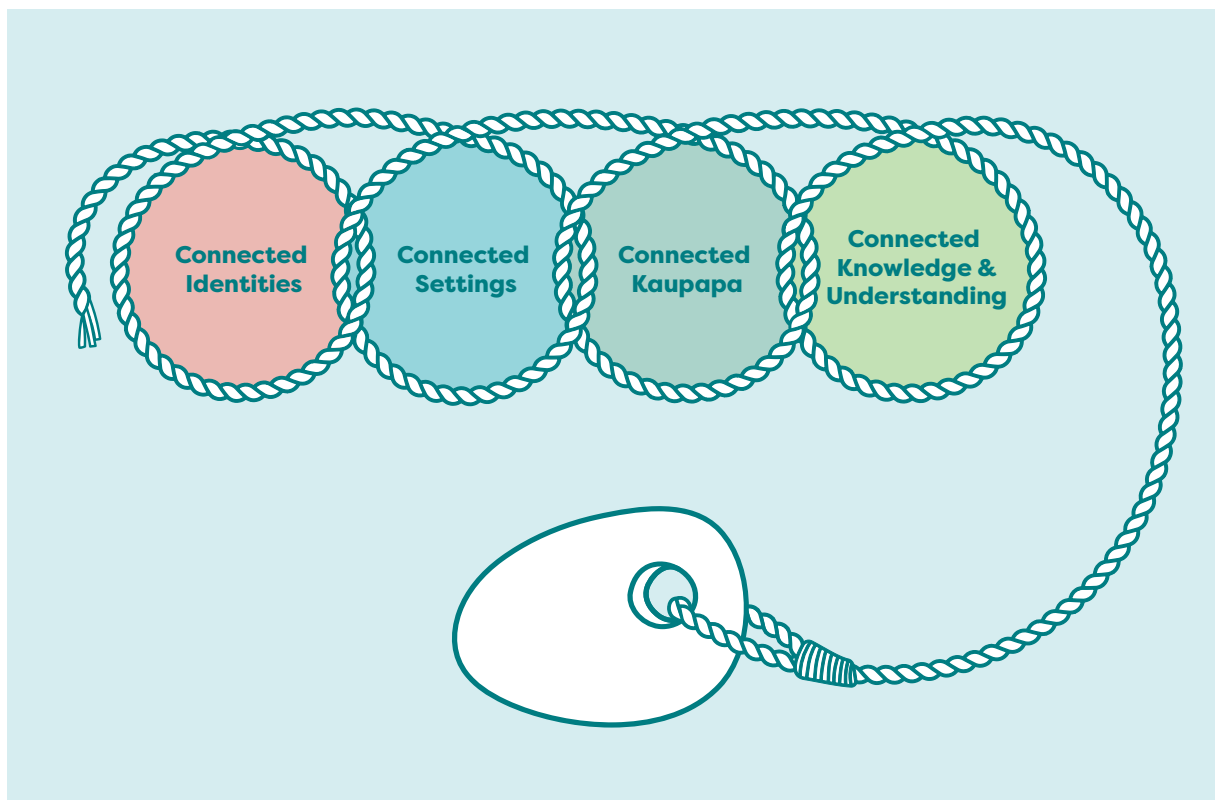
(Researcher-facilitator reflection)

The significance of *hono* has permeated the project and manifested itself across wānanga, pakirehua and rauemi developments. It has spanned identities, kaupapa, settings, and developing knowledge and understandings. As is the case with words across many languages, the meaning of hono takes on

different dimensions across different contexts of use. It is a verb, noun and adjective. Here we draw on its differing forms and its various meanings related to ‘connecting, connected and connection’, alongside ‘continual and continually’. A further meaning as ‘assembly, company or following’ also lands comfortably in the context of kōhanga reo and kura whānau.

Connected identities

Our findings point to the importance of connected identities to strengthening kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori whānau - whānau kaupapa Māori. Connecting and connected identities as a whānau as instantiated in *Wānanga Whānau*, which brought together the diverse



nature of whānau kōhanga reo - mokopuna (kōhanga reo children); raukura (kaupapa Māori graduates) whose own tamariki are now at kōhanga reo; kaumātua/grandparents with experiences of kōhanga reo across generations of their whānau; first and second generation kōhanga reo māmā and pāpā; kaiako and kaimahi. What connects the diverse kōhanga reo whānau is identity as Māori.

