



Final Report for project

***He Ara Toiora: Suicide prevention for Ngātiwai youth through
the arts (LGB-2016-28888)***

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Report prepared by

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Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi

With your basket and my basket the people will thrive.



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CONTENTS:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
CONTENTS:.....	2
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background:	1
1.2 Methodology:	2
1.2.1 Overview:.....	2
1.2.2 Challenges of Staffing:.....	3
1.3 Building Research Capacity and Capability as a Desired Outcome:	3
1.3.1 Ngātiwai Education:	3
1.3.2 Internships:.....	5
1.4 Research Objectives:.....	6
1.5 Report Structure:	7
2.0 METHODOLOGY	8
2.1 Introduction:.....	8
2.2 Theoretical Frameworks:	8
2.2.1 Performative Research:.....	8
2.2.2 Kaupapa Māori Research:.....	10
2.2.3 Historical Trauma Theory:.....	11
2.3 Research Participants:	14
2.4 Ethical Considerations:	15
2.4.1 Indigenous Peoples, Research and Ethics:.....	15
2.4.2 Ethical Approval:	17
2.4.3 Consultation Hui:	17
2.4.4 Working with Vulnerable Populations:.....	19
2.4.5 Social Media and Cyber-bullying:	21
2.5 Data Collection Methods:	22
2.5.1 Marae-based Wānanga and the Importance of Culture:.....	22

2.5.2 Observation and Reflection:	23
2.5.3 Description of Marae-Based Wānanga:.....	24
2.5.4 Additional Activities:.....	38
2.6 Data Analysis:	39
2.6.1 Analysis Hui:	39
3.0 PROJECT FINDINGS:	40
3.1 Challenges of Community-based Research:.....	40
3.2 Mauri:.....	42
3.3 'You just have to love them!'	46
3.5 Leadership, Healing and Connection:	47
3.5.1 Leadership:	47
3.5.2 Healing:.....	49
3.5.3 Connection:	49
4.0 CONCLUSION:.....	51
4.1 Ongoing Concerns:.....	51
4.2 Recommendations:.....	51
4.3 Concluding Remarks:.....	52
REFERENCES:.....	54
GLOSSARY	60
APPENDICES	62
Appendix One: Wellington, P. (2016, Feb). Final Report to Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga for Summer Internship.....	62
Appendix Two: Dowsett, G. (2016). Project Report (unpublished). Whangarei: Ngātiwai Education.	89

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background:

Suicide in New Zealand is considered to be a major health crisis, with Māori taitamariki (youth) featuring in disproportionate numbers as more likely to die from suicide than non-Māori youth (Best Practice Journal, 2010; Canterbury Suicide Project, n.d.; Coupe, 2005, 2012; Lawson-Te Aho, 2013, 2014; Walters, 2016). An OECD report noted that New Zealand has the highest rate of youth suicide in the developed countries and Māori youth are 2.5 times more likely to die from suicide (McConnell, 2016). During 2012 there was a spike in the number of young people taking their own lives here, with an increase from 5 in 2011, to 19 in 2012 (Penney & Dobbs, 2014). As a result of this spike, many organisations in Te Tai Tokerau received funding to devise programmes to address this crisis, with the result being that youth suicide decreased slightly during 2013 and 2014 (Penney & Dobbs, 2014). However during 2015 there was an overall 33% increase in suicide completions in Northland (Coronial Services of New Zealand, 2015). Many today are citing the need to have open conversations about suicide – rather than hiding ‘shameful secrets’ – as a very necessary part of the solution (Mike King, cited in Dinsdale, 2013).

Dr Lily George has been working with the Ngātiwai Education Team since July 2014, following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Massey University and the Ngātiwai Trust Board. Under the leadership of Erica Wellington, the Education Team have built a thriving unit which supports their people from pre-school through to tribal education for their kaumātua. Part of their strategic plan was to develop a research arm to the unit and Lily was able to assist with that, and build on the considerable work they had already done and continue to do. Therefore the groundwork was already being laid when Lily arrived, with the young ones being nurtured and guided by passionate Ngātiwai educators who continue to give over and above the requirements of their job descriptions.

Ngātiwai Education developed the *He Ara Toiora* project as a way in which to address the 2012 cluster of suicides in Te Tai Tokerau, and take a positive focus on developing Ngātiwai-based strategies that respond to the particular needs and requirements of their taitamariki. This has been continued with a second HRCNZ-funded project, *Kokiritia te ora*, which looks more specifically at building hope and resilience for taitamariki and provides the opportunity for the taitamariki and youth leaders to be community researchers. Both projects seek to realise the objective that ‘the tides of Ngātiwai flow with wellbeing - *Kia rere ora pai ngā tai o Ngātiwai*’.

In *He Ara Toiora* art and drama, music and dance was used to open spaces where the youth could express feelings and life challenges, including their experiences of suicide and suicidal ideation. Most of those involved in the project have either had their own thoughts of suicide at different stages of their lives, some have attempted suicide

themselves, and almost all have had close whānau or friends who have succeeded in leaving this life. During the course of this project – around 16 months – there have been at least seven more whānau who have left this life through suicide. Therefore this is a very real challenge for the people of Ngātiwai and the wider Te Tai Tokerau region (as well as throughout the country), and one which cannot be ignored.

1.2 Methodology:

1.2.1 Overview:

The original application to the LSCRC was submitted by Dr Bert van Dijk (Toiora Ltd) and Erica Wellington (Ngātiwai Education) with the support of Dr Keri Lawson-Te Aho, a recognised authority in Māori suicide prevention research; once funding was secured, the ethics application process began in December 2014. Bert was chosen for his expertise in performative research, a relatively new research paradigm in New Zealand. Performative research is that which is “practice-led” in that practice (i.e. of art, drama and so on) is the “necessary pre-condition of engagement in performative research” (Haseman, 2006, p. 6). Haseman suggests further that:

Performative research represents a move which holds that practice is the principal research activity – rather than only the practice of performance – and sees the material outcomes of practice as all-important representations of research findings in their own right. (2006, p. 7)

Due to the performative research focus of this project, from the beginning a stated outcome of the project was a performance event to be held at the end of the process. In this way, the findings of the project would be presented in the first instance to the most important audience – friends and whānau of the people involved in the project. The performance would be developed over the course of the various wānanga by the Drama Facilitator.

Given that this project was ‘by Ngātiwai, for Ngātiwai, with Ngātiwai’ (as well as other Māori groups in Te Tai Tokerau), use of Kaupapa Māori research was necessary. In fact, it was mooted that development of ‘Kaupapa Ngātiwai research’ was possible by engaging in this and the subsequent project (*Kokiritia Te Ora*). Kaupapa Māori/Ngātiwai research presupposes the validity of Māori knowledge, culture and values in general (Smith, 1999), and Ngātiwai mātauranga in particular. It takes for granted also that locus of power and control of research should be with Māori (and those most closely associated with particular Māori groups) throughout the entire research process (Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003). In fact, Māori people are best placed to conduct research with their own people, while recognising that expertise from outside of the group may be utilised also, especially those with relevant cultural and mātauranga competencies. Of fundamental importance are the relationships between the various groups and individuals engaged in the research. Further, Hudson et. al., (2010) assert that

“meaningful relationships between researcher and research participant forms another axis of consideration for evaluating the ethical tenor of a research project and its associated activity” (p. 11).

1.2.2 Challenges of Staffing:

This project underwent several staff changes throughout its term. Dr van Dijk withdrew from the project in July 2015 for personal reasons, although his influence could be felt throughout the project. Dr George assumed the role of Primary Investigator on the project at that time, with Elizabeth Sugrue taking on the role of Drama Facilitator. Elizabeth is very experienced in drama facilitation and development, as well as working with Māori youth, and proved to be an excellent facilitator. Unfortunately she also had to withdraw from the project in December 2015, and Gayle Dowsett of Ngātiwai Education stepped forward into the role. Gayle had the advantage of being familiar with the project, is very experienced with directing dramatic performances, and had worked with the majority of the taitamariki in the project through her work with Ngātiwai Education. Gayle very ably demonstrated her ability to weave together her abilities as a teacher and drama expert with her role in research. Nevertheless, the changes to staff were unsettling for some of the project participants, but this was offset somewhat by having a core group who were constant.

1.3 Building Research Capacity and Capability as a Desired Outcome:

1.3.1 Ngātiwai Education:

As part of its strategic direction, Ngātiwai Education sought to develop a research unit. *He Ara Toiora* provided the first opportunity with which to begin that development, and therefore from the outset building the research capability of the staff was a priority. Following the signing of the MOU between Ngātiwai Trust Board and Massey University in June 2014, Dr George contacted Ngātiwai Education managers Erica Wellington and Philip Alexander-Crawford, and identified building research capacity and a research institute as priority goals. Over the next 18 months Lily organised a series of activities designed to achieve those goals, through her role in the Office of AVC Māori & Pasifika at Massey University:

Table One – Activities to build research capacity and capability:

July 2014	Mini research seminar at Massey University: showcased Māori researchers and research to show breadth of possibility for Ngātiwai Education (NE).
July 2014	Attended HRCNZ Writing Workshop with two members of Ngātiwai Education; Began process of Ngā Kanohi Kitea (NKK) Development Grant (HRCNZ)

	application with close consultation between Dr George and NE staff, for <i>Kokiritia Te Ora</i> project.
1st October 2014	NKK Development Grant application submitted to HRCNZ.
November 2014	Notified of success of NKK Development Grant application – began organisation for consultation hui in 2015.
28 th & 29 th January 2015	Consultation Hui for <i>Kokiritia Te Ora</i> – 1) Whakapaumahara Marae with Ngātiwai whānau; 2) NE offices at Toll Stadium with health, social services and education professionals. <i>He Ara Toiora</i> project also discussed at these hui and support for the project sought.
January 2015	Dr Lily George and Dr Keri Lawson-Te Aho assist with ethics application for <i>He Ara Toiora</i> project; Lily then worked with NE to implement project, attending research meetings at least monthly over the next 18 months, as well as participating in wānanga.
16 th & 17 th February 2015	Lily George and six members of NE attend <i>Hauora Māori Foundations</i> paper, University of Otago/Wellington, organised by Dr Lawson-Te Aho; Made connections with other groups from Wellington, Taumarunui, Wanganui and Rotorua who are working also on suicide prevention – desire voiced to find ways to work together and possible research topics discussed.
February 2015	Research seminar series presented at Toll Stadium begins with a presentation by Lily titled <i>Voicing the silences of incarceration and trauma: Healing, potential and transformation for Māori women</i> . Monthly academic support programme for Māori students in Te Tai Tokerau begins, run by Lily and Messina Shaw of Massey University, with monthly visits. These ran until December 2015.
March 2015	KESG application (Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga) submitted for a proposed Te Tai Tokerau Research Symposium – unsuccessful.
27 th -29 th March 2015	Lily George and four members of NE travel to Taumarunui to visit <i>Breakthrough Wellness Trust</i> re initiative begun in Wellington in February; Development of support network, possible research project on models of community development.
April 2015	Submitted NKK Full Application: <i>Kokiritia te ora: Promoting vitality and enhancing belonging in Ngātiwai taitamariki</i> – application successful and project began in January 2016. This project was seen as continuation of <i>He Ara Toiora</i> , now focusing on building resilience and hope in the taitamariki as a suicide prevention measure.
7 th May 2015	Lily George and Erica Wellington presented at Massey University in Albany, in the Māori Research Seminar Series. Their presentation was titled <i>Whai mai ki au – A developing model of collaboration between Te Au Here o Tukaiaia [Ngātiwai Education] and Massey University</i> .
25 th & 26 th May 2015	Lily George, Gayle Dowsett and Petina Stone attended <i>Turamarama ki te Ora Suicide Prevention Conference</i> in Rotorua.

28 th June-1 st July 2015	Lily George and Petina Stone attended <i>He Manawa Whenua</i> (Waikato University) conference in Hamilton.
6 th & 7 th July 2015	Evaluation research training for two members of NE by Te Roopu Whāriki Research Group (Massey University) in Whangarei.
September 2015	Lily George supported Paulette Wellington in application for a Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Summer Internship to work on <i>He Ara Toiora</i> and <i>Kokiritia Te Ora</i> . The application was successful and Paulette carried out the internship from December 2015 to February 2016, with Lily as supervisor.
4 th -6 th October 2015	Lily George, two <i>He Ara Toiora</i> research team members and six Youth Leaders attend <i>Rangatahi Suicide Prevention Conference</i> at Ratana Pa. This was organised by <i>Kimiora Trust</i> of Wanganui, members of whom we had met in Wellington in February.
11 th December 2015	Lily George, one NE member and two <i>He Ara Toiora</i> Youth Leaders attended <i>How do whānau and hapū support their whanaunga to realise their potential?</i> hui at Otiria Marae, organised by Moe Milne and others.

At the time Lily began working with Ngātiwai Education, one member held a Master's degree, two were currently engaged in completing their Master's degrees, one held an undergraduate degree, and others had been awarded various diplomas and certificates. Their core business was education, especially in relation to Ngātiwai and other Māori taitamariki at local early childhood education centres, primary schools and colleges as well as kaumātua education. Plans were also underway to develop tertiary level programmes. What eventuated however was that while all NE members were passionate about increasing the educational levels and opportunities for their people, and were therefore keen to support the *He Ara Toiora* and *Kokiritia Te Ora* projects, they did not choose research as a career pathway. Although they were encouraged to take up further tertiary study, all eventually declined. It seems therefore, that if Ngātiwai Education wishes to develop their research unit further in the future, external staff with existing research capability and qualifications will need to be employed. Nevertheless, with the two projects at hand, current NE staff (as well as others involved in the project) have certainly increased their research capability and are now trained as capable community researchers.

1.3.2 Internships:

In September 2015, Dr George supported Paulette Wellington (independent contractor to Ngātiwai Education) in an application for a summer internship through *Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga*. The application was successful and Paulette carried out the internship from December 2015 to February 2016. This enabled her to be involved in projects that are embedded in Māori community development and positive Māori youth development. While this project did not teach her research skills such as interviewing, for a student researcher aiming to work with Maori communities, this experience was

invaluable. Paulette gained experience, for example, in relationship development and maintenance, and working with tikanga Māori processes in a research project. *He Ara Toiora* used Performative Research (PR) methods and methodology, along with Kaupapa Māori Research. PR is a relatively new methodology in Aotearoa, which uses performance as a way to present the 'text' of a research project, so this intersection of KMR and PR is part of what makes this project unique and innovative. Performance is of course, a natural part of Māori culture through aspects such as waiata, haka and moteatea. In *He Ara Toiora*, performance enabled the taitamariki to express their understandings of connection, suicide, identity and hope in a ways that were meaningful for them. Paulette therefore had the opportunity to learn an emerging methodology that has meaning within Te Ao Māori; or at the least, within Te Ao Ngātiwai.

The final report for the internship is attached as an appendix to this report (Appendix One). Although Paulette enrolled in a postgraduate diploma through Massey University in 2016, unfortunately she had to withdraw later in the year due to whānau challenges. Nevertheless, Paulette's work as a research intern and Health Clinician on both projects while she was able to do so, was valuable to the processes and outcomes of both projects.

Because the Ngā Pae internships were open nationally, we received other applications for our internship. One was from Kim Peita whose résumé was very impressive. Kim was then engaged in a Master's degree, had a background in education, lived and worked in Te Tai Tokerau, and therefore had ample experience in working with and in Māori people and communities. Erica Wellington and Lily George interviewed her and it was decided to employ Kim part-time as a research intern using part of the existing funding. Kim also proved to be a valuable asset to the project, attending wānanga and assisting with data collection, although she had to withdraw from the project in mid-2016 due to health issues.

1.4 Research Objectives:

The following research objectives were listed as 'Desired Outcomes' in the ethics application:

1. Seeking a deeper understanding of the risk factors leading to self-destructive behaviours among Ngātiwai taitamariki;
2. Developing and testing new arts-based strategies that restore whakapapa consciousness and whakamana/uphold tribal narratives;
3. Evidence of increased confidence, leadership, self-expression and connection among a selection/sample of our youth;

4. Building strong support networks;
5. Recommendations for further action and research.

Each of these objectives will be explained throughout this report, and it will be seen that rather than a tidy exploration of these objectives, an organic process ensued, with various facets arising in each wānanga; that is, there was no conscious desire to structure these objectives into each wānanga, but to remain open to emerging themes or understanding with each activity, and then to decide whether to follow those through or not. An example of this is given with the emergence of mauri as a major theme and through which the performance was developed.

1.5 Report Structure:

Following this introductory section, Section Two describes the methodologies and methods used in data gathering for the project. Also discussed are ethical considerations, and notions of building research capacity and capability for Ngātiwai Education staff. This is followed by descriptions of eight wānanga in which the performative strategies were employed and data gathered.

Section Three looks at data analysis, and the use of the mauri concept as an organising theme for presentation of findings. Also deliberated are three themes – leadership, healing and connection – that were identified from this project, and which represent three very important factors in building hope and resilience in taitamariki; these themes were therefore used in *Kokiritia te ora*.

Section Four concludes this Report, reiterating the main findings, as well as proposing recommendations for future projects.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction:

This section explores the theoretical frameworks of Kaupapa Māori and Performative research in more detail, with the synergies between these frameworks contributing well to the research purpose and objectives noted above. Also discussed here is Historical Trauma Theory (HTT) as an important underpinning to understanding the context within which this project was conducted. This too is a significant component of Kaupapa Māori research in that the strengths and challenges of Māori people should be explored with knowledge of the whakapapa or history within which Māori people are embedded.

In 2.3 the participants engaged within the project are discussed, while 2.4 explores ethics associated with the project. Given the sensitive nature of the topic under exploration – Māori youth suicide – and that this project is by and with Ngātiwai and other Māori people, ethical considerations were vital to the efficacy of the project. Section 2.5 notes the data collection methods that were used, while 2.6 gives an overview of the methods of the data analysis and includes descriptions of the eight marae-based wānanga as well as two additional activities engaged in.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks:

2.2.1 Performative Research:

The foundations of performative research can be found in theoretical premises such as Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Boal (1992/2002) defines *Theatre of the Oppressed* as a "system of Games and Special Techniques that aims at developing, in oppressed citizens, the language of theatre, which is the essential human language" (cited in Sullivan et. al., 2008, p. 167). There are four fundamental components to this system of intensive drama-based community workshops:

- 1) *Knowing the body* through exploration of embodied "limitations, balance, improvisational possibilities and social distortions";
- 2) *Making the body expressive* through learning the "vocabulary and syntax of dramatic physicality";
- 3) *Theatre as language* and method of inquiry and knowing, with "simultaneous dramaturgy [and] image theatre"; and
- 4) *Theatre as discourse* through the "spoken word [and] multi-voiced poems." (Boal, 1985; cited in Sullivan et. al., 2008, p. 167)

Theatre of the Oppressed is therefore composed of inherently political activity, with:

the potential to make social structures, power relations and individual habitus visible and, at the same time, provide tools to facilitate change. It is one of the few methods that offers an integrated approach to work on individual, group and social levels, and involves both the body and the mind. (Osterlind, 2008, p. 71)

Theatre therefore provides an arena and space within which participants can explore challenges and solutions, but importantly, also then being able to use those explorations to transform their real lives (Edkvist, 2005; cited in Osterlind, 2008).

Sullivan et. al., (2008) note the connection of Boal's work to that of Paulo Friere, the Brazilian scholar who wrote *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (orig. publ. 1970). In his 2000 Introduction to the 30th anniversary edition of *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (publ. 2005), Donald Macedo wrote that:

Reading *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* gave me a language to critically understand the tensions, contradictions, fears, doubts, hopes, and "deferred" dreams that are part and parcel of living a borrowed and colonized cultural existence. (p. 11)

In turn, theatre provides the embodied language through which people may "enlarge our frames of reference and to emancipate us from rigid ways of thinking and perceiving" (O'Neill, 1996; cited in Osterlind, 2008, p. 72) to achieve personal and social transformations.

Sullivan et. al., (2008) also note the 'matrix of connection' between Friere's *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Boal's *Theatre of the oppressed*, and the contemporary research paradigm of Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) in which neighbourhoods and communities become central 'actors' in research processes which are contextualised within socio-historical realities. This 'matrix' therefore "inform[s] commitment of research and advocacy efforts to partnerships that investigate root causes as well as addressing health and social outcomes of environmental injustices" (Sullivan et. al., 2008, p. 167). As noted by Horowitz, Robinson, and Seifer (2009), CBPR:

engages the multiple stakeholders, including the public and community providers, who affect and are affected by a problem of concern. This collaborative approach to research equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. (p. 2633)

Performative research is also related to 'ethnographic performance', defined by Sassis (2011) as "transformation of research data into a theatrical script and performance" (p. 4). Saldaña (2005; cited in Sassis, 2011) defines 'ethnodrama' as a "written script

[which] consists of dramatized, significant selections of narrative collected through interviews, participant observation, field notes, journal entries [etc.] (p. 4). Norman Denzin (2003) notes that “Performance ethnography simultaneously creates and enacts moral texts that move from the personal to the political, from the local to the historical and cultural” (p. x).

Performative research, therefore, was very appropriate for this particular project not only as a way in which to create a safe space for exploration of matters relating to Māori youth suicide and where participants were able to voice deeply held hurts, but also that it enabled the inclusion of culture within the dramatic performances so that the process and performances were of immediate relevance to the participants. As noted by Archibald, Dewar, Reid and Stevens (2012):

a person’s culture touches their soul in a way that awakens the truth of who they are. When a person is given the opportunity to be creative within their own cultural art form, it allows movement in the body and this helps to awaken those hidden traumatised parts. (p. 43)

2.2.2 Kaupapa Māori Research:

Māori worldviews which encompass Māori values, principles and knowledge are integral to Kaupapa Māori research (KMR) methodologies to empower and encourage participation in research (Kerr, Penney, Moewaka Barnes, & McCreanor, 2010). KMR arose in response to Māori protests of our marginalisation in our ancestral lands, and how that resulted in oppression in other arenas such as education and research (Bishop, 1996; Smith, 1999; Walker, 1990). Bishop (1996) considered that research with Māori must have a “methodology of participation” where research is “participant-driven” (Bishop, 1996, pp. 224 & 226). Pipi et. al., (2004) write that kaupapa Māori is an “emancipatory theory” in which a common goal is the self-determining right to have, for example, research theories, methods and methodologies which “enrich, empower and enlighten” all those who are involved in any particular research project (p. 141). Kaupapa Māori is therefore a critical theory which discusses “notions of critique, resistance, struggle, and emancipation” (Smith, 1999, p. 3). Kaupapa Māori research initiatives then, take for granted the legitimacy of Māori knowledge, culture and values. They are also consequently “about the creation of spaces for Māori realities” (Pipi et. al., 2004, p. 143).

He Ara Toiora utilised KMR with methods such as marae-based wānanga encompassing Ngātiwai mātauranga such as whakatauki, waiata, kaitiaki and tikanga. Each wānanga began with a powhiri process, even when re-using the same marae, as this increased the familiarity and comfort of taitamariki (and adults) with tikanga associated with powhiri. Wellington (2016) notes that:

Although some of the taitamariki did not identify as Ngātiwai, the underpinning values and principles to encourage participation with the use of Māori tikanga using a Māori worldview, did in fact seem to allow a pathway for tamariki and taitamariki to engage with the research. (p. 13)

Ngātiwai kaumātua Nupere and Te Miringa Ngawaka were present at all wānanga, lending a guiding presence in terms of tikanga. The Ngātiwai Education team had varying levels of cultural competency, and it was readily accepted that as much as possible our processes would adhere to Ngātiwai tikanga, while ensuring that such processes were not exclusionary or lacking sensitivity to the varying needs of participants.

2.2.3 Historical Trauma Theory:

Weaving together Kaupapa Māori and performative methodologies meant *He Ara Toiora* participants could work collectively in drama and art activities to explore and gain understanding of their individual and collective worlds. Performance and art was used to portray Ngātiwai wisdoms held within whakatauki and legends, which enabled cultural connections where there were none, and strengthened those already existing. The range of fun-filled activities allowed the youth to gain cultural learning while being in a space to express their individual and often painful experiences through dialogue, writing, role-playing, kapa haka and waiata.

Historical trauma theory (HTT) provides a useful way in which to understand the context which many of these taitamariki – and the adults associated with the project – are caught within. As the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori have experienced the dispossession and dissolution of culture experienced by other indigenous groups around the world through the destructions of colonisation. Suicide has become one of the responses to lives which are increasingly marked by hopelessness, in which life paths are marked by dysfunction and psychological, spiritual and physical dis-ease (see Figure One below). Important is the recognition that current experiences have been built upon those of parents, grandparents and other generations past in intergenerational transmissions of trauma.

Historical Trauma Theory purports that the responses to past traumatic event/s affecting a group of people become entrenched in the collective and social memories of the population due to an inability to deal effectively with those traumas as a result of the enormity of the event/s, and/or the ongoing impact of previous events. Self-destructive behaviours such as substance abuse and alcoholism, maladaptive social and behavioral patterns, and internalized oppressions come to underpin the learning that is transmitted from one generation to another in “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations” (Brave Heart, 2005). Wirihana and Smith (2014) note that:

The historical trauma framework provided a means for indigenous peoples to conceptualise the generational effects of colonial oppression on well-being and offered a process for understanding how it exacerbates post-traumatic suffering. (p. 198)

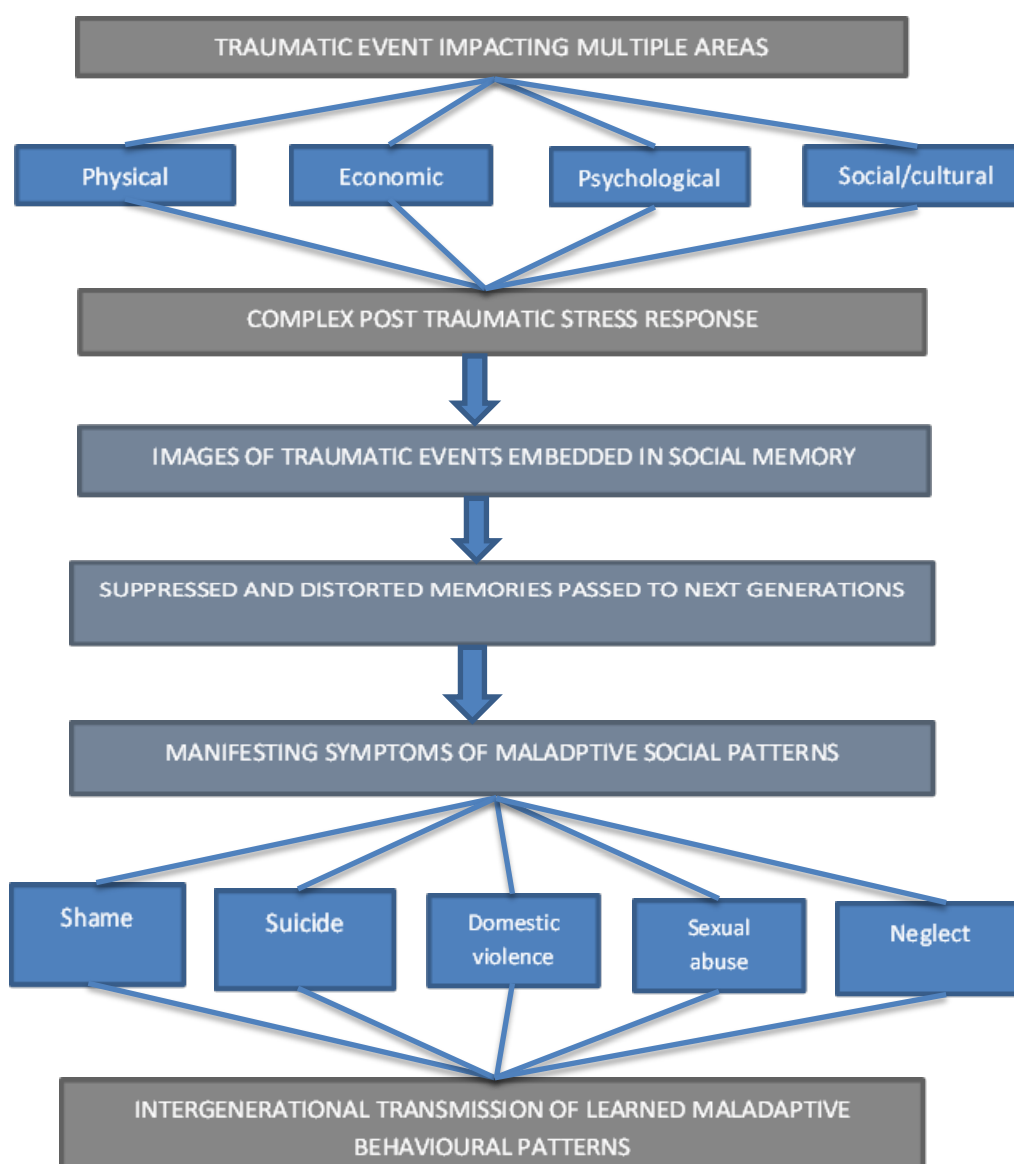


Figure One: Transmission of intergenerational trauma (Adapted from Castellano & Archibald, 2013, p. 70)

It is important to note however, that acknowledging the trauma of the past which has facilitated creation of current traumas is only part of Historical Trauma Theory; the primary aim of HTT is to **heal** from those traumas, and to be able to move forward from that healing into a more positive future. As George et. al. (2014) notes, “While historical

trauma and its responses can have a significant negative impact on individuals and groups, there are also stories of resilience and hope that can be narrated” (p. 191).

Therefore, HTT can impel a four stage process whereby we:

- 1) Confront our trauma and embrace our history;
- 2) Understand that trauma;
- 3) [grieve and] Release the pain; and then
- 4) Transcend the trauma. (Brave Heart, 2005, p. 5)

New understandings of current circumstances can be drawn from confronting trauma, thereby developing new and better ways of being within the world. These are self-determining processes whereby we “rename or reframe our experiences from traditional knowledge – it is a spiritual process and the renaming is part of decolonising ourselves” (Walters, 2007, p. 40). It is in fact a whakapapa model (George, et. al., 2014), or a way of ‘restoring whakapapa consciousness’ (Lawson-Te Aho, 2015) through knowing the fullness of our history within processes which utilise and take for granted the efficacy of cultural knowledge for our healing and living, as shown in Archibald and Castellano’s (2013) model below. By using “reclaimed culture as a ‘healing tool’, clusters of healthy, revitalized people [may foster] community renewal, [re-forge] their identities, and [assert] their place within the wider...society” (Archibald & Castellano, 2013, p. 75).

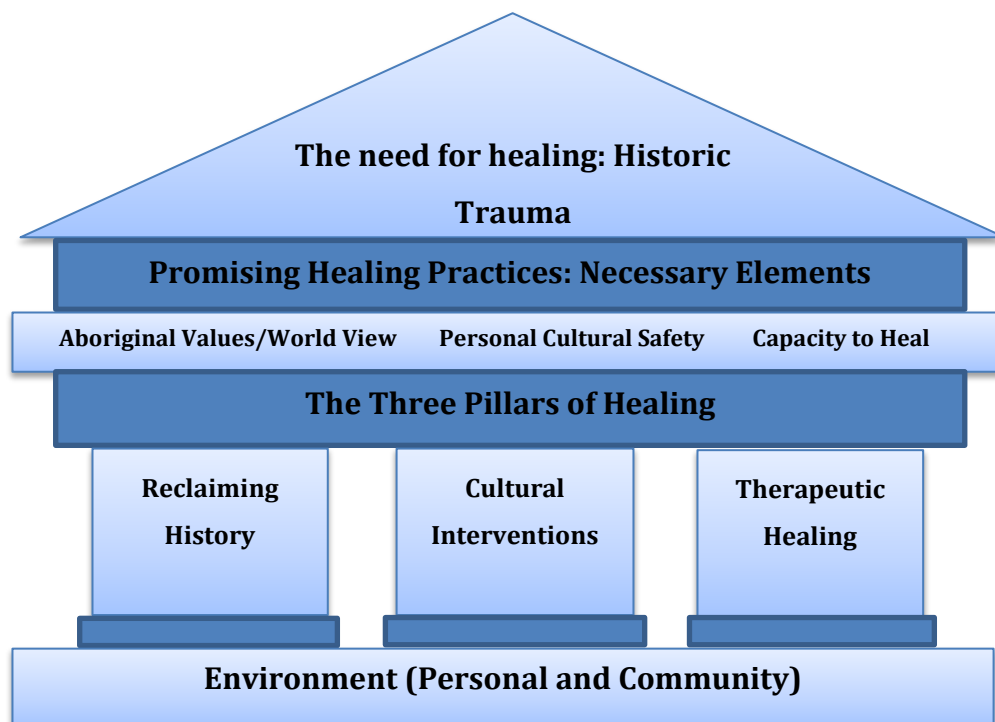


Figure Two: Promising Healing Practices (Adapted from Castellano & Archibald, 2013, Figure 5.5, p. 84).

Working in a kaupapa Māori way and with methods which see those we research with as experts of their own lives and as holding potential and worth in their own right, contributes to building a better society within which individuals – and therefore whānau and communities – have a better chance of flourishing. Di Grennell notes the necessity of “putting whānau in the driver’s seat. However where whānau lack social and economic resources, there needs to be care taken that whānau have the ability to be in the driver’s seat” (SPINZ Webinar, 2013).

2.3 Research Participants:

There were three groups of participants involved in *He Ara Toiora*. The primary group of participants were taitamariki/Māori youth aged from 11 to 16 years. Group two were Youth Leaders aged from 17 years to 48 years, the designation ‘Youth’ referring to their work on the project, rather than their age. All are of Māori descent, with whakapapa connections to Ngātiwai and/or other iwi.

Lawson-Te Aho (2013) spoke of the challenges associated with restoring whakapapa consciousness. Many of the taitamariki and adults working on *He Ara Toiora* were urban-raised with varying levels of knowledge of whakapapa, including that of the lands and people to which they belonged. Many have current and intergenerational experiences of poverty and associated issues such as low levels of employment and education, racism and discrimination, high health needs but also experienced barriers to access of necessary services, and increased inclusion in the criminal justice system. Access to marae, kaumātua and kuia and other such institutions of learning was limited for some. Many had negative educational experiences which added to their sense of hopelessness in terms of positive future pathways. All the taitamariki and all but one of the adults have had experiences relating to suicide, either their own or that of friends and/or whānau.

The third participant group was composed of Lily George, various members of Ngātiwai Education including the kaumātua mentioned previously, as well as research advisors Moe Milne, Keri Lawson-Te Aho and Helen Moewaka Barnes, and research interns Paulette Wellington and Kim Peita. This group was in essence the ‘research team’, most of whom met to discuss research processes, managed the wānanga procedures, and held debriefings following wānanga. While the research team are not generally considered participants, given the nature of performative research whereby much of the data collection is via observations of activities at the wānanga recorded in reflection notes, participation in those activities was necessary. At the first wānanga Lily attempted to be primarily an observer, but quickly realised that in order to build relationships with the other participants, there had to be closer interaction. Nevertheless she spent time at each wānanga observing the activities, talking with participants, and taking notes.

Taitamariki participation in the wānanga was fluid in that it remained open to anyone to join at any time. As knowledge of the wānanga spread via word of mouth and on the *He Ara Toiora* Facebook page, new taitamariki would arrive. The Youth Leaders group remained fairly stable, although partners of two current leaders were taken on in later wānanga. For various reasons staff from Ngātiwai Education came and went. There was never any guarantee who would be at each wānanga until the day arrived. While this created some challenges in adjusting to new group dynamics each time, stability came from a core group of around 12 taitamariki, 10 Youth Leaders and six from the research team at each wānanga.

2.4 Ethical Considerations:

2.4.1 Indigenous Peoples, Research and Ethics:

It is undeniable that research has contributed in some negative ways to the plight of indigenous people. Research was often conducted *on* indigenous and other marginalised people through the epistemological and ontological premises of Western science. From the early 20th century research practices such as participant observation and fieldwork were developed by those such as Franz Boas (1858-1942), and Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) in academic disciplines such as anthropology. Many others followed, developing a wide range of research methods and methodologies until today there are hundreds of different methodologies (underpinning philosophies) and methods (research activities) of doing research.

Māori have become one of the most researched indigenous populations, with early amateur ethnologists such as Tregear, Smith, Best and White writing prolifically on the social and cultural nature of Māori. They constructed a ‘grand design’ in an abridged and simplistic version of Māori society that matched the requirements of the emerging nation state. Any inconsistencies were considered ‘corrupt’ and discarded (Ballara, 1998, pp. 97-99). ‘Native informants’ were used here and elsewhere, often without full acknowledgement of their contribution. Indeed, it was often thought the natives were not capable of understanding themselves and their cultures. The late 19th century communication from W.E. Gudgeon to Percy S. Smith that “We Europeans have the critical faculty and must exercise it for good or evil” (cited in Ballara, 1998, p. 98) demonstrates the arrogance of intellectual entitlement shown by many non-indigenous researchers. It is not surprising then, that ‘research’ became known to indigenous peoples as a “dirty word” (Smith, 1999, p. 1), seeming to be a tool wielded to advance colonial agendas.

From the 1960s however, indigenous and other groups increasingly called for research practices that were of self-defined benefit to their needs, and which reflected more clearly the cultural practices, knowledges and values of their own people. The publication of Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s 1999 book – *Decolonising methodologies: Research*

and indigenous peoples – was significant, with the ideas contained within finding resonance with many other indigenous groups as well as Māori. It also signalled the entrenchment of Kaupapa Māori research as a legitimate research paradigm in New Zealand. As noted by Moewaka Barnes (2000):

Denying the existence of kaupapa maori [sic] research can be seen as a lack of understanding that the worldview of a researcher is integral to the research and how it is carried out, including the way in which methodologies and methods are developed. This dismisses the existence of distinct differences arising from ideology and approach related to ethnicity and culture. It could also be seen as another part of the denial of a Maori voice. (p. 4)

The ethics of research with Māori is therefore a primary consideration of that research. Hudson et. al. (2010) note that “For Māori, ethics is about tikanga, for tikanga reflects our values, our beliefs, and the way we view the world” (p. 2). When researching with Māori participants ethical factors to consider include:

- ❖ respect for an individual’s inclusion in whānau, hapū and iwi;
- ❖ the primacy of relationships for Māori, including those with wairua or the spiritual dimension;
- ❖ that informed consent *can* mean also getting consent from whānau, hapū and/or iwi;
- ❖ intellectual property may belong to whānau, hapū and iwi as well as individuals;
- ❖ appropriate methods and methodology for Māori people and communities are used;
- ❖ cultural and social diversity is recognised, acknowledged and respected; and that
- ❖ reciprocity is also an integral and conscious part of the research process.

Also of importance to many Māori now, is that the researcher/s are connected by whakapapa to the groups or community being researched with. Researchers such as Tai Walker (2001) argue that because of diversity between Māori tribes, with differences in language and custom, a tribal perspective on research must be taken. Certainly whakapapa was an important consideration for acceptance of Lily George in the research activities of Ngātiwai Education, and connection to Ngātiwai through her grandmother’s whakapapa of Ngāti Kuta as well as her grandfather’s Te Kapotai whakapapa, was highlighted. Whakapapa in research goes beyond overt whakapapa connections however, and refers also to the relationships between all those involved in research. As Hudson et. al. note:

Within the context of decision-making about ethics, whakapapa refers to quality of relationships and the structures or processes that have been established to support these relationships. In research, the development and maintenance of meaningful relationships between researcher and research participant forms

another axis of consideration for evaluating the ethical tenor of a research project and its associated activity. (p. 6)

2.4.2 Ethical Approval:

Given this project was community-based rather than within an academic institution, ethical approval was sought from the New Zealand Ethics Committee (<http://www.nzethics.com/>). Ethical approval was given in February 2015 (NZE 15 #1), initially only for recruitment and development of the youth leaders training module; because of the organic nature of performative research, wānanga plans could not be fully detailed prior to the beginning of data collection. The following recommendations were made by the Committee, noting that the Committee's key concerns were in "finding a process to ensure ethical checks on the changes or emerging research practices":

- 1) *Appoint a designated person to oversee the project's ethical practice, preferably a kaumatua or someone with clinical training:* Moe Milne was appointed as the Ethics Advisor for the project – although she was a member of the research team, she was somewhat on the outskirts of the project and did not attend the wānanga, and therefore was a more neutral person people could go to when necessary. Her mātauranga as a kuia of Te Tai Tokerau as well as her research and ethics expertise (she was one of the authors of *Te Ara Tika*) made her an ideal candidate.
- 2) *Provide a report on each separate stage of the project that the NZEC would review as an amendment to the initial approval:* This was a little more problematic, although eventually the six (rather than eight in the ethics application) Taitamariki Development Wānanga followed a more kaupapa Māori format as well as notions of emerging drama performances.

2.4.3 Consultation Hui:

According to Hudson et. al. (2010):

Consultation ensures that there has been a constructive critique of the proposed project and its potential impact on Māori. It also provides an opportunity for the community to consider the track record of the researcher. Consultation assists with the development of clearly written information sheets..., provide a mechanism for reporting back results to appropriate parties and allow issues regarding the research scope and agenda to be discussed. (p. 7)

In the ethics application, it was noted that Stage Three would involve further meetings with whānau and social service/education professionals "for the purpose of collaborative enquiry into the specific cultural and social factors that impact the high

rate of self-destructive behaviours among Ngātiwai youth”. However, it was decided that this would be an ongoing part of the project rather than separate wānanga, with whānau and professionals encouraged to attend the wānanga. Additionally, formal consultation hui were held at Whakapaumahara Marae and Ngātiwai Education offices for the *Kokiritia Te Ora* project in late January 2015 where the current project was also discussed, and these hui were therefore deemed of relevance to *He Ara Toiora* also. Pertinent information for *He Ara Toiora* was gathered such as the necessity of building the strength and resilience of our young people in order to decrease the incidence of suicide, as well as the importance of culturally-based programmes.