Whanaungatanga is undoubtedly both a value and practice that is intrinsically connecting and about connections. Parents talked about the importance of building whanaungatanga for both tamariki and their whānau. Through whakawhanaungatanga (process of establishing relationships), a sense of connection and belonging is created along with trust that supports whānau to engage with kaupapa (topics) and take (concerns) at kura. In the process of the project, one kaiako concluded that at pre-entry visits, whanaungatanga amongst tamariki, especially those they knew, was even more important to tamariki in aiding their settling, than her as a kaiako.

Connected settings

The importance of connected settings was reflected in the Hawaiki model that saw a move from what at times felt like a 'mātou' view of whānau - ('them and us' view of whānau) to a 'tātou' (everyone) view of whānau, depicted by connecting kāinga-kōhanga reo-kura as corners of the sail of the waka.

It was also reflected in mahi ngātahi (working together) undertaken by kōhanga reo and kura kaiako. The kaiako strengthened connections

across the three settings, kāinga-kōhanga reo-kura through toronga, through pukapuka and other rauemi, through sharing waiata, karakia and tikanga practices across kōhanga reo, kura and into kāinga. Kaiako have learned about approaches to programme planning in each other's settings, facilitating connections across learning themes. The kōhanga kaiako was able to share how they approached learning through the theme Matariki and the connection to the environment through *Te Whāriki*. This enabled the kura kaiako to gain a deeper understanding of programme planning at kōhanga and provided insights on how she might create connections for learners who come from that kōhanga. Other practices such as mana enhancing behaviour management strategies are also now being shared.

Connected kaupapa

The mahi carried out by one of the kaiako pūrua included identifying and illuminating connections between *Te Whāriki a Te Kōhanga Reo* and *Te Aho Matua o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori*, it not only promoted understanding amongst parents, but it also increased kaiako knowledge of the documents guiding the kaupapa of their respective settings.

The significance of connected kaupapa is reflected in our project networking with the Kōhanga Reo Trust regional and national offices. It sits behind our view of kōhanga reo and kura kaupapa Māori as more than sites for early learning³¹ and schooling³². They are part of a cultural-political-educational movement, or kaupapa, a kaupapa encompassing

31. Royal Tangaere, A. (1996) *Te Kōhanga Reo: More than just a language nest. The future of te reo Māori, te iwi Māori and a people's soul*. Keynote address, 18th Annual Conference, New Zealand Association for Research in Education, Nelson Polytechnic, 5-8 December.

32. Smith, G. 1997



transformative action and long term vision, aspirations and commitment. Positive and supportive connections between those working for the movement, be it as students, parents, teachers, researchers, policy makers, curriculum designers, administrators and organisations, can but only strengthen the kaupapa itself.

Connected knowledge and understandings

The sharing of knowledge and understandings that occurred at wānanga, through the pukapuka and resources kaiako and tamariki have produced, during visits between kōhanga reo and kura, and in the networking that occurred, all point to the power of connecting.

Wānanga also showed that sharing gaps in knowledge can be as powerful as sharing the known. It brought to

mind the significance of gaps in the takarangi spiral pattern. The takarangi is a three-dimensional carved form. This means that when we view it from any particular angle there will always be aspects of the pattern that remain unseen. It is the gaps between the spirals of the takarangi that enable us to see what was previously unseen as we move to another viewing point. Similarly, knowledge gaps shared by whānau members were often filled by other members who were able to share knowledge from their point of view. Sharing what is unknown and what is not understood is knowledge building in itself.

“It’s about challenging all parents, teachers, kaimahi [staff] to work together in unison to establish an environment where the children will be successful.”

(Kura kaiako)



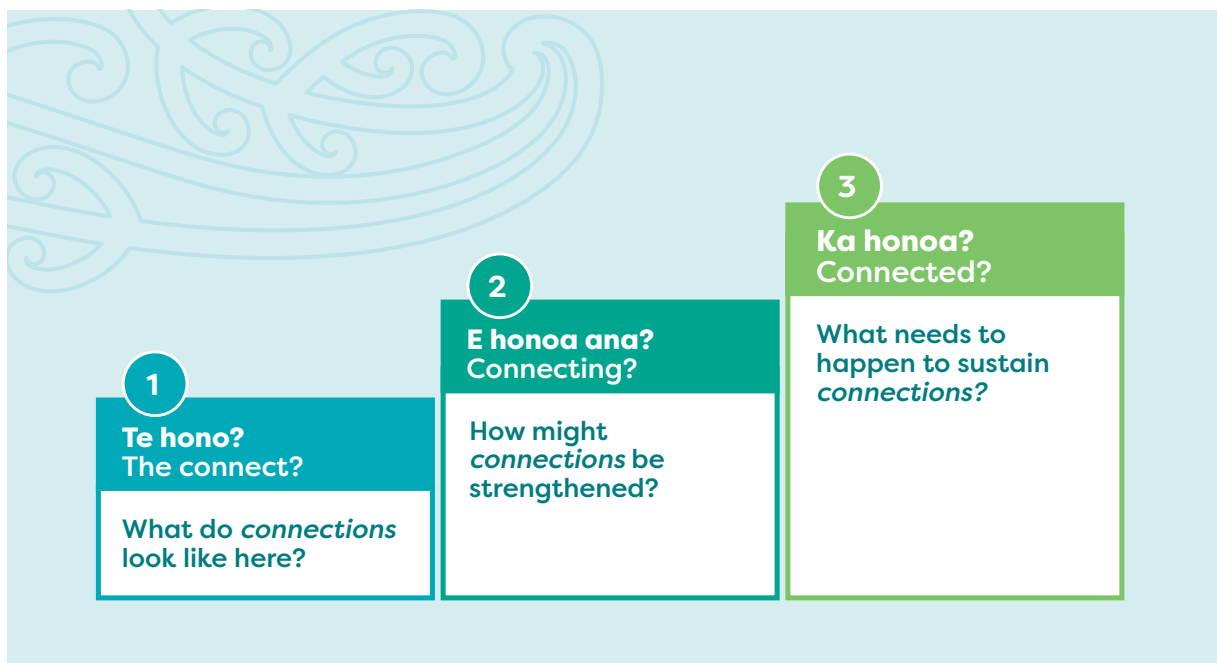
Hei taunaki (Recommendations)

Making the invisible visible - What kōhanga reo and kura can consider

Sustained connections can support effective transition, and so much more, what do effective connections look like, sound like and feel like in kaupapa Māori settings?

While we have tentatively begun to explore the idea of reflective tools that support and sustain effective connections across kōhanga reo, kura and kāinga, we have not yet had the opportunity to wānanga this with whānau and kaiako. Below is our thinking that we intend to take to the final *Wānanga Ngātahi*.

The poutama below invites kōhanga reo and kura whānau to consider the quality and level of their connection to kaupapa related to moving to kura and the next steps related to strengthening and sustaining these.



Below are a set of draft provocations in the form of reflective questions that stemmed from the research. These questions include practices participants considered could positively impact whānau confidence to transition their tamariki to kura kaupapa Māori. The overarching provocation encompassing kāinga, kōhanga reo and kura is

“Kia rite, kia mau - getting whānau kura ready, what can this look like?”

As tamariki and their whānau transition to kura, what might kōhanga reo and kura consider?

Using the poutama above choose a reflective question and spiral through taumata (level) 1, 2 then 3.