At the hui, the option was given for participants to write their thoughts and ideas on sticky notes, rather than speak within the hui which seemed to suit some participants. Comments related to the following main points:

a) Importance of marae:

- ❖ *“Tikanga Maori bro, marae, he tangata. More of it. Staunch Ngātiwai.”*
- ❖ *“Pā village. Let’s get back to how it was cos with each other as a whanau we are a whole.”*
- ❖ *“Marae noho – to help our taitamariki identify who they are and be proud of who their tupuna were. Tell them their history that we are morehu, rangatira.”*
- ❖ *“Marae Noho – Teach them the rich history of their ancestors, teach them the truth and help give them the tools to succeed.”*
- ❖ *“Whakamana all marae in Rohe. Tikanga Māori – practice.”*
- ❖ *Keep our children connected with marae. We are stronger together.”*

b) Understanding the issues:

- ❖ *“Parents and grand-parents need more or better communication with our taitamariki. Build A – BOND.”*
- ❖ *“Understand the culture of the time they live in and communicate positively through the mediums they utilise today.”*
- ❖ *“Not all problems start at home – getting bullied, relationship problems, cyber bullied, getting beaten up at home, stress at home at school.”*
- ❖ *“Suicide sux shit. Hope the research team are the right ones that can connect with all types of whanau including gangs and children.”*
- ❖ *“Urban programmes running for Ngatiwai – youth living in town, awareness, adds on tv, Maori youth suicide.”*
- ❖ *“Not all our young people associate with marae, how do we pick them up?”*
- ❖ *“Touchy subject. Needs to be addressed.”*

c) Collective activities:

- ❖ *“Talk about running a festival to bring awareness.”*
- ❖ *“Positive activities promoting Kaupapa Tangata Whenua.”*

- ❖ *“Turning the negative aspects into positives, e.g. tagging – giving them tools to be creative and create own income and self-sustain themselves.”*
- ❖ *“Music and Art are good mediums of expression and can help empower our taitamariki and can create wealth and self sufficiency and is quite wholistic.”*
- ❖ *Build resilience through whakawhanaungatanga. Build bonds within taitamariki throughout the motu. Ngātiwai. Culture. Belonging. Security.*

d) Understanding the value of our young people:

- ❖ *“Value our Rangatahi!!!!”*
- ❖ *“Young people engaging young people. Developing/Creating. Safe environment for Taitamariki to share openly; ability to use language that they feel comfortable with.”*
- ❖ *“Youth initiatives. Know our Kids.”*
- ❖ *“More noho marae. More youth wānanga.”*
- ❖ *“You can only get the answers from taitamariki.”*
- ❖ *“You need bigger involvement of our young people. Should be more youth driven.”*
- ❖ *“Help our young people know their magnificence!”*

Other issues raised was the need for aroha, not just with the research team, but with all whānau; being sensitive to needs of taitamariki and ensuring safety of participants; recognising intergenerational factors; recognising the difference between urban and rural youth; and development of pathways to address this serious issue.

Participants who offered their support for the project included those from organisations such as Northtec, NDHB Suicide Prevention, Ministry of Education, Kimiora Child and Youth Mental Health, Kia ora Ngātiwai, and Ngāti Hine Health Trust. Overall the support mooted at the hui for the projects and their kaupapa was very positive.

2.4.4 Working with Vulnerable Populations:

As noted, almost all participants have had some experience of suicide in their lives. For many of the taitamariki involved in the project, these experiences were very current and their vulnerability was immediate. For example, at the Youth Leaders training wānanga, one of the leaders noted that she was worried about her younger sister (who later became part of the project) as she had been the victim of cyber-bullying that morning where someone had posted a Facebook message to her sister that ‘she was so ugly she should go kill herself.’ Therefore care needed to be taken to ensure the psychological safety of the participants, especially our taitamariki. Wellington (2016) writes that “It is an ethical consideration to ‘do no harm’; however, it seemed at times we did indeed run the risk of creating harm when participants were reminded of past or current traumas” (p. 17). While we considered that opening spaces where all were free to talk about their experiences was important, there was a strong likelihood of triggering emotional distress for the participants.

To that end, a *Safety Plan* was developed by Raewyn Smith (a local counsellor working with Te Roopu Kimiora) and Paulette Wellington (project Health Clinician). There would be at least one Health Clinician (HC) present at each wānanga, and this included Dr Alayne Hall (psychotherapist and researcher) in the later wānanga. Associate Professor Jacque Gray, a Native American researcher visiting from the University of North Dakota, attended the first Taitamariki Development Wānanga in November 2015 and acted as Health Clinician at that time. The Health Clinicians would be available for anyone who wanted a confidential conversation about any current issues they had. The HC was not to provide ongoing counselling however but was only to deal with immediate situations as they arose, and help organise further counselling if necessary. If any situations arose, the HC was to complete a 'Serious Adverse Event' form that was provided.

The *Safety Plan* also reiterated for the research team and Youth Leaders that while it was important for them to be available to listen to any of the taitamariki who wanted to talk about their issues, they were to encourage the taitamariki to approach the HC, rather than trying to deal with the issues themselves, given that they had little to no training in dealing with such situations. This helped to ensure the safety of the taitamariki as well as the Youth Leaders and research team.

Included in the *Safety Plan* were inspiring quotes, including an adaptation of the work from Sir Mason Durie¹ shown below:

WE³

Through the wānanga and all our time with the taitamariki, their whānau and each other, WE seek the following goals –

WHAKAPIRIPIRI/ENGAGEMENT:

To bring together our taitamariki, their whānau, kaumātua and kuia, and TOGETHER enrich our lives so our taitamariki know just how magnificent they are!

WHAKAMARAMA/ENLIGHTENMENT:

To increase awareness of the challenges our taitamariki face; to listen and understand what they need to help them know their magnificence; to strengthen all our whānau by forging strong and enduring connections between each other, our culture, our whenua and our atua through sharing knowledge with each other.

¹ (see, for example, SPINZ Presentation, 2009, <http://www.spinznz.org.nz/resourcefinder/listings/resource/559/suicide-prevention%3A-whanau-centred-approaches/#content-230>)

WHAKAMANA/EMPOWERMENT:

To share knowledge of self, whānau/hapū/iwi and culture so that all may be empowered to seek their full potential. We celebrate our taitamariki in all of who they are as ngā uri o Tukaiaia, and in their unique expressions of self. Together we build the energy of positive growth for our taitamariki, help them build a sense of self-worth, strengthen connections between generations, and provide them with a sense of ownership and a voice on important development processes which affect them.

$$\text{WHAKAPIRIPIRI/ENGAGEMENT} + \text{WHAKAMARAMA/ENLIGHTENMENT} = \text{WHAKAMANA/EMPOWERMENT}^2$$

2.4.5 Social Media and Cyber-bullying:

Bauman (2014) wrote that the interpersonal theory of suicide proposes two main conditions – thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness – which along with the capability for suicide, can result in suicide attempts or completions. While there is stronger link between traditional bullying and suicide than with cyber-bullying:

The nature of technology is such that an act of cyber-bullying can be seen by an extremely large audience, meaning that the victims may believe that their social worlds have been destroyed. Many young people use technology as a way to maintain relationships, but when cyber-bullying occurs, it may seem that those relationships have been irreparably damaged. This may lead victims to believe they no longer belong. It may also be that vulnerable adolescents think seeking help from others would place an undue burden on them....Then the perceived burdensomeness element is present. (Bauman, 2014, p. 78)

Hinduja and Patchin's (2010) research with a random sample of 1,963 youth from a large US school confirmed that those who are victims of traditional or cyber-bullying, are more likely to have suicidal thoughts and attempt suicide than those who had not. Interestingly, those who perpetuate bullying were also more likely to experience suicidal ideation and attempts, although at a lesser rate than victims. Hindaju and Patchin (2010) suggest that:

The findings provide further evidence that adolescent peer aggression must be taken seriously both at school and at home, and suggest that a suicide prevention and intervention component is essential within comprehensive bullying response programs implemented in schools. (p. 206)

² *Safety Plan*, Ngātiwai Education, Whāngarei, p. 4.

It was clear on the *He Ara Toiora* project from the outset that social media and cyber-bullying were important issues for us to be aware of within this project. A related ethical issue arose with the realisation at the consultation hui and first wānanga that it was commonplace and taken for granted by the adults as well as the taitamariki, for photos and videos to be taken of the people and activities at these events and almost immediately uploaded to social media such as *Facebook*. Given the potential of these images to contribute to cyber-bullying of participants, as well as the vulnerability of many participants, it was discussed and agreed upon that there would be a ban on photos and videoing at the wānanga, except for one group photo at each wānanga, and only those who were happy to have that photo on social media would participate in it. However, it took some time for participants (including some of the research team) to adjust to the ban as this was such a normal part of their lives, but in the ensuing discussions it was accepted and everyone came to understand the potential harm that could come from posting photos and videos of such sensitive activities.

Our *He Ara Toiora* Facebook page³ is open to the public and gained 156 members, primarily those from the project as well as whānau and friends. The page became a place to post positive messages, panui for upcoming events, for people to network and support each other, as well as provide updates on the wānanga. The administrators for the page have had to remain vigilant however, to ensure the page is managed safely.

2.5 Data Collection Methods:

"Make up a story. Narrative is radical, creating us at the very moment it is being created....tell us what the world has been to you in the dark places and in the light. Don't tell us what to believe, what to fear. Show us belief's wide skirt and the stitch that unravels fear's caul."

(Toni Morrison, 1993, The Nobel Lecture In Literature:

http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1993/morrison-lecture.html)

2.5.1 Marae-based Wānanga and the Importance of Culture:

Drawing from the work of Nicole Coupe, Johnston (2006) writes that "Being cut off from Maori culture is a key factor behind the high rates of Maori suicide and attempted suicide". Best Practice Journal (BPJ) (2010) noted that Māori ethnicity can be both a protective and a risk factor for Māori youth. It can become a risk factor when taitamariki lack cultural connection and knowledge, but are nevertheless adjudged externally and internally as Māori, often in a negative light. However, culturally aligned factors which can provide protection from suicide include:

³ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1620056488244603/>

- ❖ An understanding of Māori concepts and experiences;
- ❖ A strengthening of cultural identity;
- ❖ Access to cultural resources e.g. kaumātua and marae; and
- ❖ Reconnecting and maintaining cultural connections. (BPJ, 2010, p. 38)

They state further that “For Māori, a strong cultural identity and support within a caring community is thought to strengthen resilience to mental disorder, even in the presence of adverse socioeconomic conditions” (BPJ, 2010, p. 38).

As noted, data collection was via eight marae-based wānanga on marae connected to Ngātiwai. Marae included Paratene te Manu (Ngunguru), Whakapaumahara (Whananaki), Te Turuki (Waikare) and Takahiwai (Takahiwai). Having marae-based wānanga as part of this project was taken for granted by the team at Ngātiwai Education as a necessary part of exploring factors relating to suicide prevention. Ngātiwai Education were running a *Putaiiao Science Academy* programme with Kamo High School and other local colleges, where taitamariki would be taken on marae-based wānanga to experience Putaiiao/science through a Māori lens. The success of that programme in terms of bringing taitamariki together and providing a sense of belonging and connection between taitamariki and pakeke (adults) showed the efficacy of doing so. Given also that this was a Ngātiwai project by/for/with Ngātiwai, having marae-based wānanga was always going to be the first preferred option. Descriptions of the eight wānanga are included in Section 2.5.3 below.

2.5.2 Observation and Reflection:

Haseman (2006) writes that practice-based research strategies such as the reflective practitioner, participatory research and collaborative inquiry are “concerned with the improvement of practice, and new epistemologies of practice distilled from the insider’s understandings of action in context” (p. 3). However, performative research takes this further, preferring ‘practice-led research’ which is “intrinsically experiential and comes to the fore when the researcher creates new artistic forms for performance and exhibition” (p. 3). Haseman also argues that while this is linked to qualitative research, performative research nevertheless represents a distinctive third methodological category in addition to qualitative and quantitative research, with the major distinction being that the ‘text’ is presented through performance rather than just being written.

However, in building up to a final performance as we did in this instance, observation and reflection of the ‘performances’ (art, drama, kapa haka etc.) in each wānanga had to be recorded. As noted previously, while Dr Lily George attempted to stay primarily as ‘observer’, the nature of the research meant that participation was necessary. Observations and reflections of the wānanga were recorded mainly by Lily and Paulette Wellington as well as some by Kim Peita. Erica Wellington and Gayle Dowsett wrote some of the milestone reports for the LCSRC which also forms part of our data

collection. Taitamariki and Youth Leaders were asked to provide feedback in some form at each wānanga, and much emerged from discussions that we held also. Copies were kept of relevant posts in our Facebook page. And of course the performance expressions themselves, in the form of tangible products such as artwork and poetry, powerfully articulate the thoughts and feelings of the taitamariki and other participants. All this constituted the data which we refined – with the strong input and guidance of Drama Facilitator, Gayle Dowsett – into the final performance, as detailed below.

The next sub-section provides descriptions of the wānanga and includes the voices of participants as well as explanation of some of the challenges faced in this project. They also show the development of the process leading up to the drama performed at the final wānanga.

2.5.3 Description of Marae-Based Wānanga:

1) Youth Leaders Training Wānanga (YLT):

This was held on 19th-20th September 2015 at Whakapaumahara Marae. The purpose of this wānanga was to invite potential youth leaders, provide a two day training programme, and then select those who would act as Youth Leaders at the following Whānau Engagement Day and Taitamariki Development Wānanga. Present were kaumātua, seven research team members, and 12 potential leaders.

Ice-breaking drama activities helped to breakdown shyness, and included activities such as acting out meaningful objects like marae in pairs or groups, representations of natural factors such as awa/rivers, and the whole group enacted the flight of Tūkaiāia, the ancient bird which features on the logo of Ngātiwai Education and represents the strength of Ngatiwai in the following whakatauki:

Kia Tūpato!

Ka tangi a Tūkaiāia kei te moana, Ko Ngātiwai kei te moana e haere ana;

Ka tangi a Tūkaiāia kei tuawhenua, ko Ngātiwai kei tuawhenua e haere ana

Beware!

When Tūkaiāia calls at sea, Ngātiwai are at sea;

When Tūkaiāia calls inland, Ngātiwai are inland⁴.

This activity seemed to deeply touch most participants, and some then told stories of their particular understanding of or connection to, Tūkaiāia. The next activity was to draw a representation of their first home or first memory, and participants then discussed what their drawings meant for them. Other activities were more fun-orientated, drawing many laughs from the participants. In this process of getting to

⁴ Source: Ngātiwai Trust Board – http://www.ngatiwai.iwi.nz/uploads/5/9/0/0/59002899/070316-ngatiwai-newsletter-february_3.pdf

know one another – and for the participants, to feel some connection with the research team, some of whom they hadn't met before – barriers were broken down and quite quickly potential youth leaders shared some of the pain associated with their own or whānau experiences of suicide.

In one particular activity participants were separated into groups representing five generations, and each generation had to then talk about what life had been like when they were teenagers, starting with the oldest generation. This very clearly drew a picture for participants of how colonisation had impacted negatively upon their parents, grandparents and older generations, thereby demonstrating the intergenerational nature of dysfunction and why this had happened. It was a very natural exposition of the impact of historical trauma that increased understanding in the participants of some of their life experiences.

By the end of the weekend, the 10 remaining participants were offered positions as Youth Leaders. Two of the Youth Leaders made posts in Facebook that reflected the inspiration they had gained from the wānanga:

"....This year I've had my ups and downs and haven't been the best role model for people. But this weekend I connected with a suicide prevention group and heard this saying 'Help as many people as you can, but start with the ones closest to you'. This quote inspired me to start a movement w[h]ether it's small or big as long as I have a positive effect....be kind to one another you don't know what people are going through....Remind your friends and family you care about them through tough times...."

"So I thought I'd take time to acknowledge the overwhelming weekend spent at Whakapaumahara Marae....met some amazing young women from around our NGATIWAI rohe and an amazing young man who carry so much mana and enthusiasm to tautoko te kaupapa for YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION....Yes we come from all walks of life but we all have the same heart (Aroha) – to be able to come and share your stories and help make a difference in someone else's life is truly inspiring. I am in awe of all your strength and abilities...."

2) Taitamariki/Whānau Engagement Day (WED):

This was held 17th October 2015 at Paratene te Manu Marae, the purpose of which was to explain the project further and introduce the research team. This was preceded by a pre-meeting at Gayle Dowsett's home the evening before to discuss processes for the next day and to strengthen bonds between the research team and Youth Leaders. The Whānau Engagement Day itself was disappointing in the sense that only 11 taitamariki and one whānau member participated.

However, most seemed to engage with the activities throughout the day, which included art, drama, and dance. Sticky notes were available upon which people could write messages of hope which included the following:

- ❖ *"Kia piki te kaha, kia piki te ora, kia piki te māramatanga."*
- ❖ *"You are loved."*
- ❖ *"You are you I am me and we are both ok."*
- ❖ *"I care."*
- ❖ *"He aha te mea nui o tēnei ao? Ko koe, ko au, ko te tangata."*
- ❖ *"There is only one you, don't let us lose you."*
- ❖ *"Operating and cooperating together."*
- ❖ *"Listening. Sharing stories. Accepting difference."*

Given this was the first wānanga post-training, there was some settling in needed from the now expanded group of research team, Youth Leaders and taitamariki. As with the previous wānanga, the planned debrief session at the end of the wānanga was not successful as by then most people just wanted to get home, so a challenge for the team was to find an effective way in which to discuss the events of the wānanga in a timely fashion. Nevertheless this was a great start to the wānanga which included taitamariki and all were determined to boost recruitment so more taitamariki would be at the next wānanga.

3) Taitamariki Development Wānanga 1 (TDW1):

This was held 7th to 8th November 2015 again at Ngunguru Marae. Activities included writing firstly negative, and then positive messages on a long piece of paper (this and other art activities were facilitated by Ngātiwai artist, Dorothy Waetford). Negative messages included:

- ❖ *"Even though you have all this support around you, you still feel alone – In your world!"*
- ❖ *"Not being heard, feeling left out, having memory loss."*
- ❖ *"Hearing but not listening."*
- ❖ *"Unworthy, not good enough, ugly, fat."*
- ❖ *"Alone. Emptiness."*

Positive messages included:

- ❖ *"Positive vibration whanau."*
- ❖ *"You is kind, you is smart, you is important."*
- ❖ *"Love, kina, kutai, tuangi, kokoto, tamuri."*
- ❖ *"Manaakitanga, being supportive."*
- ❖ *"I love my whanau, me too!!! They mean the world to me."*

Other art activities involved drawing images representing feelings on white paper with Indian ink, and group work using paper and straws to form wharehau, while the taitamariki were led in drama exercises by Elizabeth Sugrue.

Taitamariki were given pieces of paper on which to provide written feedback and there was also a discussion on how we could improve the wānanga. Comments included:

- ❖ *"Maybe have more outdoor activities....some were boring...."*
- ❖ *"Thank you so much for this weekend. I have enjoyed my two days with yous. I really enjoyed expressing my emotions with indian ink and I also like working as a group to make whare and present them."*
- ❖ *"I liked how people listened to what I have to say. I felt equal to others and I didn't feel left out. Thank you for helping me through my tough times. Xoxoxoxo"*
- ❖ *"The food. Go for more swims."*
- ❖ *"Fun learning new things! Interesting sad stories. Meeting new people. The food! Good hosting. Activities. Learning new songs."*

Following this feedback it was decided that each wānanga would include time for swimming on one or both days – all the marae we utilised were close to beautiful beaches, and given most were of NgātiWAI⁵ descent, spending time in the water was an obvious inclusion in our programme. Trips to Ngātiwai wāhi tapu would also be included in the wānanga.

A critical incident occurred at this wānanga on the Saturday during a group discussion on experiences of suicide, led by Elizabeth Sugrue. Considerable emotion was released during the discussion with some very personal experiences being shared. While this was tolerable for some, others found it difficult to deal with and left the venue, therefore needing to be retrieved by one of the research team members. It took several hours of caring activity such as mirimiri from research team members and conversation for those who needed it with the Health Clinician, for the taitamariki to settle down. However, valuable lessons were learned – it is likely that having the discussion near the end of a long and intense day was not helpful, and given this was the first Taitamariki Development Wānanga with several new participants, the relationships and trust had probably not developed enough for this kind of deep conversation to occur. Although a similar exercise occurred at the Youth Leaders Training Wānanga, in that instance we were a smaller group with an older average age. We were thankful that we had those present at this wānanga who could deal effectively with the situation.