The connect	Provocation
Whānau voice	What processes and tools are utilised to gather whānau voice about transition / other related kaupapa/take? How are they kept informed?
Whānau wānanga	What opportunities are there for whānau to wānanga about transition / other related kaupapa/take?
Resourcing	What resources could support whānau and tamariki to feel confident about maintaining a Māori-medium pathway? How do you know?
Transition map	Where can whānau access clearly mapped transition information identifying the where, when, how, what and who of the enrolment process to kura?
Roles through transition	Who has roles in supporting whānau to navigate the transition process?
Established relationships	What established relationships do whānau have with kaimahi and/or whānau at kura? How do/might they support transition?
Roles of whānau	What do whānau know and/or want to know of the cultural-political-educational movement of Te Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori and the impact their participation has?
Knowledge and understanding	<p>What additional supports, resourcing and opportunities could be made available to whānau to support transition including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acquisition of te reo Māori (of and about) • tikanga • Māori philosophies that guide learning at kōhanga reo and kura
Curriculum, planning and routines	What do kōhanga reo and kura know of the other's documents that guide teaching and learning that could support transition? How are they similar, different? What is and can be shared?

Developing rauemi

Resource and artefact development that is finely balanced and sensitive.

Resources developed by kaiako pūrua are tailored, and targeted to their kōhanga reo and kura. It is important that whānau are able to see themselves in resources, rather than relying on universal, generic resources only. It is also imperative that they have control over resources developed by them, for them.

Kōhanga reo and kura want to provide every whānau with a kete of useful rauemi to support them through the transition process. The kaiako pūrua identified and began to produce bespoke rauemi, this requires time, expertise and resourcing. The wānanga across the project identified many more potential kaupapa that have implications for resource development.

In engagements with kōhanga reo and kura leadership during the tono phase, a commonly asked question centred around the knowledge mobilisation phase. Leadership wanted assurance that they would have control of the findings and of what would be shared more widely outside of their kōhanga reo and kura whānau. We gave each setting an assurance that any findings or impact stories shared would be done in collaboration with participant settings. Sharing from the project thus far has been overseen by or directly under the control of, the kōhanga reo and kura involved, for example, an invitation to other local kōhanga reo to participate in a *Wānanga Whānau* at the start of the project; the decision to share the pukapuka o ngā mana me ngā mātāpono with Te Runanga Nui o ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa.


Resource creation can be endless but if there is little opportunity to wānanga as a whānau and unpack new resources, the danger is that any resources developed remain at the level of information only and not part of knowledge sharing and knowledge building. In producing and mobilising resources consider how whānau might be supported to unpack, understand and use the resource should be considered, and appropriate support materials developed.

Research capacity and funding

Factoring in time-demands, capability, and capacity for Māori-medium research.

Researchers and facilitators with capability to work in Māori-medium settings are still relatively few in number. They also often find themselves spread across English-medium agendas that include a focus on Māori learners, or language, or knowledge, or culture. Much of the research work in this project was carried out by a team of two, with administrative support. We were acutely aware of the need to manage potential for overload and competing commitments throughout the project, for ourselves and for the four kaiako. While the kaiako were motivated, passionate, and committed to their pakirehua, they were also stretched. Kaiako are also a 'limited commodity' in Māori-medium settings and have many priorities on their time. While the teacher release funding removed time barriers for kaiako participation, finding appropriate teaching cover and time to put on their researcher pōtae (hat) was still a challenge.

All research entails analysis and interpretation. For Māori-medium research this often increases and



intensifies as much of it is, rightfully, carried out through the medium of te reo Māori, and may not only be accompanied by requirements of cultural analysis and interpretation, but also translation of data, information and messaging.

Holistic approach to transition in Māori-medium education.

While this project explored the transition of tamariki and their whānau at the early learning-schooling nexus, one of the participating kaiako inquired about the possibility of future projects focusing on other transition points along the Māori-medium journey. We are all too aware that there are a number of significant transition points along the Māori-medium pathway³³ where providing knowledge and support would not only be of great benefit to tamariki and their whānau on their learning journey, but also to educational, cultural and language aspirations across te ao Māori.

Supportive connections

We also had the opportunity to connect with a whānau transitions coordinator on fixed-term funding from the Ministry of Education. We saw how this role, carried out by a person who has deep knowledge and experience of both kōhanga reo and kura, helped to alleviate some pressure on staff, along with the potential of bedding in roles like this.

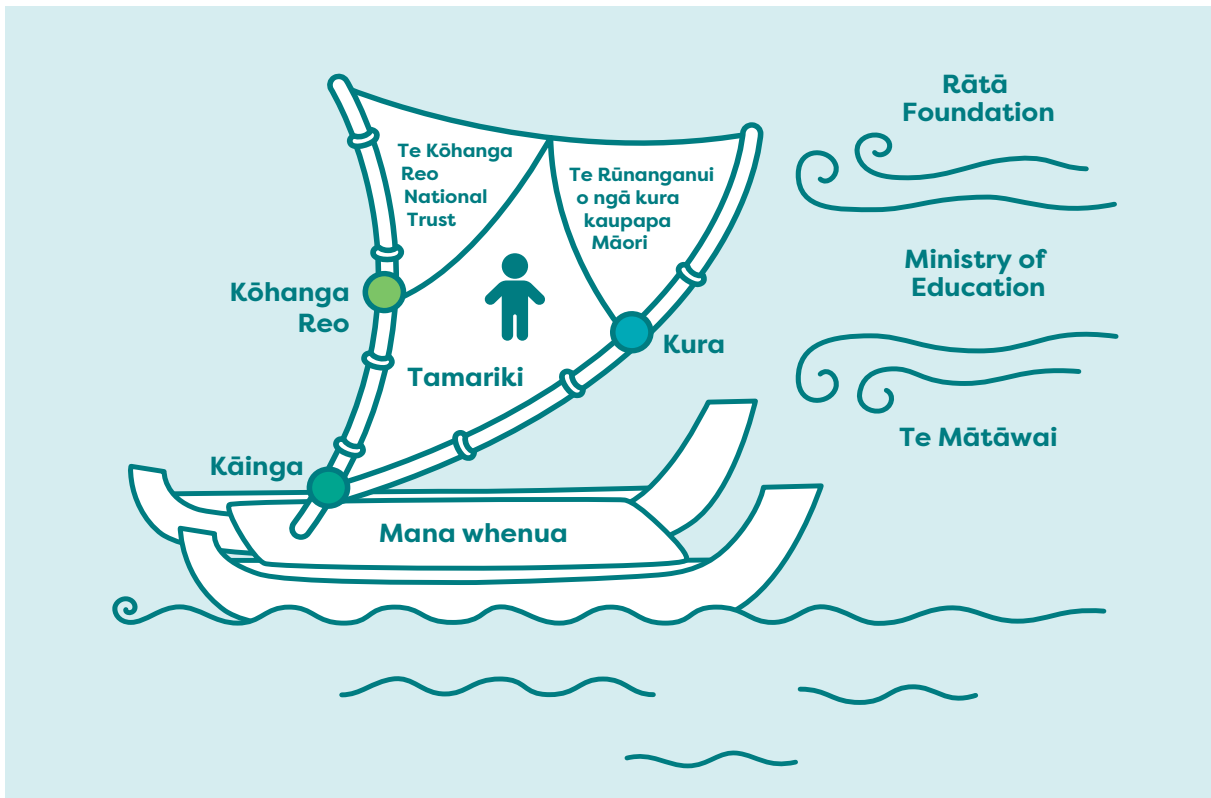
Early in the report we noted the positive nature of Māori-medium transition rates in Ōtautahi

(Christchurch) and Waitaha (Canterbury region), but not without challenges. What was evident were levels of anxiety amongst whānau about the transitions itself. What was also evident, while not a focus of this project, is that Māori-medium early learning provisions are relatively limited, reflected in kōhanga reo and other centres' long waiting lists. NELP aspires to barrier free access, for kura this access begins at early learning with kōhanga reo. Inability to access kōhanga reo has significant implications for whānau who desire a Māori-medium education pathway. Similarly, access to kōhanga reo (as well as other Māori-medium early learning programmes) has implications re government targets for Māori-medium learners.

Finally, an important enabler and outcome of this research was strengthened networks and relationships - connections - with Te Kōhanga Reo Trust and the Ministry of Education.

Relationships with organisations and entities that protect, support and guide kaupapa Māori educational movements such as kōhanga reo and kura are essential to the success of any endeavours to support and strengthen Māori-medium education outcomes. Relationship building requires approaches that recognise, acknowledge and affirm rangatiratanga and self-determination drivers underpinning Māori educational movements. This can be challenging as it carries with it implications for leadership, direction and control.