⁵ 'wai' translates to 'water'.

4) Taitamariki Development Wānanga 2 (TDW2):

This was held on 12th and 13th December 2015 again at Paratene te Manu Marae. One of the first activities was a discussion regarding the resignation of Elizabeth Sugrue as Drama Facilitator and the stepping-in of Gayle Dowsett to that role. Elizabeth had met with the Youth Leaders earlier in the week, so it was a shock to the Leaders that she had left. Sadness was expressed about Elizabeth leaving, but most also expressed their confidence in Gayle taking over. One research team noted however, that *"It's really difficult to keep team morale up when people keep leaving, and when some of the team don't turn up."*

Nevertheless, this also provided the opportunity for the research team to clarify their roles. Other concerns were raised, such as why we spent so much time at Ngunguru; it was explained that while it was preferable that we spend time at other Ngātiwai marae others often weren't available on the dates we wanted, or were too expensive for our budget. Gayle Dowsett and Paulette Wellington were from that particular marae and others were also connected, and the buildings were more than sufficient for our purposes. What this discussion and previous discussions highlighted for the participants however, was the willingness of the research team to listen to the needs of the other participants in an atmosphere of aroha and respect, and to adjust the programme accordingly where possible.

A highlight of this wānanga was the presence of Vincent Nathan who performed some spoken word poetry and encouraged the taitamariki to write their own. One of the taitamariki commented that they enjoyed the poetry because *"it was true but at the same time funny."* The poetry written by the taitamariki and Youth Leaders expressed some of the life challenges they faced, as exemplified below:

❖ *"*6 is a place I call home
Where I seen a lot of things like
Cussy doing rarkys in the paddocks,
And [breaking] into baches by the sea
Kids sniffing gas at the ages of 11, 12, 13 and 14
In the bushes, graffiti on the road sign.
These were some of the bad things I see in *,
The place I call home."*

❖ *"**
Pigs search up and down the street,
Looking for [their] next victim.
Targeting innocent kids
Who are just walking with their mates."*

⁶ Place names are not given in full to protect the identities of the taitamariki.

*Where all the [prostitutes] look through south mall,
Waiting for some c... to turn up and take out.
Where nearly every kid on the block be smoking weed.
** be where its at."*

- ❖ *"The Coast. Wage. Stage. Cage. Age. Page.
The coast where everyone was equal until a certain age
Intermediate pre-teens turned into rich puppets
On a stage the movies and ten pin bowling
Attracted to
I was stuck in a cage
Different to the others because my mum was on minimum wage."*

- ❖ ***** to the ****
Moving from living with my grandparents being taught the ways of respect,
Not having a clue where mum is but knowing that around the corner on the piss
At the age of 4 first time meeting this so called father of mine, for just the five
minutes
And yet I don't have a [glimpse] of what he looks like."*

- ❖ **** is a place
Where all the rats hang around places
Smoking weed
And getting drunk."*

Despite the negative images that these poems portray, generally the taitamariki felt safe enough to express some of the challenges they face on a daily basis and seemed to enjoy writing them. One of the taitamariki commented that he/she enjoyed the poems *"because I understood alot of things like don't worry about the little things, 'cause sometimes we have to look at the bigger picture."*

This wānanga contained a significant event however. A close whānau member of some of the team had passed away and it was decided that we would go to their home where he was being held, and pay our respects. This was the correct procedure in terms of tikanga, and therefore an important experience for the taitamariki. Some of the taitamariki and Youth Leaders asked if we could attend the Christmas celebration at Toll Stadium following our attendance at the tangi and it was agreed we would. Unfortunately a fight broke out amongst some of the youth there, and some of our taitamariki also got involved. We quickly got our group together and left the event to return to the marae. The research team met first that evening to discuss how we would handle the incident and it was agreed that we as the adults and research team were to take responsibility for this as it was our decision to go. We then returned to talk with the Youth Leaders and taitamariki, expressing our concern for their care and safety,

taking responsibility for our decision, and reiterating that we were there to support them in making positive decisions for themselves. It was also decided that from now on we would not stray from the programme that had been set before the wānanga and stick to our kaupapa.

Another significant but more positive event at this wānanga was the writing of a waiata for our roopu by Youth Leader, Rangihopuata Rapana. Rangi had only come to the wānanga to bring his partner (another Youth Leader) but was quickly offered a position as Youth Leader. Given his talents with waiata and kapa haka, Gayle Dowsett requested that he write a waiata using some of the messages gained from the sticky notes on the Whānau Engagement Day. The result, as shown below, strongly reflects what we were trying to achieve with these wānanga, and the thoughts and feelings underpinning our mahi:

WHAKAKOTAHI AOTEAROA WHAKAPIRI

CHORUS

*Love heals with gentle hands
Love stands with open arms
Love shares with constant care
And love works with all to share.*

*You are loved, tu tahi tātou we stand as one
You are you, I am me but really we are one
I care for you, you care for me cos' we are whānau hard
Never worry, just be happy, "Kia maia kia kaha."*

CHORUS

*Ko te mea nui i roto i tēnei ao
Ko ngā tangata, ko koe, ko au (ko au)
No reira kia koutou nga tai tamariki
Whakakotahi Aotearoa Whakapiri.*

CHORUS

*Sharing stories, laughing hard, brings smiles to your face
Listening and being there makes it a better place
So never think that you're alone cos' we'll be here for you
There's always someone out there that really cares for you.*

CHORUS X 2

5) Taitamariki Development Wānanga 3 (TDW3):

This was held 23rd and 24th January 2016 at Te Turuki Marae in Waikare. One point of significance in the powhiri was that three kaumatua, several kuia and whānau from Te Kapotai were there to welcome us onto the marae, and a large group of whānau were there to support us throughout the weekend; until then, unfortunately the numbers of whānau support were low. Papa Hau Hereora took us on a tour of the area, detailing some of the history/whakapapa of the area, and that was followed by fish and chips on the beach at Russell and a swim. That evening the whānau joined us for Lily George's presentation on her life story and creating a vision board; Papa Hau stayed with us for the rest of the evening, playing on his guitar and singing waiata, which made a lovely atmosphere for the taitamariki as they were engaged in an exercise of creating 'dream pathways' on their own vision boards.

Although Te Turuki Marae and Te Kapotai hapū are not of Ngātiwai, there are some very close whakapapa links there. This was demonstrated by the significant number of taitamariki who had tupuna in photos hanging in the wharenuī, and buried in the urupā outside. Until that morning, we were unsure as to whether we would have kaumatua present there as a well-known kaumatua of Ngātiwai/Te Tai Tokerau descent had died and the burial was that Saturday so it was possible that the Te Kapotai kaumatua would attend that event (in fact, several of our roopu were not with us as they had gone to the tangi). However, as noted by the kaumatua, our kaupapa was significant and it was important that they be there to support us.

At the powhiri one of the kaumatua talked directly about suicide, noting that whakamomori – a term often used to describe suicide – is actually about the loss of wairua and the deep grief associated with loss, which can then lead to actions such as suicide. Ihimaera and MacDonald's (2009) writing agrees, stating that:

Whakamomori has been described as a journey that is enclosed in a deep-seated sadness and is more powerful than a passing feeling. Whakamomori has an extremely severe impact on the wairua and mauri of the person affected. If left untreated whakamomori can lead to attempts of suicide. (p. 18)

The kaumatua also noted that it was the anniversary of the death by suicide of one of their young people four years before.

An activity led by Gayle Dowsett involved a group discussion of questions such as 'What is it in 2016 that would help Māori youth have resilience against suicide?', 'How are we going, and what things have been of use to you?' Comments from the taitamariki and Youth Leaders included:

- ❖ *"It has been overwhelming but in a good way. Seeing how far everyone has come."*
- ❖ *"How everyone has opened up."*

- ❖ *“Good seeing a lot of people from the first wānanga. Good seeing familiar adult faces. It feels good that adults will give up their time for us, and that young people seem to be trusting the group of adults.”*
- ❖ *“I have seen a change. I have been thinking about two who aren’t here. It’s good that us older ones are here again, ‘cause the young ones need us.”*
- ❖ *“Good being here. Helping us with our confidence – to not be shy.”*

Comments from the research team included:

- ❖ *“I want to learn from youth, I feel honoured to learn from you. This is ground-breaking. You will be our leaders.”*
- ❖ *“I am proud of you all and humbled by what you share and the things you go through.”*
- ❖ *“Seeing you grow – thank you for coming back each time.”*
- ❖ *“I am really impressed with how you all gel, especially since some of you are new here today. It’s massive, you speaking in front of a group you don’t really know.”*
- ❖ *“I admire the relationships you all have. I admire your bravery to speak difficult thoughts.”*

One of the kaumātua present commented *“I’m glad you are in the whare tupuna. The wairua of our tupuna is in here.”*

On the Sunday morning, another kaumatua asked if he could have time to talk about some insights he had received at 5am that morning, about the importance of karakia. He noted that it doesn’t matter which religion or spiritual belief you have, but that *“without our spiritual side, when our mind is scrambled, we can’t settle our minds”*, hence the importance of karakia to help achieve that. Gayle Dowsett then led a discussion with the taitamariki about the importance of karakia in their lives. Most agreed that they use karakia for comfort and protection; one noted however that *“If I’m feeling sad or not good, karakia would not help. I use the beach, I feel better there. Or the urupā. Talking to my tupuna at the urupā.”*

A significant point about these discussions was the increasing willingness for the taitamariki and Youth Leaders to open up and voice their thoughts and feelings, some of which could have left them open to ridicule or judgement. This was contributed to by the strong leadership through the activities of Gayle Dowsett, along with supportive input from the rest of the team. Having that robust kaumātua/whānau support was also one of the important factors contributing to the success of this wānanga. It was especially significant for Lily George, given that this was her marae, and she later made the comment in a Facebook post that it was *“truly aroha in action, and a true expression of the depths of whanaungatanga.”*

6) Taitamariki Development Wānanga 4 (TDW4):

This wānanga was held at Ngunguru Marae, 13th to 14th February 2016. We had three sets of manuhiri at this wānanga, the first being Te Aorangi Harrington who works for the Northland DHB in health promotion (including suicide prevention work) as well as being the author of two books on Māori role models which he uses in his *Māori Role Models on Tour* work with Ngāti Hine artist, Theresa Reihana. In the latter work, they travel to different schools in Te Tai Tokerau talking about Māori role models, with Theresa assisting the taitamariki to construct a painting relating to their mahi. At our wānanga, Te Aorangi talked about his life journey, expressing a desire to 'light a spark' within our taitamariki, and assuring them that we all have greatness inside us. Many of the taitamariki could connect with Te Aorangi's story and gained inspiration from hearing of his journey from challenge to triumph.

Rati Sinclair, a te reo expert from Matawaia (Ngāti Hine) came to teach the taitamariki an exercise that helped them understand how difficult it is to learn a new language, which created a lot of fun and laughter. On Sunday, two local hip hop dancers came to teach our taitamariki two dances, one of which it was thought could be performed at the final wānanga. The purpose of having a variety of manuhiri at our wānanga was to keep them interesting and therefore the taitamariki engaged, as well as providing experiences that were relevant and current for them, such as the spoken word poetry and hip hop dancing. In her doctoral thesis, Wilson (2014) writes that "With origins in the South Bronx area of New York in the early 1970s, hip-hop culture is now produced and consumed globally....[and] all four elements of hip-hop have become a part of many youth work initiatives across the globe" (p. 11).

The Drama Facilitator took the taitamariki through several role playing activities designed to get them thinking about their behaviours in new ways. Topics included being bullied, being abused in a relationship, lying to parents, and the challenges of repeating behaviours which have the same negative results each time. Most of the taitamariki seemed to find these exercises interesting although, as with most of the wānanga, there were small but challenging personality conflicts to sort through. On the whole however, taitamariki and other participants were engaged with the activities.

The Health Clinician at this wānanga was Dr Alayne Hall who presented on the concepts of Mauri moe, Mauri oho and Mauri ora. While some of the taitamariki did not seem interested, perhaps because they had trouble understanding the concepts, some gained considerable insight from the presentation. As will be shown later, these concepts formed the core of our performance at the final wānanga.

A critical incident occurred on the Sunday with a public argument between two of the research team members immediately prior to us welcoming manuhiri. This possibly reflects the pressures the team was under at these wānanga. While there was much to gain from each wānanga, they were challenging for those who had little or no prior

experience with research, and even less in dealing professionally with the kinds of emotional issues we were confronted with at each wānanga. Hence the necessity of having a Health Clinician present; in this instance she stepped in to help deal with the situation. We also followed our usual method of dealing with incidents (where relevant) in holding an open discussion where everyone had the opportunity to talk, and those who needed to, took responsibility for their actions.

A final exercise to settle everyone was to create Valentine's Day cards for each other. Everyone was assigned one other person to create a card for, in which they were to express appreciation for that person and outline some of their positive qualities. This seemed to help restore harmony within the group also.

7) Taitamariki Development Wānanga 5 (TDW5):

This wānanga was held on 12th and 13th of March 2016 at Paratene Te Manu Marae. The programme opened with kōrero from Paora Glassie of Te Wānanga o Aotearoa who came to talk with us about their Tu Taua mau rākau programme. He also told his life story which includes experiences of drugs and alcohol abuse and violence. Joining Tu Taua and learning mau rākau had changed his life however, and he encouraged our taitamariki to take up the programme to create positive changes in their own lives.

In preparation for our performance at the next wānanga, further discussion was held on the Mauri concepts which were to be used as an organising framework for the performance. Some of the factors contributing to suicide, according to the taitamariki, were:

- ❖ *"Self-image, meaning judgement on the way you look and so on."*
- ❖ *"Disappointment to yourself or your own family."*
- ❖ *"Emotional abuse – sticks and stone can break my bones but names will never hurt me. Wrong!"*
- ❖ *"Losing someone close to you."*
- ❖ *"Negative words continuously in your ear."*
- ❖ *"You're dumb and never going to get anywhere."*
- ❖ *"When whanau/friends suicide - #jumpingonthatbandwagon!"*
- ❖ *"Beyond our control – upbringing."*

The taitamariki were then separated into three groups, with each group discussing and listing some of the factors relating to one of the Mauri concepts on sheets of paper. Comments included:

Mauri moe:

- ❖ *"Not wanting to get out of bed."*
- ❖ *"No energy."*

- ❖ *“Bulimic and anorexic – food problems.”*
- ❖ *“Using drugs and alcohol.”*
- ❖ *“Lazy as, curled up in bed, crying, heart broken.”*

Mauri oho:

- ❖ *“Eating. Progressing. Talking.”*
- ❖ *“Learning to love yourself.”*
- ❖ *“Opening your curtains.”*
- ❖ *“Talking to your family and friends.”*
- ❖ *“Admitting when you’re wrong.”*

Mauri ora:

- ❖ *“Whanau.”*
- ❖ *“Aroha.”*
- ❖ *“Being there.”*
- ❖ *“Spiritual element. Karakia.”*
- ❖ *“True life force.”*

These discussions helped the taitamariki to comprehend the Mauri concepts more fully, by connecting them to aspects of their own lives and others they knew. The excitement for the final performance began to build as Gayle Dowsett led the roopu through a variety of drama exercises which could be used at the performance. Dr Alayne Hall also added to that with creation of a slogan for our roopu – *“Choose side by side, not suicide!”* to which was added *“Whakakotahi Aotearoa Whakapiri”*, the name of the waiata previously written by one of the Youth Leaders. These words featured on the t-shirts which were worn at the final performance, providing our roopu with a positive and uplifting shared identity.

A fun element for this wānanga was a Mexican-themed feast on the Saturday night, for which many people dressed up with the wharekai decorated appropriately. Although there have been challenges within these wānanga, it was very encouraging for the research team to note the development and increased confidence in the taitamariki who have attended regularly, including getting into the spirit of the Mexican evening. We left the wānanga on Sunday feeling more connected, and excited about what was to come.

8) Taitamariki Development Wānanga 6 (TDW6):

Performance offers a new authenticity, based on body knowledge, on what audiences and performers share together, on what they mutually construct. As a form of cultural exchange, performance ethnography encourages everyone present to feel themselves as both familiar and strange, to see the truths and the gaps in their cross cultural

embodiments. In this exchange, we find an authenticity that is intuitive, body-centered, and richly ambivalent. (Jones, 2002, p. 14)

This wānanga was held at Takahiwai Marae on 16th and 17th April 2016 with the main purpose being to provide expression, through performance, of some of the findings of the project to the whānau and friends who attended. Saturday was spent rehearsing the programme that Gayle Dowsett had devised, including some poetry that she and Paulette Wellington had constructed from data collected over the wānanga, the night before. Taitamariki were organised into groups and supported to create drama segments depicting one of the Mauri states. In her report on the drama facilitation, Dowsett (2016) writes:

we built the concept of three stages of mauri into a context that had been our theme throughout the wananga. Youth sharing the life challenges that they face in today's world, that can lead to suicide. The drama tutor created many different dramaturge experiences using conventions and techniques through the elements appropriate for this kaupapa. The teaching was minimal and these drama tools were introduced as and when they were helpful only. The need for interacting and involving youth in all activities so that the results are their voice and not influenced by adults, meant the journey rather than the performance was the main focus. Taitamariki and leaders were given experiences of describing mauri and the states of mauri moe, mauri oho and mauri ora, through drama, through personal experience, through photos and through korero. By then it was expected that [they] had basic knowledge and understanding of mauri and the skills of drama and performance needed to present their understanding in a context that they co-wrote in their groups. (p. 2)

The Sunday dawned cloudy and threatening rain, but this did not dampen the enthusiasm portrayed by the taitamariki, and indeed all the roopu. Although not as many friends and whānau turned up as we had hoped, the taitamariki nevertheless performed with confidence and some degree of skill. A slideshow had been constructed from the photos collected over the seven wānanga – while there was a general ban on photos, research team members had taken photos at each wānanga to keep a record, but these were not posted to social media – and this played in the background while the performance was enacted.

The performance⁷ began with a group enactment of the flight of Tukaiaia, followed by the *Ngā iwi e waiata*. Rod Ngawaka from Ngātiwai Education opened the korero with karakia and a discussion of the Mauri states, followed by waiata from four of the taitamawāhine. Lily George talked about some of the journey we had taken together, as well as explaining some of the detail on the t-shirts:

⁷ See page 4 of Dowsett's (2016) report in Appendix B of this report, for the Performance Programme.

The heart, te ngākau, signifies that this project is a mahi aroha; it is within the heart that we truly come to understand he taonga tuku iho that our tupuna left for us. The heart is made up of three koru, signifying firstly, the continuously unfolding journey of life and learning. They signify also three states of mauri – mauri moe, mauri oho and mauri ora. And while they are separate states, they are nevertheless connected and interconnected. They signify the relationships we have with ourselves and with each other and with everything around us.



Following this was spoken word poetry relating to each of the mauri states, and illustrated by drama segments performed by the taitamariki. Individual poems were recited and waiata sung, with demonstrations of two interactive dances we used through all the wānanga, *Ki Mai* and *Pukana*. We ended with a rousing rendition of a Ngātiwai haka by the taitamatāne, and then all sang our waiata, *Whakakotahi Aotearoa Whakapiri*.



Dowsett (2016) notes “The presentations to the manuhiri were understood and appreciated for the ideas that the group intended. The feedback was powerful and heartfelt, giving a review of the performances with deep understanding” (p. 3). Those in attendance who helped us “mutually construct....an authenticity that is intuitive, body-centered, and richly ambivalent” (Jones, 2002, p. 14) seemed very impressed by the growth in confidence of the taitamariki, and by the messages imparted in the performance. One father noted it helped him to understand what his children had been going through, and that “*we could connect with all that was being said.*” Although there was sadness expressed that this was the final wānanga for *He Ara Toiora*, we affirmed that we needed to continue these wānanga and were grateful that we would be working together again in the next project, *Kokiritia Te Ora*.

2.5.4 Additional Activities:

There were two additional activities to which members of the research team, youth leaders and taitamariki participants travelled as part of the *He Ara Toiora* project:

a) Rangatahi Suicide Prevention Conference: 4-6 October 2015, Ratana Pā, Wanganui.

This conference occurred between the Youth Leaders Training Wānanga and the Whānau Engagement Day. Lily George had been invited by Kiritahi Firmin of *Kimiora Trust*, a Māori organisation very involved in youth and wāhine development, and suicide prevention, in Wanganui. It was decided to take the Youth Leaders as well as those of the research team who could attend; three research team members and six Youth Leaders attended the conference.