³³ see e.g. Hill, R., Rameka, L., & Skerrett, M. (2017).



This image illustrates some of key macro and micro relationships that needed to be considered in the learning ecosystem for this research.

Policy

The table below summarises our recommendations for thinking about policy, both national and organisational, in ways that positively impact on Māori-medium whānau and their tamariki.

Resourcing - time and materials	Provide equitable resourcing for the learning ecosystem to achieve shared outcomes that are important to the community at the centre.
Research informing practice	Support ongoing kaupapa Māori driven research activities to continually strengthen practice through connected policy, settings, kaupapa, knowledge and understandings, and relationships.
Reciprocal relationships	Prioritise connections with key stakeholders from all levels and start from a place of deeply understanding needs, nuances, strengths, shared outcomes and barriers. Consider who is at the table, whose voices are missing and how they could be heard? (see diagram - extended waka)

The journey continues

Although this is the final report, the mahi continues. Rauemi continue to be refined with feedback from whānau, and we will continue to work through decision-making about dissemination with kōhanga reo and kura leadership - What remains targeted to the kōhanga reo and kura whānau who made the project possible? and - what is appropriate for wider dissemination, in what form? We are particularly excited about the kura decision to share some of their mahi with Te Runanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa.

At the time of writing this report, gatherings in Aotearoa continue to be impacted by Covid-19 and a final *Wānanga Ngātahi* is yet to be held. We are looking forward to gathering together again under the same roof once we are all able to travel and to congregate!

**Kia pai te whakaterere i te waka kei pariparitia
e te tai, ka mōnenehu te kura nei**

*Steer the canoe carefully or our treasures
will be drenched by the sea spray*



Kuputaka (Glossary)

hono / hononga	connecting, connection
hua	fruit, berry, roe, egg, progeny, value, finding, result, outcome, asset
hui	to gather, to meet; meeting
kāinga	home
kaiako	teacher
kanohi kitea	seen face
karakia	prayers, ritual chants
mana	prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power; “the power of being” ^[1]
mana whenua	authority associated with possession and occupation of tribal land
manu pīrere	fledgling bird; term used for kōhanga reo graduate
mātāpono	principle
mātau	know, understand, knowledge, understandings
mokopuna	grandchild, term used for child attending kōhanga reo
reo ngātahi	together, as one
pakirehua	inquiry
pukapuka	book, paper, letter, document, pamphlet, etc.
pūrua	pair, in pairs, by twos
rā	sail of a canoe
rauemi	resource
raukura	feather, plume, treasure; term used for kura kaupapa Māori graduate ^[2]
taumata	level
tamaiti	child
tamariki	children
teina	younger or junior sibling/cousin of the same gender
tono	request, invitation
tuahine	sister or female cousin of a male

tuakana	elder or senior sibling/cousin of the same gender
tumuaki	principal
tungāne	brother or male cousin of a female
waiata	songs, chants
wānanga	forum for discussion, deliberation; to theorise
whakatau	to settle; to welcome formally
whanaungatanga	a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging
whānau	extended family, family group, a familiar term of address to a number of people, the primary economic unit of traditional Māori society

Sources: <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>; <https://www.teaching.co.nz/dictionary>

[1] Te Whāriki Early Childhood Curriculum [English-medium]

[2] Te Aho Matua

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Rātā Foundation Steering Group members

Rātā Foundation: Kate Sclater (2020 -), Courtney Sheat (2020 - 21), Vimbayi Chitaka (2021 -),

Ministry of Education: Jo George Scott (2020 -)

Pacific Peoples' Representative: Ruta McKenzie, SAASIA (2020 - 21), Havana Vili, Mapusaga A'oga Amata, (2021 -)

Whānau Parent Representative: Henare Te Aika-Puanaki, Ngai Tahu, (2020)

Canterbury Westland Primary Principals Association Representative: Pene Abbie, Paparoa Street School, (2020 -)



He rauemi, he rangahau nā

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