This was an important event in which the team and Leaders were given a wider perspective on research into suicide prevention. It also provided an opportunity to meet other taitamariki from around the country who were working in this area, and to gain ideas for our own wānanga. Confidence was increased when our Youth Leaders won a drama/roleplaying event, in the process gaining them some extra pocket money as well as confidence. Following this conference, those who attended felt more settled into their roles as Youth Leaders.

b) World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference 2016: 1-3 June 2016

The original plan was for only Dr George, Gayle Dowsett and Paulette Wellington to attend this conference and present on the project, due to cost. However, following the Analysis Hui, the Youth Leaders expressed their interest in attending, noting that the taitamariki would be very keen to attend as well, especially since the Conference included an Indigenous Youth Summit. So it was decided to fundraise in order for us all to go. Additional funding was raised through Lotto draws and market stalls run by the group, as well as gaining grants from Te Puni Kōkiri and the Ngātiwai Trust Board.

Twenty two of the group attended – four research team members, seven Youth Leaders, and 11 taitamariki. This was an incredible experience for the taitamariki, and indeed all participants. Most participated in the Youth Summit and we received many positive reports of the participation and behaviour of the taitamariki from other conference attendees. Meeting indigenous people from all around the world was a highlight. Sharing our collective strength was a bonus, and this was ably demonstrated in the conference presentation in which two group leaders and one taitamariki presented along with Dr George and Gayle Dowsett. Following the presentation, we were approached by several groups from around the country with requests to visit them and

share our knowledge with them; unfortunately budget restraints prevented this. Our entire group however, was very grateful for the opportunity to share in this experience, one many would never have had – or even imagined – the possibility of before this time.

2.6 Data Analysis:

2.6.1 Analysis Hui:

Analysis of data occurred throughout the process of wānanga, necessitated by the observational and reflective part of the data collection process, as well as in developing the framework for the final performance. However an analysis hui was held on 23rd April 2016 at NE offices at Toll Stadium. Although originally planned as a two-day marae-based wānanga, as this occurred the weekend following the final performance (we had to take into consideration the next project which began in July, and we recognised the need for a break before that started) we decided to make it one day, and at a central venue. Additionally, Dr Lawson-Te Aho had participated in the final performance wānanga, and had remained through the week to attend the analysis hui, giving her and Dr George some time to do a preliminary analysis and prepare for the hui. In hindsight it was probably best left until the next month, with a two-day (albeit shortened) event.

Nevertheless the hui was well attended by research team members and Youth Leaders, along with a few taitamariki. Ethics advisor, Moe Milne, was also in attendance, and her breadth of mātauranga was appreciated and contributed well to a discussion on mauri, signalling our need to explore this further in the future. Points that were reiterated were the efficacy of marae as venues for this kind of research ‘by, for, with’ Māori; of mauri as a kaupapa Māori way of understanding suicide prevention; the importance of connection; the intergenerational nature of trauma and how this contributes to suicide, and therefore the need for healing; and how developing leadership in our taitamariki can support them to build resilience in their lives.

One factor noted regarding data collection was how semi-structured interviews with taitamariki and Youth Leaders could have provided valuable additional insights into factors contributing to suicide and aid in suicide prevention. However, using performative research seemed to preclude the use of interviews as a data collection method, and to now include interviews would put us behind on the agreed-upon timeline. We resolved therefore, to ensure that interviews with the taitamariki and Youth Leaders would be a fundamental part of the *Kokiritia Te Ora*, and given that almost all had agreed to be part of the next project, we could draw from their experiences in *He Ara Toiora* also.

The hui was concluded with dinner at a local restaurant, which also seemed an appropriate way to conclude our time together on *He Ara Toiora*.

3.0 PROJECT FINDINGS:

3.1 Challenges of Community-based Research:

The terms community participation, community engagement, community-based participatory research (CBPR) and community-engaged research (CER) and community collaboration have all been used to describe research with communities in which communities have major input into research processes (Nation, Bess, Voight, Perkins & Juarez, 2011). The authors note further that CBPR is usually defined as a partnership where the expertise of researchers and community members are combined to increase understanding and amalgamate knowledge and action for the advancement of the community. CER is defined as “a collaborative approach to research that democratically involves community participants and researchers in one or more phases of the research process” (Nation et. al., 2011, p. 4). While there are differences between these forms and others of similar focus, what is generally agreed upon is the acknowledgement of and preference for partnership and collaboration between all parties involved in research, including that between universities and communities. As noted by Tesler Lindau et. al., (2011), “Community and university collaborators, with shared vision and principles, can effectively work together to plan innovative, large-scale community-based research that serves community needs and priorities” (p. 200).

In her work with Māori communities however, Moewaka Barnes (2000) noted that at that time, “partnerships between indigenous communities and researchers were rare” (p. 17). Moewaka Barnes goes on to mention that in terms of health promotion, “the need for both the message and the messengers to belong to the same ethnic group has been emphasized” (p. 18). Ahuriri-Driscoll et. al., (2007) argue that:

The phrase ‘for Māori, by Māori, with Māori’, synonymous with Kaupapa Māori research, reflects the strong community participatory orientation and aims of this paradigm. Its use has evolved from glib reference and catchphrase, to a ‘checklist’/gauge of how well a research project has enacted community participatory principles, and to what extent Māori participation in the research process is meaningful and empowered.

[and that]

Kaupapa Māori theory, research and action have been born out of concerns relating to exploitative and detrimental impacts endured by Māori at the hands of non-Māori researchers. (p. 61)

It is clearly understood by most Māori researchers today, and an increasing number of non-Māori researchers, that any research conducted with Māori communities needs to ensure community input into all phases of the research process, ensuring community participation is ‘meaningful and empowered’ and that the community receives direct

benefits from the research. Additionally, “Māori have much to offer all planning, research and policy making by providing an indigenous perspective that is often lacking in the present Eurocentric western worldview” (Harmsworth, 2005, p. 6). But as Kidman (2007) writes:

When Māori are excluded from the social narrative and the focus of social research shifts to non-Māori populations, there is a danger that research findings about non-Māori perspectives, cultures, attitudes and priorities will become the basis for interpreting and analysing the cultural concerns of Māori communities. (p. 7)

In his “excellent report” (Kidman, 2007, p. 1) on best practice guidelines for research with Māori communities, Harmsworth (2005) considers that “The most important fundamental ingredient for developing good practice is to ensure the relationship is founded on a sound set of principles, and on trust, respect, and cultural understanding” (p. 37). Harmsworth (2005) provides a set of 14 ‘steps towards collaboration’ which include:

- ❖ Step 1: Respect indigenous culture...;
- ❖ Step 2: Acknowledge and recognise the importance of incorporating an indigenous perspective into all plans, policy, management, decision-making and the development of new projects...;
- ❖ Step 3: Have an open mind and respect for other forms of knowledge...;
- ❖ Step 4: Identifying the right group of people to work with...;
- ❖ Step 5: A willingness and desire for both parties to develop a partnership and to define what is expected on both sides...;
- ❖Step 7: Identify, define and clarify general and specific issues with Māori groups...;
- ❖Step 9: Identify capacity needs for effective engagement...;
- ❖Step 12: Determine areas of common interest with common purpose...;
- ❖Step 14: Proactively engage other parts of the community with clearly defined and articulated sets of values and goals to address Māori issues and enhance Māori values. (pp. 40-42)

In the case of *He Ara Toiora*, Ngātiwai Education began the process before Dr Lily George offered her services in 2014, having identified and set the kaupapa of Māori youth suicide prevention, and had approached Dr van Dijk to collaborate on the project given the shared interest in drama and performance with Erica Wellington and Gayle Dowsett. As noted previously, this was the start to their strategic plan of developing a research unit. Although not intending to be involved in this project, Lily and Keri Lawson-Te Aho were asked for support by Erica with the ethics application and moving forward from there.

Lily George did not enter the relationship with Ngātiwai Education intending to lead research, but rather saw her role as supporting them to develop their leadership in research. However the reality was that, given the relatively low levels of research experience within the NE team, her leadership was needed in both this and the subsequent project. As the only experienced researcher ‘on the ground’ working with people who were nevertheless eager and passionate about their people and communities, the pressures were at times considerable and she was grateful for the support of Whaea Moe Milne, Dr Lawson-Te Aho and Professor Moewaka Barnes who could fully understand the demands of research. It nevertheless took time to come to terms with this expanded role and this perhaps contributed to some of the challenges which arose.

Wellington (2016) notes:

A major challenge at times was the people and therefore the project being caught up in intra-iwi and intra-organisation politics and conflict. While this is not the place to detail those conflicts, there have been times when the continuation of the project was threatened by particular conflicts. Differences in perspectives relating to suicide were sometimes evident, with one whānau member who works in the field giving evidence of kaumātua/kuia in earlier times viewing suicide as “kohuru/murder” and as “mahi Matapiko/a selfish act”. This however did not align with the perspective through which *He Ara Toiora* was working, with our emphasis on aroha and manaaki, on resilience and hope. Other challenges arose from factions within Ngātiwai not being in support of a major organisation associated with the project, and therefore were not inclined to support the project. (p. 16)

These kinds of issues are not unusual in research with Māori communities, and indeed Lily had encountered similar issues in previous research (see, for example, an account on her doctoral research in George, 2010, or in George, 2017 [in press]). But in cases of conflict between Lily and members of Ngātiwai Education or the team, relationships had to be negotiated carefully, and unfortunately, not always successfully. A recommendation Lily can put forward therefore, is that in such research partnerships there are more than one experienced researcher working closely with the community to ease some of the pressures and to bring more balance to the relationship.

3.2 Mauri:

Mauri emerged in *He Ara Toiora* as a major concept through which to understand a kaupapa Māori focus on suicide and suicide prevention. It is noted here however, that this report does not look into this complex concept with great depth and instead provides an overview of how it has been utilised within this project. The future desire is

to develop a comprehensive model of suicide prevention utilising the mātauranga associated with the concept along with the knowledge gained through this project.

Mauri is commonly thought of as the 'life principle or life essence' that is contained not just in people and other animate beings, but also in inanimate objects and abstract concepts. For example, when describing the stage of reassessment of a situation in the process of pakeaka, Greenwood and Wilson (2006) describe mauri as "the living, irreducible energy that exists in that instant: the promise of growth" (p. 12). Morgan (2010) writes that "Mauri makes existence possible. Mauri is the force created by the mana (prestige, authority) of the atua (gods) that binds the body and the spirit." (p. 245).

Pohatu and Pohatu (2011) consider that:

Mauri holds a central place in informing Māori, how and why our lives take the form they do. It imbues Māori thinking, knowledge, culture and language with a unique cultural heartbeat and rhythm. Angles to that heartbeat and rhythm are positioned by Māori principles (take pū), valued, applied and interpreted in our activities. (p. 1)

In terms of suicide, Durie (2014) considers that 'unleashing the mauri' involves "healing the body, lifting the spirit, strengthening the mind [and] building relationships (whānau, society, te ao Māori, the natural environment)" (p. 13). He presents two forms of mauri, that of 'mauri noho' (languishing mauri) and 'mauri oho' (flourishing mauri), noting however that while a mauri may languish, it can never be extinguished. Mauri noho may arise from:

- ❖ Cultural & spiritual alienation
- ❖ Negative emotions
- ❖ Knowledge gaps
- ❖ Chronic pain
- ❖ Listlessness
- ❖ Negative relationships
- ❖ Isolation. (p. 15)

The task at hand is to provide interventions that can move mauri from languishing to flourishing, and which avoid or reduce risk (such as alcohol and drugs, cultural alienation or educational failure) while strengthening protective factors (e.g. personal resilience and social skills, self-determination and social inclusion). Factors which impel transition to mauri oho include whānau cohesion, capacity, and capability; a strong cultural identity; and social participation (Durie, 2014).

Those such as Pohatu and Pohatu (2011) however, speak of Mauri oho as the catalyst stage which helps people transition from Mauri moe to Mauri ora. At the final

performance, Lily George spoke the following words, drawing from Pohatu and Pohatu (2011) as well as discussions and performances within the previous wānanga:

one of the features of Mauri Moe is where because of some kind of mamae, a person becomes isolated and withdrawn; this is when the mauri, or the potential transformative power of that person, lies dormant – “Mauri moe here indicates that change and challenges have yet to begin and be faced” (Pohatu & Pohatu, 2011, p. 5). Mauri Oho “is the point of being awoken from a particular state of mauri moe....Something has happened to spark interest, a willingness to participate, make a commitment” (Ibid). We are all born with the blueprint for Mauri Ora within us, so something sparks that blueprint into action, and the person is now able to look beyond themselves to their relationships with those around them.

As Maori we are ALL about relationships! Mauri can indicate the energy of the interaction between us and others. When we are in mauri moe, we are unable to honour the integrity of those relationships as we become inward-focused. We move into mauri oho when we are able again to reach outwards to connect with others; so it’s the “willingness of our hearts (ngākau) to engage with the hearts of others” (Pohatu & Pohatu, 2011, p. 6).

But this takes courage, and there is a fragility to this courage as it can easily be lost again. So in the stage of mauri oho, we need support, we need aroha; we need to understand we are never truly alone. And as “we re/discover mauri oho, we renew the human purpose in everything we do” (Ibid).

So Mauri Ora is about knowing our human purpose. It is about knowing our potential and having courage to turn that potential into ability. Mauri Ora is about “being fully aware of the transformative possibilities” of our lives (Pohatu & Pohatu, 2011, p. 7).

But within our lives we can move often through the cycle of mauri moe, mauri oho and mauri ora. The trick is knowing some strategies and building some resilience, so that even when you are in mauri moe, you know you can move out of that when you are ready, and be engaged in a constant movement towards mauri ora.

So part of our task with *He Ara Toiora* therefore, was to investigate strategies which helped taitamariki build resilience and move from Mauri moe to Mauri ora.

In the table below, Ihimaera and MacDonald (2009) detail ways in which to apply Te Whare Tapa Whā to suicide prevention; the lower level shows ways in which we achieved this with *He Ara Toiora*:

Table 2: Applying Te Whare Tapa Whā framework to suicide

Wairua	Hinengaro (Psychological)	Tinana (Physical)	Whanau (Family)
<i>Ihimaera & MacDonald (2009):</i>			
Assist in the development of a strong and positive	Help the young person recognise their strengths	Encourage good nutrition, rest, recreation and exercise	Encourage reconnection with whānau to ensure a

cultural identity	and encourage effective coping strategies and problem solving techniques		sense of belonging
He Ara Toiora:			
Marae-based wānanga; lived experience of tikanga and kawa; positive interactions with pakeke, kaumatua, kuia.	Role-playing life situations; building strong relationships between generations; safe spaces to express emotions; aroha and manaaki.	Good kai; exercise such as yoga, kapa haka, wāhi tapu excursions, swimming; safe spaces to rest.	Collective experiences with whanaunga; encourage healthy relationships between those at wānanga; increased knowledge of whakapapa.
<i>"I liked how people listened to what I have to say. I felt equal to others and didn't feel left out."</i> Taitamariki participant	<i>"We feel like we know each other really well, and we support each other through Facebook and stuff. It's great how some of the taitamariki who were really bad, feel a lot better now."</i> Taitamariki participant	<i>"When we go off the marae and do things like swimming, that's the best part, then we don't mind doing the activities."</i> Taitamariki participant	<i>"First time here. Good to meet other people, helping with confidence which is important because you can stand up and say what's right when you're older."</i> Taitamariki participant

(Adapted from Ihimaera & MacDonald, 2009, p. 14)

According to Morgan (2010):

mauri is the binding force that makes existence possible by bringing the physical and spiritual attributes of a being or thing together in unison. When actions impact negatively on the mauri of something, this essential bond is weakened, potentially resulting in the separation of the physical and spiritual, and leading to the death of a living thing or the loss of a thing's capacity to support other life. (p. 249)

Providing taitamariki with strategies they can utilise at times of mauri moe or mauri oho in order to deal with what are often the commonplace result of living a human life, is one way in which to prevent Māori youth suicide. Focus should not be on preventing suicide however, but in providing environments within which taitamariki, adults and kaumatua/kuia – i.e. whānau and communities – can flourish. This includes addressing components such as Mauri ora: access to te ao Māori; Waiora: environmental protection; Toiora: healthy lifestyles; Te Oranga: participation; Ngā manukura: leadership; and Te mana whakahaere: autonomy (Kingi et. al., 2014).

3.3 'You just have to love them!'

One of the most significant findings in this project is also the most simplistic – 'you just have to love them!' This quote from one of the research team sums up the sentiment of most of those involved in the project – that when all is said and done, what taitamariki need most is to be loved, feel secure with a strong sense of belonging, and to have purpose. This is a simplistic answer that does not take account of the complexity of the situations within which these taitamariki live every day however, nor that of generations of their whānau. Blaming negligent whānau is easy; what is harder is to understand the complexity, be prepared to support whānau to make changes where necessary, and with a caring and non-judgemental attitude. Nevertheless, it remains important to 'just love them'.

In considering the 'pedagogy of love' put forth by influential Brazilian scholar, Paolo Friere, Schoder (2010) writes that:

a conscious life—as an ongoing process of education—is an act of love; we need the courage to risk acts of love; we can create a world in which it will be easier to love. If we do not consciously strive to love, we risk letting other, less noble, ethics dominate our lives. And while actively seeking love does not guarantee our success, we cannot be successful if we do not attempt to love. (p. iii)

In their work with youth in no education, employment or training (Y-NEET), *Ngā Rangatahi Toa* utilise Friere's 'pedagogy of love' as a central concept for their programmes in order to transition these taitamariki/rangatahi back into society in positive ways. One outcome "is a self-confidence which results usually in greater acceptance and participation, and a more meaningful place in the wider world" (Longbottom, 2016). Given that over 3,500 taitamariki in New Zealand are in alternative education institutions, 63% of which are Māori, with Māori and Pasifika youth making up 100% of those in alternative education in South Auckland, this is a significant matter for our communities. Yet such youth:

are largely invisible to the public eye; the students are thus both a marginalised and pathologised group....A core focus of *Ngā Rangatahi Toa* then is to address and reverse the harm perpetrated by the universal rangatahi experience of being "shaped" in an image not of their own making. (Longbottom, 2016)

Drawing from international as well as national initiatives of positive youth development, and through collaboration with local community groups as well as government organisations, *Ngā Rangatahi Toa* utilise culture, art, history, theatre and film as ways in which to inspire and encourage the taitamariki. Taking the time to build trust and ensuring the successful communication of programme content to the taitamariki is where *Ngā Rangatahi Toa* align their programmes with Friere's 'pedagogy of love'. They note however that "Love" is one of the most misused words in the English

language”; in their practice however, as exemplified by staff and mentors, they understand that:

“to love is to recognise yourself in another” (Tolle, 2005, p. 105) As a result of this kaupapa, rangatahi are able to safely reconfigure their often chaotic lives and trust enough to take strength from the challenges that would have once overwhelmed them. The life experiences that previously defined them in a negative manner usually become immensely powerful learning tools for personal development. (Longbottom, 2016)

In the processes of *He Ara Toiora*, there was a constant commitment to treating those involved with the project, particularly the taitamariki, with love and respect. Given the emotional intensity and sensitivity of the central topic – Māori youth suicide – we considered this an absolute necessity. As mentioned previously, one community member shared knowledge of suicide as ‘murder’ and ‘a selfish act’; if we had taken on that perspective in our project, we doubt we could have achieved the results that we have. What was needed for many of the taitamariki was to know they were worthy of respect, and that current behaviours did not have to define them or their lives. What they needed was hope, not further denigration – as noted in the Consultation Hui, they ‘needed to know their magnificence’.

3.5 Leadership, Healing and Connection:

The themes of leadership, healing and connection were not fully identified until the end of *He Ara Toiora*, and as part of the process of research design for *Kokiritia Te Ora*, in which we drew from the experiences of *He Ara Toiora*. Once identified as central themes they seemed obvious however, and the importance of these themes was clearly demonstrated throughout the project. While leadership development for the Youth Leaders was an obvious goal, we also noted the leadership development occurring for some of those whose attendance at wānanga had been consistent. For that reason, they were employed as ‘Taitamariki Leaders’ on *Kokiritia te Ora*.

3.5.1 Leadership:

At the 2005 Hui Taumata, Māori leaders identified the current gap in leadership and governance, advocating “nurturing leadership potential in everyone, and growing in particular the leadership potential of all our Rangatahi [youth]” (Mead, Stevens, Third, Jackson, & Pfiefer, 2005, p. 3). Recognising that traditional or defensive leadership styles do not entirely meet the needs of 21st century Māori development, Durie (n.d.) writes that “Tomorrow’s leaders must be able to dance at the interface” (para. 6) between Te Ao Māori and external organisations and institutions, in integrated leadership forms which understand the importance of those external relationships to

our development. For many of our taitamariki/rangatahi however, access to spaces of positive leadership development is limited. Ware and Walsh-Tapiata (2010) state that:

Despite the innovative approach of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa and the applicability of its Rangatahi Development Package, the diverse realities and experiences of Māori youth are still presenting unique challenges to national policy in Aotearoa New Zealand. (p. 18)

Positive youth development (PYD) is a concept defined as, amongst other things, “a strengths-based model that advocates building upon the assets and competencies of youth to promote desirable outcomes” (Chand, Farruggia, Dittman, Ting Wai Chu, & Sanders, 2013, p. 29). Lerner's ‘Five Cs’ model of PYD puts forth *caring, confidence, competence, character*, and [positive] *connections* as specific traits which invigorate positive development. Effective programmes should then result in the surfacing of *contribution* as a sixth characteristic (in Chand, et. al., 2013). Models such as this assume the efficacy of youth, and their potential to contribute positively to our society. Given Māori youth make up nearly 20% of the total population of New Zealand youth (Ware & Walsh-Tapiata, 2010), it is important they are well supported to fulfil their potential.

Certainly the taitamariki involved in *He Ara Toiora* have exhibited strength and fortitude, intelligence and creativity, despite some difficult circumstances they may be living in. When treated with caring and respect, many responded in a similar vein to others around them. While there were tensions and challenges at each wānanga, with some relating to the intensity of teenage concerns, as trust was built between taitamariki and adults the tensions lessened and caring behaviour was more frequently exhibited.

There are several examples of inspiring transformations; one relates to a young man who first came to the Whānau Engagement Day, at the time wearing a Community Detention bracelet on his ankle. His behaviour that day was mischievous, and he incited some of the younger boys to mischief as well. At TDW 3 in Waikare however, due to some of the Youth Leaders being at the tangi rather than the wānanga, Gayle Dowsett asked if he would ‘step up’ and take a leadership role in teaching the young men the haka. Almost immediately we perceived a change in him, and could see how the taitamariki responded positively to him; although usually very reserved, at the Waikare wānanga he expressed the goal of being ‘the best farmer in New Zealand’. Since that time he has worked consistently and positively as a Youth Leader, and while still facing challenges, he has shown that he has within him all that he needs to achieve his goal. The reality remains however, that he also requires considerable external support to help him succeed.

3.5.2 Healing:

According to Puketapu Andrews (1997):

To heal means to become whole, to be powerful, to know your own power. This in turn means to know who you are physically, spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. All of these elements of a person's being must be attended to in order for that person to become whole....so that they are able to live their life positively and creatively, to their fullest potential. (p. 69)

In their research involving Māori women with experiences of incarceration, George et. al., (2014) consider that "With its ultimate aim of healing, historical trauma theory can be utilised to seek self-determined solutions to past wounding, thereby contributing to contemporary rebuilding for incarcerated Māori women and their whānau" (p. 184). An important component in this is the 'self-determined' nature of healing – through a person acknowledging the trauma that they may have suffered and the healing that is therefore needed, in recognising the potential they hold within them, it is possible to transform lives that respond to personal and collective needs. Wirihana and Smith (2014) write that "Traditional methods of healing in Māori communities were developed on the basis of the interconnected relationships between spiritual, physical, social and psychological processes" (p. 203). They cite methods still of use today as including connection to ancestors through whakapapa kōrero, providing knowledge of methods and strategies to respond to the suffering and trauma which are often a normal part of life, as well as something that is impelled by oppression and dispossession.

Understanding the impermanence and continually changing nature of human experience can denote the ability to be resilient and build strategies to ensure that the discomfort of change has less impact. For example, although a state of Mauri moe may result from devastating change, knowing that life will change yet again may be sufficient to impel someone into Mauri oho and to then seek Mauri ora. As we noted in *He Ara Toiora*, for some of the taitamariki we worked with, trauma and pain seemed to be continuous and unending states from which they doubted they could emerge. Having experiences which contributed to building their self-worth and self-confidence while finding connection and belonging in a cultural context, enabled the taitamariki – and adults – to feel more able to face whatever they needed to, even though challenges remain.

3.5.3 Connection:

For Māori, our most basic form of connection is through whakapapa, to whānau, hapū, iwi and atua. Edwards, McCreanor and Moewaka Barnes (2007) state that in the:

Te Pae Mahutonga framework for wellbeing, positive transformation for Maori is seen to turn upon the closely linked processes of whanau support, whanau healing (where necessary) and whanau development. The wellbeing of rangatahi

Maori is crucially impacted on by the quality of whanau as a context for Maori youth development and the future wellbeing of the Maori population. (p. 13)

For the taitamariki attending our wānanga, being immersed within a whānau-like context in marae-based gatherings went a long way towards improving their wellbeing. At the consultation hui at Toll Stadium in January 2015 however, a participant stated that there are some youth who do not know enough about Māori culture to stand up and be proud of being Māori; it was indeed a concern voiced at the prior marae consultation hui as well, the possible reticence of some of our taitamariki to attend if marae-based. An adult participant noted that some adults are hesitant to participate on marae due to their whakamaa over lack of cultural knowledge. Yet what we found was important was the way in which taitamariki were welcomed into that space and then nurtured while there. Having powhiri and whanaungatanga sessions as a part of each wānanga was important for connecting the taitamariki and others to the marae and to each other. A research team member noted at TDW3 in Waikare that all taitamariki were able to stand and recite their pepeha, even those less confident, while being well supported by the rest of the group. As George (2010) writes:

Marae are places of refuge and learning where the active expression of Māori culture is most obvious. Tendrils of tradition incorporated with contemporary nuances reach out to enfold those whom these places and spaces nurture and embrace. While these ideals may not always find articulation in reality, their presence at the least provides a foundation centuries old on which to build pathways in the present and into the future. (p. iii)

By having marae-based wānanga, connections to self, to each other, to whenua and wai, to tupuna and atua, was enabled for the taitamariki. That provides for them, a foundation on which they may build their future.

4.0 CONCLUSION:

4.1 Ongoing Concerns:

In October 2016, Walters reported coronial findings that New Zealand continued to have the highest rate of teen suicide in the world, with Māori suicide rates higher than that of any other ethnic group in this country. Chief Coroner Judge Deborah Marshall said this "unacceptably high" total required further dialogue about suicide prevention. Shaun Robinson, CE of the Mental Health Foundation considers that "New Zealand needed to build a social movement where people felt confident to have "courageous conversations" about what's going on for them" (cited in Walters, 2016). More resources are certainly needed to deal with this significant issue, but the question has to be asked – given the considerable funding in recent years (which some would still consider to be insufficient), why is our suicide rate still unchanged?

In the course of this project, at least seven people connected to us by whakapapa took their own lives. Tariana Turia (2011) stated that:

Leadership in Maori suicide prevention must challenge inequities and injustice; address systemic barriers and at the same time critically examine mainstream responsiveness to ensure that every person, every whanau, that may be at risk is attended to.

While in this and other projects we wish to focus on "*prolonging and celebrating life*" instead of 'preventing suicide' (Consultation Hui participant), the reality remains that many Māori taitamariki face unacceptable challenges and traumas, including some of those participating in *He Ara Toiora*. We must deal with that reality while refusing to let it define who we are as a people.

4.2 Recommendations:

Recruitment was a significant issue in this project. While we had up to 20 and more taitamariki attending our wānanga, that was below the goal of 50 originally intended. Problems with recruitment reflected, we believe, conflicts within the local communities and organisations which possibly enforced loyalties to other organisations. There were some in the community who saw our project as less than optimal due to the 'wrong' people being involved, and therefore were not inclined to support the project. More whānau and kaumātua support was needed also, but this perhaps reflects the time and space where conversations about suicide are still tapu for some, and therefore a reluctance to be involved ensued. Although this was a project primarily for the benefit of Ngātiwai people, a focus on primarily Ngātiwai taitamariki and those whom Ngātiwai Education were working with limited the project somewhat as well.

While organisational representatives at our Consultation Hui expressed a desire to work with us on this project, that proved difficult to achieve for reasons we can only speculate at. It is probably necessary that *He Ara Toiora* be part of a larger movement in Te Tai Tokerau to work together in more cohesive and comprehensive ways if we are indeed to fully address this issue. We live in hope that *He Ara Toiora* contributes to a wider process that may be more likely to decrease the suicide rate significantly.

It is likely too, that for every taitamariki we had on the project, there were two or three more living with the same challenges and needing support – there must be recognition that suicide is part of wider social inequities that impact of Māori individuals and whānau. Development of programmes for our taitamariki must draw from the strength and beauty of our cultural knowledge, while taking account of the context which surrounds our taitamariki, often to their detriment. So too, must our own hapū and iwi organisations prioritise our taitamariki and fully acknowledge that our taitamariki are our future. If we won't look after them, who will? Certainly the current and previous governments haven't proved their ability, or even their willingness, to do so.

Recommendations arising from this project therefore include:

- ❖ That in future projects, sufficient time be spent building relationships within Māori communities with whānau, hapū and iwi, as well as education and social service organisations to ensure efficient recruitment and maintenance of participants;
- ❖ That a commitment to relationship building and maintenance be an ongoing part of projects with Māori communities;
- ❖ That we continue to have 'courageous conversations', utilising our "kōrero as a koha" (Moe Milne) to our taitamariki;
- ❖ That we always recognise the value and importance of our taitamariki;
- ❖ That we always recognise the value and importance of our taitamariki to our current and future goals;
- ❖ That in projects focusing on Māori youth and general development, Māori youth are significant contributors to and participants in the projects;
- ❖ That we recognise the challenges within which our taitamariki are mired, and focus on creation of solutions to those challenges which are taitamariki-informed.

4.3 Concluding Remarks:

Ihimaera and MacDonald (2009) propose a 'recovery approach' to suicide prevention, considering that "Social inclusion is a core component of recovery....A recovery approach is compatible with community action-focused activities" (p. 18). Further:

- ❖ Recovery is a journey, not a destination;
- ❖ Recovery is not a cure, it is a process;

- ❖ The core of recovery is born out of hope;
- ❖ Hope allows the hapū, iwi, hapori Māori and community to see that there is more to life than the present experience;
- ❖ Hope offers a way for hapū, iwi, hapori Māori, and the community to believe in themselves, to be positive, to identify strengths and to promote well-being;
- ❖ Wherever the recovery journey leads, it should be seen by all as being of value to the individual, whānau, hapū, iwi, hapori Māori, and to the community. (p. 18)

Our work with these taitamariki both broke our hearts and mended them. They broke because we became more aware of the challenges and heart-break and trauma that some of our taitamariki live with every day; it therefore should not be surprising that some of our taitamariki see suicide as a viable way in which to let go of the associated pain. But our hearts mended, too, because we could see the strength and resilience and creativity and absolute beauty of our taitamariki; mostly they just need to be reminded of it. As the bonds developed and the trust grew, they could see hope, so we could too.

“He kai kei aku ringa – There is food at the end of my hands”: this whakatauki expresses the humble assertion of someone who is confident in his or her capacity to use their ability and resources to create success for themselves and their loved ones. Surely it should be a goal for us all to ensure that our taitamariki grow to be confident and successful, strong in their connections to their marae and tupuna, with the knowledge and ability to lead us powerfully into the future.

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GLOSSARY

Aroha	Love, affection, empathy
Atua	Ancestor with continuing influence, god, supernatural being, deity
Hapū	Sub-tribe
Hīkoi	Walk or excursion
Hui	Meeting/gathering for discussion
Iwi	Tribe
Kapa haka/Kapahaka	Māori cultural group, Māori performing group. Māori cultural songs and dances.
Karakia	ritual incantation, prayer
Kaitiaki	Guardian, caregiver, trustee, minder, keeper, steward
Kaumatua	Respected elder, usually in a leadership role
Kaupapa	Topic, programme
Kaupapa Māori	Māori approach, Māori topic, Māori customary practice, Māori institution, Māori agenda, Māori principles, Māori ideology - a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society. ⁸
Kuia	Respected female elder ⁹
Mahi	Work, activity
Mamae	Feelings of sadness/emotional distress
Manaaki	Hospitality
Manuhiri	Visitor, guest
Marae	Often used to describe the courtyard or the open area in front of the wharenuī, where formal greetings and discussions take place. In this case it is used to include the complex of buildings around the marae as traditional gathering places for the people of Ngātiwai and other Tai Tokerau groups.
Mauri	'Life essence', of varying states. See Section 3.2 for further explanation.
Mātauranga	Knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill, education. Usually

⁸ www.maoridictionary.co.nz

⁹ <http://www.ngatiwai.ac.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Ngatiwai-Korero-Mai-for-web1.pdf>

	used to denote that which relates to Te Ao Māori.
Ngākau	Literally, heart; also used figuratively or metaphorically to describe heart, mind, soul.
Pepeha	Formulaic expression of belonging to environment and people of origin
Pōwhiri	Aka pōhiri. Rituals of encounter, welcome ceremony on a marae.
Pūrākau	Legend, myth ¹⁰
Taitamariki	Young adults. Other iwi use 'rangatahi' or 'taiohi' as well.
Tangi	Funeral
Te Ao Māori	Māori world
Te reo Māori me ona tikanga	The Māori language and its accompanying customs
Tikanga	Custom, correct procedure
Tupuna	Ancestor/s
Urupā	Burial ground, graveyard
Wāhi tapu	Sacred place often commemorating an important event in that people's history or a place such as a burial site.
Waiata	Song/sing.
Wānanga	Place, experience or environment where important topics are learnt.
Whaea	Mother, aunt, in more recent times used as a respectful honorific title for an adult female.
Whakapapa	Genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent, history.
Whakataukī	Proverb, significant saying
Whānau	Extended family, family group, sometimes used for members of a group with a common purpose, to include those who may not have any family ties to others in the group.
Whenua	Land

¹⁰ www.maoridictionary.co.nz

APPENDICES

Appendix One: Wellington, P. (2016, Feb). Final Report to Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga for Summer Internship.

Final Report – Ngā Pae Māramatanga

*The effectiveness of arts and drama as strategies to build hope and resilience in
taitamariki.*

A Māori youth suicide prevention project.

**A report to Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga in fulfilment of the requirement for
Summer internship funding**

By

Paulette Wellington

2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION	64
SECTION TWO – SUICIDE AND SUICIDE PREVENTION	65
2.1 Suicide	65
2.2 Prevention Programmes for Māori Youth in Tai Tokerau	66
2.3 What He Ara Toiora is offering Māori youth	67
SECTION THREE – BUILDING RESEARCH CAPABILITY	68
3.1 Research Training with He Ara Toiora	68
3.2 Other involvement in He Ara Toiora	69
3.3 Whānau Engagement	69
3.4 Taitamariki Leader Training	70
3.5 Additional Whānau Engagement	71
3.6 He Ara Toiora Taitamariki Development Wananga	71
3.7 Preliminary Insights	73
SECTION FOUR – WEAVING RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES	75
SECTION FIVE – PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS	77
5.1 Challenges of Working with Iwi	77
5.2 Challenges of Working with Taitamariki and Vulnerable Populations	79
5.3 Community Research	80
SECTION SIX – CONCLUSION	81
REFERENCES	84
GLOSSARY	87

SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

How effective are arts and drama as strategies of Māori youth suicide prevention, in building hope and resilience in taitamariki?

This report explains my involvement in the *He Ara Toiora* research project, during a Summer Internship through Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga (NPM). My academic supervisor is Dr Lily George of Massey University, who is lead researcher and co-manager of the project, along with Gayle Dowsett of Ngātiwai Education. The internship took place in Te Tai Tokerau/Northland, over ten weeks from 7th December 2015 to 19th February 2016. This report engages with the research question posed above as a way in which to organise the report effectively.

He Ara Toiora is a research project into suicide prevention for Ngātiwai taitamariki using arts and performance-based wānanga to explore whether the use of drama, music (including waiata), dance (including kapa haka), visual arts and performance might enable taitamariki to express feelings of difficulty coping with life stressors, as well as providing a safe space for discussions in relation to suicide. It is hoped that these wānanga and resulting expressions of feelings might enrich participants' lives and enable them to find pathways and build resilience to cope with future stressors. The data collected will provide insights into how this type of engagement with taitamariki might enhance resilience and decrease the high rate of youth suicide throughout the Ngātiwai rohe and Tai Tokerau.

The overall objective of this internship with Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga to build my research capability, has been accomplished through research work on two collaborative projects between Te Au Here o Tukaiaia/Ngātiwai Education, He Ara Ngātiwai Charitable Trust and Massey University. This includes but is not limited to experience of:

- community and iwi research practices within Māori/Ngātiwai marae-based communities, including consultation, tikanga practice, and relationship development/maintenance;
- data collection practices including observational and reflective data collection, as well as transcribing data and data analysis;
- research design and implementation, including developing budgets;
- working with vulnerable populations, including development and implementation of a Safety Plan;
- designing, researching and writing journal articles.

SECTION TWO – SUICIDE AND SUICIDE PREVENTION:

2.1 Suicide

Suicide in New Zealand is considered to be a major health crisis (Canterbury Suicide Project, n.d.), with Māori youth featuring in disproportionate numbers as more likely to die from suicide than non-Māori youth (Best Practice Journal, n.d.; Canterbury Suicide Project, n.d.; Coupe, 2005; LawsonTe Aho, 2013, 2014). New Zealand youth have the second highest rate of suicide in OECD countries (The Guardian, 2015). Chief coroner Judge Marshall stated that “Over the last eight years I believe we’ve seen a shift in society’s preparedness to have a more open conversation about suicide, but we are not seeing any movement in what is an unfortunate static annual figure” (cited in The Guardian, 2015).

It is the need to have open conversations about suicide - rather than hiding ‘shameful secrets’ - that is considered by some as part of the solution. Well known comedian, Mike King, has been open about his own battles with depression and suicide ideation. In 2013 he stated that:

There's a real need to talk about suicide, but talk about it safely, make sure there's help there for somebody who needs it. We need to talk about why people commit suicide, and it's generally people who feel hopeless and they often genuinely believe that they are the only ones going through it and it becomes overwhelming. We have to show them that there is hope, that no matter how they feel others have been through the same thing and that they can get through it. (cited in Dinsdale, 2013a)

Speaking of the loss of son Nicholas to suicide, Jane Stevens urged that “We have to start talking about it. We would never be ashamed of our boy and we feel so strongly that people have to wake up to what is going on in this country – it is an epidemic” (cited in The Guardian, 2015).

In response to the increasing rate of suicide, the government gave \$25million to suicide prevention programmes, with \$8million going to fund Māori and Pasifika programmes (APNZ, 2013). This resulted in the development of Waka Hourua, which “supports Māori whānau, hapū, iwi, Pasifika families and communities to develop and enhance their own capacity and capability to prevent suicide and to respond safely and effectively when and if suicide occurs” (<http://wakahourua.co.nz/>). A major focus for Waka Hourua and similar organisations is the development of local, whānau/hapū/iwi-driven solutions. As noted by Michael Naera of Ngāti Pikiao suicide prevention services, part of their solution is to ‘Whakaoho Mauri’; “Awakening the life essence of a person through the protection of mana and protection of wairua” (SPINZ Webinar, 2013). Di Grennell of Te Puni Kōkiri states the necessity of “putting whānau in the driver’s seat. However where whānau lack social and economic resources, there needs to be care taken that whānau have the ability to be in the driver’s seat” (SPINZ Webinar, 2013).

Northland has not been immune to these appalling statistics on suicide, which conceal stories of devastation for individuals and their whānau left behind. Youth suicide statistics in Te Tai Tokerau/Northland have steadily increased in the past decade. During 2012 there was a spike in the number of young people taking their own lives, with an increase from 5 in 2011, to 19 in 2012 (Penney & Dobbs, 2014). As a result of this spike, many organisations in Tai Tokerau have received funding to devise programmes to address this crisis, with the result being that youth suicide decreased slightly during 2013 and 2014 (Penney & Dobbs, 2014). However during 2015 there was an overall 33% increase in suicide completions in Northland (Coronial Services of New Zealand, 2015). The reality is that youth suicide in Tai Tokerau is still a major health crisis, and Māori youth in Tai Tokerau are considered among those most likely to experience suicide ideation (Penny & Dobbs, 2014). As noted in He Ara Toiora documents (2015):

This project arose as a way in which to address the cluster of suicides in 2012, which impacted on Ngātiwai communities, as well as others in Te Tai Tokerau. He ara Toiora is the first of two projects...which take a positive focus on developing Ngātiwai-based strategies that respond to the specific needs and aspirations of our taitamariki. This project can be seen as part of a wider initiative to strengthen the people and mātauranga of Ngātiwai by addressing the myriad needs identified within Ngātiwai communities, but in ways that enhance and uplift, rather than deny and depress. (Information and Contacts document, November 2015)

2.2 Prevention Programmes for Māori Youth in Tai Tokerau

There are a range of services in Tai Tokerau which provide support for those who suffer from suicide or associated issues. Northland District Health Board's Te Roopu Kimiora (Health Point, 2016) offers clinics at set hours during weekdays, requiring referrals to access their services, and provides necessary support to many of our whānau. They provide Māori staff who are experienced in working with whānau. However this model may not be attractive to some Māori as the model of accessing services at Kimiora tends to be more medical than holistic. Some organisations for Māori youth in distress in Tai Tokerau have attempted to offer a more whanau-based approach, such as Te Whare Oranga at the Anglican Care Centre. However the list of practitioners at Te Whare Oranga does not include anyone who has an obviously Māori background nor does their organisation offer kaupapa Māori-based counselling (Whāngarei Anglican Care Trust, 2016). Other services that do provide kaupapa Māori services include Jigsaw Whāngarei, Otāngarei Trust, and Ngātiwai Education itself – the latter organisation provides parenting programmes for whānau, whānau education plans (WEAP), and in-school academic and pastoral support for Ngātiwai students. While these are not specifically suicide prevention programmes, they are vital to addressing the complexity of the environment within which suicide exists.

Northland Company Playworks Productions Ltd's production, 'Matanui', was an initiative intended to empower youth and their communities to build community resilience. Matanui was an interactive play performed at various locations in Northland that invited conversation and dialogue around experiences of suicide. An evaluation by Penney and Dobbs (2014) found that this production (along with community and teacher education) met its outcomes to support youth; increase youth resourcefulness; and strengthen school teams and communities.

The Raid Movement is a local taitamariki suicide prevention group sponsored by Ngāti Hine Health. They tour local colleges to spread their message, "Life over everything". As noted on their home page (see <http://www.theraidmovement.co.nz/>):

The Raid Movement is a small group of young people who are changing the world, one school at a time. Our aim is to show support to our fellow young people and show them that life is the most important gift of all.

Their Mission is to decrease youth suicide in New Zealand, and offer comfort and support to young people by emphasising that life is a gift. The website features a video with an inspirational story and song.

Whangarei and the wider Northland area have many other organisations that provide helpful services to local youth. These include the Northland District Health Board which offers many resources on its website, as well as providing active services such as Te Roopu Kimiora. The *Promoting Whānau and Youth Resilience* programme launched in 2013 uses a "three-pronged attack...with the aim of empowering the region's youth and giving them and their communities the resilience to deal with the complex issues and risk factors youth face today" (Dinsdale, 2013b). Despite these and other initiatives however, suicide continues to rise in Northland, with a 33% rise in 2015 (Collins, 2015). It is obvious that the issues surrounding suicide are multiple and complex, and therefore require multiple solutions.

2.3 What He Ara Toiora is offering Māori Youth

He Ara Toiora (and *Kokiritia te ora*) identify support networks for taitamariki who are affected by suicide, contribute to positive youth development for our taitamariki and use dramatic and visual arts to search for ways to engage with, and research strategies to allow expression of feelings during times of difficulty. This is in collaboration with Ngātiwai whānau and hapū within the wider iwi, and work within Ngātiwai tikanga; for example, our kaumātua and kuia are strongly involved in the projects.

He Ara Toiora, using a performance and arts-based programme to engage Māori taitamariki, links into the belief that most Māori enjoy music and performance (waiata and kapa haka).

Observational data as well as art and written pieces from participants are gathered in this performative research project over a Youth Leaders (YLS) training wānanga, a Whānau Engagement Day, and six Taitamariki Development Wānanga (TDWs). Performative research draws on performance as an integral way of expressing research findings. Haseman (2006) notes that “when research findings are made as presentational forms they deploy symbolic data in the material forms of practice; forms of still and moving images; forms of music and sound; forms of live action and digital code” (p. 5).

At each wānanga, conversations are enacted through drama and art as well as written dialogue, and it is these which express the thoughts and insights of the taitamariki in a way that is tacit and subtle, yet incredibly powerful. Using drama process has been found to allow participants to be more comfortable ‘acting out’ a story that is similar to their own. For example, during our recent wānanga all of the participants engaged in role plays. One of the taitamariki asked her group to enact her own story using different names, giving her group insight into her thoughts and feelings, as well as their own. Osterlind (1995) promotes Augusto Boal’s findings that participants not enacting their own stories felt “free to play their real emotions, feelings and thought” (p. 77). Some of these stories and conversations will be featured in the presentation at the final wānanga for He Ara Toiora in April, to whānau and friends of participants.

SECTION THREE – BUILDING RESEARCH CAPABILITY:

During the weeks leading up to the NPM internship start date, I attended meetings with supervisor, Dr Lily George. We outlined the work plan I would be following, specified the objectives and timelines and formed a detailed plan for the internship. I commenced a literature review on suicide, Māori/iwi research, and performative research, which has contributed to the writing of this report, expanded my understanding of the related issues, as well as provided a resource for others on the project.

Work completed during the internship includes collection, transcription and analysis of data from TDW2, TDW3 and TDW4 (February 2016); *He Ara Toiora* (HAT) team meetings and planning for TDW5 and HAT final performance as well as analysis of data; internship meetings with Dr Lily George; attending and supporting team, health clinician and whānau at TDWs; discussion and planning for *Kokiritia te ora* (KTO); budget planning for KTO; Safety Plan implementation; and reflective journaling for all TDWs attended.

3.1 Research Training with He Ara Toiora

The research training I am undertaking has relevance to improving Māori health specifically in the Ngātiwai rohe, and generally for Māori. The outputs of *He Ara Toiora* can contribute

to the body of information for suicide prevention as well as positive youth development. With the training I am receiving through involvement with this project, and future academic study, I will also be able to contribute to Ngātiwai whanau, hapū and iwi development, as well as to the pool of Māori health researchers.

My Māori community involvement continues to assist me to remain focussed on the passion I have for continuing and growing my contribution towards research. This has involved and continues to be as Trustee and member of the executive of Ngunguru Marae Committee for two and a half years; attending Ngātiwai hui and wānanga with topics such as waiata, tikanga, te reo Māori; Office of Treaty Settlements hui; iwi information updates; encouraging taitamariki engagement with our iwi, hapū and marae; engaging with kaumātua and kuia; encouraging continuous contact with our marae and the local kura on matters that our trustees, kaumātua and kuia believe a co-ordinated effort would benefit tamariki; interacting with the Ngunguru Sandspit Society to engage their group with our hapū and marae to encourage a better result for the environmental status of Māori whenua and moana; attending tangi and hui at various marae; consultation with Northland Regional Council on Resource Consent Applications in the Ngunguru rohe; and as a member of the Ngunguru Catchment Group contributing to investigation of the negative environmental impacts in our rohe. I am strongly committed to Ngātiwai people and whenua, and will always be engaged in such activities for our people.

3.2 Other Involvement in He Ara Toiora

I have been a part-time team member on the *He Ara Toiora* and *Kokiritia Te Ora* projects since January 2015. My role initially was to complete a summary of the literature on suicide in general, youth suicide and youth suicide prevention in New Zealand, as well as research methodologies and methods. This was to provide background for the *He Ara Toiora* and *Kokiritia Te Ora* projects and the research team. It soon became apparent that we needed a Health Clinician since we were dealing with vulnerable participants and challenging issues. Since my background is in psychology, social work and counselling, I was offered this role alongside the role of literature mapping. One of the challenges therefore, was to ensure the roles of researcher and Health Clinician remained separate and that when I was acting as Health Clinician that was my primary focus. For the term of the Internship I was Health Clinician on only one occasion however, with Dr Alayne Hall taking that role for the other wānanga.

3.3 Whānau Engagement

Throughout the early part of 2015 we held team meetings to organise and begin the engagement with taitamariki for the project. As part of the development phase of the

Kokiritia te ora project, consultation hui were held in January 2015, the main purpose of which was to inform whānau further on the kaupapa and process of *Kokiritia Te Ora*, and to ask for their insight into the relevant issues. Our first hui was held with whānau at Whakapaumahara Marae, a Ngātiwai marae in Whananāki. We had a sizeable turnout for this hui, and support was offered by many, as well as interest from taitamariki to be participants. Our second hui was shortly after the first, and attendees were from interested and related organisations in the Ngātiwai rohe; this included social service professionals, teachers, a local MP, kaumātua/kuia and Ngātiwai whānau, members of the RAID Movement, as well as the three research supervisors – Professor Helen Moewaka Barnes, Dr Keri Lawson-Te Aho, and Mrs Moe Milne. Again we had a sizeable turnout for this hui, with offers of support for our projects.

One of the main insights gained from this hui was that KTO should focus on the positive aspects of our taitamariki and their development, rather than focusing on suicide. As noted by one of the participants – “Do we want to celebrate life, or mourn death?” Whaea Moe Milne suggested we help our taitamariki “know their magnificence”.

At both hui the *He Ara Toiora* project was also presented to whānau, with many attendees showing interest and support for this project as well. Many commented on the timeliness of the projects, given the prevalence of suicide for Ngātiwai whānau. Essentially therefore, *He Ara Toiora* was to lay the groundwork in engaging taitamariki and whānau in conversations around suicide, while *Kokiritia Te Ora* would extend those conversations into positive taitamariki development.

In July 2015 a further whānau engagement hui was held at Whakapaumahara Marae for the *He Ara Toiora* project. Prior to this the original Principal Investigator (PI), Dr Bert Van Dijk, had withdrawn from the project for personal reasons, with Dr George taking over the PI role and Liz Sugrue being engaged as the Drama Facilitator. One of the purposes of this hui therefore was to introduce Liz to the whānau, as well as provide an update of where the project was at. A decrease in attendance was noted at this hui, however the kaumātua, kuia, taitamariki and their whānau who did attend, were all enthusiastic about being a part of this project.

3.4 Taitamariki Leader Training

A wānanga to train and select Youth Leaders (YL's) as mentors to the younger participants (tamariki and taitamariki) was held in September 2015. All those who attended (10) were chosen as Youth Leaders. Ages ranged from 17 to 48 years, with the term ‘Youth Leader’ referring to their work with youth, rather than their age. Also part of the purpose of these positions was to provide leadership opportunities and training for the Youth Leaders.

The research team engaged in team building exercises run by the Drama Facilitator. It was clear very early in the day that the participants were keen to engage and participated freely in organised activities involving Ngātiwai whakapapa and whakataukī, acting out Ngātiwai stories, and role-playing a fictional scenario about a teenager whose friend had committed suicide. This led to several participants sharing personal experiences of suicide. This sharing of emotional experiences tended to result in displays of distress by some of the Youth Leaders, and it was evident that the Safety Plan we had drawn up was in fact a necessary tool for the research team, the Youth Leaders, as well as the future tamariki and taitamariki participants.

3.5 Additional Whānau Engagement

During October 2015 another Whānau Engagement day for *He Ara Toiora* was held at Ngunguru Marae and taitamariki were invited to attend along with their whānau. Relationships were built between the research team and the Youth Leaders during the evening before the Whānau Engagement day, staying overnight together and participating in acting skits. The programme planned for the following day was discussed and the mood was very positive and upbeat. Again we had a disappointing turnout at the engagement day, with six Youth Leaders, only 11 taitamariki, one parent and one kaumātua in attendance. All who did attend, however, engaged wholeheartedly in the performance activities, particularly those with Māori components. Art activities did not seem to be as well received as the drama, however at the end of the art activities when participants explained their art, they appeared to be animated and articulated their feelings clearly.

3.6 He Ara Toiora Taitamariki Development Wānanga

Our first of six Taitamariki Development Wānanga (TDW) was held in November 2015. Although I was not available to attend this wānanga, others in the research team gave feedback on the two day wānanga held at Ngunguru Marae. A guest Ngātiwai artist attended this wānanga and led participants through some art activities. In one of the activities, participants wrote negative messages they have had directed towards themselves or someone they know on a roll of wallpaper, followed by what they considered to be positive messages. Negative messages included '*chubby bubbly*'; '*Hi slut*'; '*Fat guts*'; '*I can smell you*'. Positive messages included '*help those that want to be helped*'; '*listening to music*'; '*friends*'; '*Tangaroa is in my blood*'. Feedback from participants included '*I liked the fun games and activities, art, watching people swim, meeting people, learning how to build a whare with straws*'; '*loved it but need more activity*'; '*the last wānanga was more fun than this one*'; '*getting to know different or new people that you would be able to connect with*'.

I attended a research team meeting after TDW1 when we discussed how to improve on the wānanga activities that were not well received by participants. The Drama Facilitator then met with Youth Leaders prior to TDW2, to get their feedback on the programme for this wānanga. There had been some internal challenges with staffing and several research team members who began the process with HAT had withdrawn from the project for a variety of reasons. Immediately prior to TDW2, the Drama Facilitator also withdrew, and the project Co-Manager, Gayle Dowsett (a very experienced performer and director), took over as Drama Facilitator. All remaining research team members stepped up to fill necessary roles, and a cohesive and committed team resulted. Attrition of taitamariki was also of concern, but after robust discussion the team chose to continue regardless of numbers, as the kaupapa was not about how many taitamariki participated, but that those who participated were able to gain something positive and relevant from participation.

TDW2 was held in December 2015 at Ngunguru Marae. I attended as Health Clinician for one day, and our alternate Health Clinician attended for the other day. I also attended as a research team member assisting with data collection and whānau support, although I was careful to keep boundaries between the two roles. This wānanga included more participant discussion about the programme for all wānanga due to engagement of the new Drama Facilitator, and reports from Youth Leaders of activities they considered were not working well. It seemed that all participants were more invested in the programme, whether it was due to discussions with them on the programme, or that the programme now included a hīkoi was arranged to a Ngunguru maunga and a beach for a swim. Some difficulties were experienced during another field trip, however this allowed for discussions between research team members and open discussions with participants on how to manage difficult situations. Taitamariki participants shared that these types of difficulties are experienced often by themselves and their friends in their homes as well as when they leave their homes. The research team members were therefore able to model alternative behaviour for dealing with difficult situations, including the necessity for taking responsibility for your actions, even as an adult.

Three new Youth Leaders were taken on – male partners of two existing YL's, plus the mother of two taitamariki participants – which added some necessary balance to the group. One of these new YL's, Rangi, was tasked with composing a waiata from hopeful post-it quotes written at the Whānau Engagement day – the main theme was aroha, reflecting one of the main values underpinning the project. This waiata, *Whakakotahi Aotearoa Whakapiri*, is now sung with gusto at each wānanga. The chorus is worth repeating here:

*Love heals with gentle hands
Love stands with open arms
Love shares with constant care
And love walks with all to share.*

TDW3 was held at Waikare Marae during January 2016, and included similar performance and arts-based activities; however the theme was more about resilience. Activities included the taitamariki designing vision boards for themselves, giving expression to some of their future goals. The Drama Facilitator explained again that the participants were here to help us find ways to build hope for young people who experience difficulties. This reminder seemed to give participants a sense of pride in assisting to help others. It was again evident that participants were willing to share their experiences when asked for feedback about the wānanga they have attended and whether the types of performance and art activities would help others. Participants engaged well during the role play activities they took part in. I again had the Health Clinician role (along with research team member role) at this wānanga and led participants through a technique on how to find their 'safe place' when experiencing difficult emotions.

The fourth TDW during February 2016 was again held at Ngunguru Marae. A guest speaker shared his story of hope and 'starting a spark' to convey the message that 'we have greatness inside of us'. Another manuhiri/guest took participants through an exercise intended to highlight how difficult it is to learn te reo Māori, using a made-up language to express this. Discussions about kaitiaki by a matua on the research team saw many participants engaging and sharing their knowledge of kaitiaki in their own area. Drama exercises and role-plays allowed participants to act out their own experiences and those of their whānau and friends, with Youth Leaders and research team members assisting them. All engaged in these role-plays, and it was clear that most realised the different ways we can change our behaviour to become more resilient. Waiata and kapa haka practise, along with guest hip hop kaiako, saw participants engaging enthusiastically. The other Health Clinician in attendance at the wānanga helped some of the taitamariki and research team to work through some feelings of mamae that were brought out during the wānanga.

3.7 Preliminary Insights

The insights gained from this mahi have been more than just learning 'how to do research'. As mentioned earlier, we organised a Whānau Engagement day and we were disappointed that only one adult whānau member attended. A primary reason for this put forward in discussions, was that some tamariki and taitamariki do not want their whānau to be present when there is opportunity for them to disclose difficulties. This was also found in a photovoice project by Jensen et. al. (2006), with secondary school age Māori and Pacific young people who told their parents to "back off because this is our project" (p. 34). There has also been some conjecture that this marae-based, adult supervised programme may have been an opportunity for parents to send their tamariki and taitamariki to a 'safe place' so that they could have someone else take care of their children's emotional needs and give the parents some time out.

The project, by its nature, has meant some of the participants have disclosed distressing events in their lives (both from their past and present), and I have been pleasantly surprised by how open they are with their stories. I have also been rather astonished at some of the circumstances these young people have found themselves in and quite proud of how they have dealt with them. I have loved watching the progress the young people have made during the journey in this project.

Although this is a research project, the outcomes participants are reporting at this mid to late stage of the project, are very encouraging for their future resilience. Participants' reports include positive statements such as:

"we feel like we know each other really well, and we support each other through facebook and stuff. It's great how some of the taitamariki who were really bad, feel a lot better now." Taitamariki participant

Some reports from team members and taitamariki allow for reflection and possible adjustment of programmes. These reports include:

"we find it exhausting coming such a long way to the hui. We have to leave home about 5am, then by the afternoon we are really tired, and don't want to join in anything." Taitamariki participant

"some of the things are really boring, and that's why our whānau, our parents, don't want to come. They came once and got really bored, and even though they said they think it's worthwhile for us taitamariki, they don't want to keep coming along." Taitamariki participant

"It's really difficult to keep team morale up when people keep leaving, and when some of the team don't turn up." Research team member

Reflecting on things such as team morale and why parents don't come to the hui, have allowed for opportunities to discuss whether we planned the programme as well as we could have. We found that by allowing taitamariki input into the programme for each wānanga and asking for their feedback on processes, taitamariki became more engaged. A similar finding by Wilson (2014) emerged while conducting a research project with youth workers using hip hop to engage with youth. By encouraging participant feedback and altering activities to keep up with new hip hop trends, this ensured continued youth engagement and interest.

Other insights included the possibility that some team members were more invested in the programme than others; and a question on whether the exhaustion that results from travel to distant marae outweigh the benefits of marae-based hui arose. These and other reflections will be taken into account during data analysis and final reporting, offering an

opportunity for the participants and team to include their insights, suggestions and hopes for further research and programmes that might evolve as a result of this research.

Working with Dr Lily George on this project has enlightened me about the value of forming networks, new ways to deal with challenges (such as personality conflicts between research team members, attrition of participants), the value of working as a team, the importance of enforcing ethical procedures, and the significance of choosing research methodologies wisely.

SECTION FOUR – WEAVING RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES:

The research design used in *He Ara Toiora* combines Kaupapa Māori research and Performative Research methodologies. Performative researchers are considered to be those who enter a research project not with the sense that there is a problem, but more that they are embarking on a project which is exciting, and that they “tend to ‘dive in’, to commence practising to see what emerges” (Haseman, 2006, p. 3). When first approached to be a part of the research team for the *He Ara Toiora* project, all team members spoke with enthusiasm about how the use of performance should engage Māori participants, particularly if waiata and kapa haka were to be used, and were excited to discover what this might bring to our Ngātiwai tamariki and taitamariki.

Using theatre skills in exploring risky youth experiences, Conrad (2004) found this process was a “way to collectively draw out, represent and question their experiences through theatrical means” (p. 12). *He Ara Toiora’s* use of performance during wānanga to encourage and enable taitamariki to express their experiences was surprisingly successful. Some of the tamariki were as young as 13 years, appeared shy, and it seemed to some of the team that we would have difficulty getting them to open up to us. However, we found that as soon as role-playing of Ngātiwai whakataukī and discussions about our whakapapa were introduced, when waiata and kapa haka were taught, it seemed as if there was no limit to the amount of information the tamariki and taitamariki were willing to share.

Kaupapa Māori research methodology is based on Māori worldviews with values and principles that empower and encourage participation (Kerr, Penney, Moewaka Barnes, & McCreanor, 2010). Basically, it is research done by Māori, with Māori, and it is intended to use Māori worldviews and to be “for the benefit of Māori” (Kerr, et. al., 2010, p. 28). The *He Ara Toiora* project uses kaupapa Māori research methodology with marae-based research done by Ngātiwai, for Ngātiwai, incorporating Ngātiwai whakataukī, waiata, kaitiaki and tikanga. Although some of the taitamariki did not identify as Ngātiwai, the underpinning values and principles to encourage participation with the use of Māori tikanga using a Māori worldview, did in fact seem to allow a pathway for tamariki and taitamariki to engage with the research.

By combining kaupapa Māori and performative methodologies, the *He Ara Toiora* project incorporated Māori values and practises into performance and other arts-based activities. Restoring whakapapa consciousness is often a challenge for Māori participants (Lawson-Te Aho, 2013). However the depth of knowledge by team members regarding the whakapapa of Ngātiwai tamariki and taitamariki allowed for knowledge of their whakapapa to be shared and increased the connection of those young people to the kaupapa at our hui and wānanga.

Using performance to enact Ngātiwai whakataukī and legends integrated a connection to heritage with fun-filled activities to draw on a need for youth to express their feelings not only through dialogue or story writing, but through role-play, song and dance. One Youth Leader taught a Ngātiwai haka to the male tamariki and taitamariki participants, who all joined in enthusiastically and have practised this haka whenever they were asked to. The leader explained the meaning of the words in the haka, providing meaning to the actions – I believe this has contributed to the confidence displayed when sharing feelings that may not be so easily expressed in other environments such as:

“It is easy to believe comments about yourself when you are being bullied.” Tamariki participant

“my life has turned around since I have been coming to these hui.” Taitamariki participant

“Good being here. Helping us with our confidence – to not be shy.” Tamariki participant

“[I] feel honoured to know that researchers are learning from us.” Tamariki participant

A Māori worldview is one that values others’ opinions and offers an outlet for the needs of all participants. Tikanga ensured that all who wanted to voice their thoughts were valued, and although this sometimes meant that our programme was behind schedule, surprising and valuable outcomes arose as a result. For example, a kaumatua at Waikare Marae explained the origins of karakia and why they are used on marae, that they can be a useful tool for coping with difficulties:

“Karakia was always acknowledged first. When you come onto the marae we have a responsibility to pass karakia on.” Kaumatua participant

The result of this dialogue by the kaumatua was that the Drama Facilitator encouraged participants to think about whether karakia would be a valuable tool for them to use if they were in a difficult situation. Encouraging participants to share their own ways of coping, whether they used karakia or not, brought out many insights about how resilient they are. Some comments included:

“If I’m feeling sad or not good, karakia would not help. I use the beach, I feel better there. Or the urupa. Talking to my tupuna at the urupa and talk to my Nana.” Youth Leader

“[we] only use karakia if we are sick. Now that I know a Youth Leader and other youth I can talk to them.” Taitamariki participant

He Ara Toiora also took into account tamariki and taitamariki feedback and interspersed marae-based activities with free time activities at beaches. This was a result of feedback from a previous wānanga, where participants had reported that they wish they could go to different marae instead of just the same one. It was explained to them that some marae were out of our budget, but that we would hīkoi more. Some comments from tamariki included:

“when we go off the marae and do things like swimming, that’s the best part, then we don’t mind doing the activities.” Tamariki participant

“[I’m] going great, thanks for beach trip and kai.” Tamariki participant

SECTION FIVE – PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

The following sub-sections engage with three insights gained from preliminary analysis of the data to date. These insights have been gained mainly through my observations during wānanga and engagement with collected data, and through discussions with my supervisor. As such they remain preliminary, although it is hoped each insight can be expanded into separate academic journal articles.

5.1 Challenges of Working with Iwi:

Working with iwi presented several challenges. Several members of the research team have deep knowledge of Ngātiwaitanga, however tangi and commitments to whānau and other organisations presents the challenge of replacing team members when tikanga demands that we accept and step up to commitments to tangi and whānau. Traditionally, tangi and whānau are regarded as top priorities in tikanga Māori, and Ngātiwaitanga follows this tikanga.

Another challenge was due to several of the tamariki and taitamariki participants growing up in an urban environment without much knowledge of tikanga. It was sometimes stated that they did not understand the need for long explanations about the meaning of te reo Māori me ona tikanga, and that it was ‘boring’. What we noted in the wānanga however, was the enthusiasm displayed by the tamariki and taitamariki participants for Ngātiwai-

related activities. Examples include role-playing a Ngātiwai kaitiaki such as Tukaiaia, hīkoi to Ngātiwai wāhi tapu, and general kapa haka and action-based activities such as ‘Ki mai’ and ‘Pukana’. A positive strategy, therefore, could be to use such activities to incite initial entry and interest into Te Ao Māori, and enable engagement with deeper aspects when possible.

Some of the research team are fluent in te reo Māori, however most are not. This presented a small challenge, although given the lack of te reo knowledge amongst most of the tamariki and taitamariki, it was generally found that tikanga concepts were explained in English – therefore the team members who do not have fluent te reo Māori, could learn along with the youth participants. This also can be seen to reflect the fact that only 24.8 percent of Ngātiwai people can hold a conversation about everyday things in te reo Māori (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). However, as there are marae that expect that only te reo Māori be spoken on the taumata, we may be limited in future projects with lack of te reo Māori me ona tikanga ability amongst our research team. Nevertheless, we must also always be aware of the reasons and realities amongst those we research with.

A major challenge at times was the people and therefore the project being caught up in intra-iwi and intra-organisation politics and conflict. While this is not the place to detail those conflicts, there have been times when the continuation of the project was threatened by particular conflicts. Differences in perspectives relating to suicide were sometimes evident, with one whānau member who works in the field giving evidence of kaumātua/kuia in earlier times viewing suicide as “kohuru/murder” and as “mahi Matapiko/a selfish act”. This however did not align with the perspective through which *He Ara Toiora* was working, with our emphasis on aroha and manaaki, on resilience and hope. Other challenges arose from factions within Ngātiwai not being in support of a major organisation associated with the project, and therefore were not inclined to support the project.

As noted by Sherwood and Edwards (2006) however:

Colonisation has been a tradition and action, which enabled the British people to claim their superiority over Indigenous people worldwide. This process ensured colonising nations usurped, dislocated, dismantled and demeaned the First Nation peoples in order to occupy and promote their own authority over their new subjects and country. (p. 183)

Ngātiwai people and places have certainly had experiences of colonisation, and this perhaps is reflected in some of the challenges we encountered. It is necessary, therefore, that decolonising processes occur. Lawson-Te Aho (2014) writes:

De-colonisation is a tool by which ‘psychological normalisation’ of the ‘abnormalising’...effects of colonisation can be deconstructed. However, on its own, decolonisation is insufficient to provide the courage needed for survival and positive life choices. Unresolved grief and trauma effects can become totally disempowering

and oppressive as to disable the will to fight....However, precious insights buried deep in the psyche and spirit of indigenous peoples that reflect legacies of courage and determination to overcome, offer seeds of hope, that when exposed to the right conditions, might grow to become healing potential. (p. 183)

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) book sought to 'decolonise research methodologies', pointing out the need for "reimagining of our world" (p. 1) where research serves our needs and purposes rather than those of others. Jenny Lee (2009) sought to reclaim the traditions and purpose of pūrākau as methodology which "draws from and responds to the wider historical, social and political research contexts, in particular the early New Zealand research context that recorded pūrākau as myths and legends" (p. 1). Decolonisation must include helping our whānau become aware of how colonisation has impacted on their experiences of the world, and through telling their stories and having their voices heard, be able to attain healing of the traumas they may have faced.

5.2 Challenges of Working with Taitamariki and Vulnerable Populations:

The tamariki and taitamariki who volunteered to be a part of *He Ara Toiora* have all had experiences of suicide either within their close whānau and friends, have attempted suicide themselves, or have experienced suicide ideation or self-harm. Working with taitamariki and vulnerable people such as these presented several challenges. 'Tamariki' is used in te reo Ngātiwai to describe children, while 'taitamariki' describes young people who are no longer children as well as those who are young adults. Generally young people need a sense that they are respected, in order for them to trust the adults who are working with them. Rapport building was necessary during the early stages of the *He Ara Toiora* project and this transpired for the first YLs and early participants. Due to having new participants at each wānanga, it was then necessary to include rapport-building activities at each new hui or wānanga. This sometimes put the programme behind schedule, however a positive to come out of this, was that new participants shared experiences that were similar to those who had been attending previous wānanga, increasing the interaction and helping those who were affected by suicide to find more peers they could relate to.

Working with vulnerable populations requires a unique approach, one which takes into account situations and conversations that may trigger deep emotions. For this reason, *He Ara Toiora* team developed a Safety Plan, with steps clearly laid out on the process to follow if participants displayed difficulty coping with their emotions and ensuring their emotional and physical wellbeing. There was concern that the participants in *He Ara Toiora* may find the conversations contributed to renewed suicide ideation or self-harm. Playing out scenes youth might be experiencing are described by Cozart et al. (2003) as risky, and these authors encourage dialogue by interacting with participants, not merely talking 'at' them. In addition, performing scenes that might be very close to situations participants have

experienced, it is necessary to take into account Cozart et al.'s (2003) findings that audience members can feel mocked, and may become unsettled and disturbed if they don't fully understand the message trying to be portrayed.

We have certainly found in this project at different times, that participants – including Youth Leaders and research team members – have reacted to emotional triggers. Sensitivity to such nuances as well as having people present with the skills necessary to deal with such events is very necessary. It is an ethical consideration of research to 'do no harm'; however, it seemed at times we did indeed run the risk of creating harm when participants were reminded of past or current traumas. Nevertheless, we draw comfort from seeing the positive results of this project and consider that sometimes feeling the pain is necessary. As Lawson-Te Aho's (2014) article title notes, "The healing is in the pain", and sometimes "Re-visiting and re-narrating trauma histories [is] a starting point for healing".

5.3 Community Research:

He Ara Toiora is a community research project. Community research needs an approach that is participatory with community input (Moewaka-Barnes, 2000b). As described above in challenges working with iwi, taitamariki and vulnerable populations, those challenges had to be overcome before the research team could ensure participation would be safe for young and vulnerable participants and to encourage community input.

Community input also aligns with the kaupapa Māori methodology used by *He Ara Toiora*. Ngātiwaitanga concepts encourage input from any person who believes they want to contribute to any kaupapa. This was found to impede on the timelines set in place to meet funding body requirements, since opening the floor to discussions (often needing to repeat explanations of the kaupapa) required long hui that not all team members could spare the time for. To remedy this, a smaller 'executive' group was appointed to meet and report back to the larger group. There was no intention to exclude anyone from discussions as this is not strictly tikanga, nor is it consistent with kaupapa Māori methodology, but given time constraints this seemed a logical solution. Anyone who wished to could attend these meetings, but this took the onus of the larger group to attend multiple meetings when their presence wasn't necessary. Some team members questioned this decision however, and eventually a few members of the team dropped off the project. Due to this and other circumstances, the rest of the team had to rally around and step in where there were roles to fill. We now have a core group who are dedicated to the project and even though some do not fully understand research processes, we have managed to collaborate with our lead researcher who patiently and humbly explains the need to fulfil data gathering requirements, even while 'copping a bit of flack' for doing so.

SECTION SIX – CONCLUSION

How effective are arts and drama as strategies of Māori youth suicide prevention, in building hope and resilience in taitamariki?

The *He Ara Toiora* research project began in January 2015. My involvement has been as a part-time research assistant at the project's inception, continuing through 2015, then being accepted as a Summer Intern through Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga (NPM) from December 2015 to the end of February 2016. The internship took place in the Ngātiwai rohe in Tai Tokerau. This report engages with the research question posed above as a way in which to organise the report effectively. *He Ara Toiora*, a Ngātiwai research project into suicide prevention for taitamariki, is an arts and performance-based project to determine whether the use of performance might enable taitamariki to express feelings of difficulty coping with life stressors. It is also intended to explore whether arts and performance can be used effectively as a suicide prevention strategy, and provide a safe space for discussions in relation to suicide.

Prevention programmes in place in Tai Tokerau have attempted to reduce the spike in the youth suicide rate in 2012. *He Ara Toiora* is a kaupapa Māori arts and performance-based project intended to address the lack of success in reducing the high Māori youth suicide rates in Tai Tokerau, to explore whether marae-based hui and wānanga might be a more successful vehicle for these youth, and to complement and find further avenues to increase hope and resilience in this population. *He Ara Toiora*, in collaboration with Ngātiwai whānau, hapū and the wider iwi, was formed to identify support networks for taitamariki and contribute to positive youth development.

Methodologies used in *He Ara Toiora* are Kaupapa Māori Research and Performative Research. These two methodologies complement each other since both are based on engaging with participants, one using Māori worldview and the other using participatory methods such as performance. *He Ara Toiora's* use of Kaupapa Māori, marae-based research combined with performance and arts-based activities such as waiata, kapa haka and whakataukī served to enhance a sense of (re)connection for participants. This has resulted in tamariki and taitamariki expressing their experiences and increasing their connection to their tupuna, hapū, iwi, and as a result they have expressed an increase in confidence and ability to cope with difficulties. Comments such as “*my life has turned around since I have been coming to these hui*” and “*Good being here. Helping us with our confidence – to not be shy*”, have supported previous use of these methodologies.

My involvement with *He Ara Toiora* (and the related project *Kokiritia te ora*) began early in 2015 with a review of the relevant literature on Māori youth suicide, suicide prevention programmes, Māori health and wellbeing, and research methodologies and methods. During the following months it has included participation and data collection during hui and wānanga. Leading up to my internship with NPM, I engaged in further review of

performative research which has increased my knowledge of related issues and provided a resource for others on the project. Training in research through He Ara Toiora has the intended outcome of contributing to improving Māori health specifically in the Ngātiwai rohe and generally for Māori. My involvement in this marae-based kaupapa Māori performative research project has included attending and participating in whānau engagement hui, training for Youth Leaders, three taitamariki development wānanga and many meetings with the research team.

Apart from learning how to do research, I have gained several insights during the course of the project. Difficulties getting wider whanau to attend wānanga has resulted in further review of literature where similar groups have experienced this. Participant feedback is that young people want to be in a separate space from their whanau when discussing difficulties around emotionally charged topics.

Another insight was that it took very little rapport-building before discussions about suicide were introduced, and I was surprised and pleased how open the tamariki and taitamariki are about difficult situations they have been in. From the initial stages of the project, through to the most recent wānanga in February 2016, participants continue to engage in discussions about unpleasant experiences and share how they are coping with them. Reports from taitamariki such as *“we feel like we know each other really well, and we support each other through facebook and stuff”* and *“It’s great how some of the taitamariki who were really bad, feel a lot better now”*, have inspired the whole research team to put more time and energy over and above that which is required. Some of the challenges have been difficult to overcome, however team discussions have enabled us to find pathways to carry on with the project as planned.

Incorporating tikanga into *He Ara Toiora’s* project meant that commitments such as tangi and whānau commitments are accepted as being a priority over attending hui and wānanga. This has resulted in some difficulties when team members couldn’t be present as expected. In addition, the use of te reo Māori sometimes gave rise to feedback from participants that they did not understand the need for long explanations about meanings of the words in the waiata and haka and that it was boring.

Attrition of taitamariki participants and research team members proved to be a challenge, necessitating further rapport building with new participants at each hui or wānanga. Most of the tamariki and taitamariki participants in the project have had experience of suicide or self-harm either for themselves or their whanau and/or friends. Role-playing scenes where participants might relate to the difficult situations enacted could trigger emotions previously suppressed. It has been necessary to incorporate a Safety Plan to ensure participants are safe if they are triggered emotionally and physically. However, we have noted significant instances of increased self-esteem and self-confidence in several of the participants. As one of the research team members noted, *“You just have to love them”*. But we also noted that

this kind of mahi requires long-term commitment and a strong network of people willing to make this kind of commitment.

The *He Ara Toiora* project culminates in a performance for whānau and friends in April, with an analysis hui scheduled for late April 2016. The *Kokiritia te ora* project will continue through to June 2017. The data collected will provide important insights into how this type of engagement with taitamariki might enhance resilience and decrease the high rate of youth suicide throughout the Ngātiwai rohe and Tai Tokerau. Most importantly however, these are not just statistics, they are Ngātiwai tamariki, taitamariki and their whānau. Our ultimate goal is this - *Kia rere ora pai ngā tai o Ngātiwai* - that the tides of Ngātiwai flow with well-being.

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Whāngarei Anglican Care Trust. See <http://www.whgcare.org.nz/index.html>

GLOSSARY

Aroha	Love, affection, empathy
Hapū	Sub-tribe
Hīkoi	Walk or excursion
Hui	Meeting/gathering for discussion
Iwi	Tribes
Kaiako	Teacher, instructor
Karakia	Ritual incantation, prayer
Kaumatua	Elder
Kaupapa	Topic, programme
Kuia	Respected female elder
Mamae	Feelings of sadness/emotional distress
Manaaki	Hospitality
Manuhiri	Visitor, guest
Matua	Father, uncle, in recent times used as a respectful honorific for an adult male
Moana	Ocean
Pūrākau	Legend, myth
Taitamariki	Young adults
Tamariki	Children
Tangaroa	Lord of the sea
Tangi	Funeral
Te Ao Māori	Māori world
Te reo Māori	The Māori language
Te reo Māori me ona tikanga	The Māori language and its accompanying customs

Tikanga	Custom, correct procedure
Tupuna	Ancestor
Waiata	Song/sing
Wānanga	Place, experience or environment where important topics are learnt.
Whaea	Mother, aunt, in more recent times used as a respectful honorific title for an adult female.
whakataukī	Proverb, significant saying
Whānau	Extended family, family group, sometimes used for members of a group with a common purpose, to include those who may not have any family ties to others in the group.
Whenua	Land

Appendix Two: Dowsett, G. (2016). Project Report (unpublished). Whangarei: Ngātiwai Education.

Project Report

Ngatiwai Trust Board

The research we undertook for this project took us on a long and arduous journey into the life of Ngatiwai teenagers in 2015/2016. The research was imperative in this community because of the high suicide rate among Ngatiwai youth and because of a call from whanau in this rohe as well as from the clinical community that supports them. It was identified early on that the research team would become the teina and the taitamariki would become the tuakana where the youth culture was the focus. What was learnt from them over the research period was phenomenal and sometimes scary, but rich data evolved.

The kaupapa Maori research approach was embraced mostly because it was the way the research team needed to work with Ngatiwai taitamariki but also because we identified action research and te Ao Maori very early on in the research design. As a way of having taitamariki open up to explore situations and life choices, through their own identity, and to give them tools and confidence, drama was the predominant toiora engaged with using visual art and toi whakaari when specific ideas could better be expressed and explored.

In this project report, a review of the methodology and subsequent data outcomes will show many highs and lows as this project was navigated. The summary of these highs and lows, written as successes and challenges, will show that as a project, it was successful when aligned with the goals of the research, but also that there is a long way to go in terms of supporting young Maori to be successful in avoiding the journey taken for way too many, culminates in taking their own life, or at least, having thoughts of this tragic act.

Alongside the research and student voice, was a plan to build research capacity in Kaupapa Maori Action research among Ngatiwai uri, under te uara o whanaungatanga,

kotahitanga, manaakitanga, ūkaipō, and rangatiratanga. If this outcome was achieved, it was within the rich and informative narrative of youth culture, mana tangata, korero taitamariki, video stories, personal story boards, spoken word poetry, and much more. I do not think this was specifically addressed with staff of Te Au Here o Tūkaiaia or with Ngātiwai Uri.

Another desired outcome of the project was to construct a tribal narrative around issues of youth suicide. This became a huge piece of work and we have very detailed korero from taitamariki which fits into the boundaries of this outcome, but we now realise the boundaries are enormous and fluid for taitamariki. A tribal narrative of historical issues around youth suicide is one thing, and some of that korero was recorded, but truthfully, the young people we worked with were very focussed on their own lives, challenges, friends whanau, school mates, cousins, ...all who had a personal journey with similar experiences. The common thread for these students was social media, bullying, loneliness, despair, all of which could occur at any time of the day or night, and a rollercoaster of emotions that could change their state of mind many times within a short time period. We can only imagine how harrowing it is to say this explains a normal day in their life.

So our focus then became an acknowledgement of the reality of life for these taitamariki in 2016, but also to explore kaupapa Maori theories of what could be good coping strategies. Our richest resources are our people in Maoridom, and we were frequently blessed to have kaumatua and kuia along on our wananga to just be there and to allow our interactions to be incredibly natural. We are all used to the life on a Marae and it was never a problem to the young people opening up about their personal journeys or indeed struggles, as they knew everybody that was there, had given up their time and whanau to support this kaupapa from a place of aroha. We were reminded of the different phases of mauri by a clinician who came along to some of our wananga. She talked about the states of being and explained to the group about the way we as maori move between the states frequently. When explaining mauri in a simple way, it is an important part of wairuatanga, of spirituality from a Maori perspective. We believe that everything has a mauri, the rivers, the mountains, the trees, as well as those with a beating heart. This is because we are all equal with everything around us, with mauri

being the connector. This then explains connectedness and interrelationships amongst all things. (Tikanga – Societal Lore, Māori ki Ōtāgo 2010.)

From there we built the concept of three stages of mauri into a context that had been our theme throughout the wananga. Youth sharing the life challenges that they face in today's world, that can lead to suicide. The drama tutor created many different dramaturge experiences using conventions and techniques through the elements appropriate for this kaupapa. The teaching was minimal and these drama tools were introduced as and when they were helpful only. The need for interacting and involving youth in all activities so that the results are their voice and not influenced by adults, meant the journey rather than the performance was the main focus. Taitamariki and leaders were given experiences of describing mauri and the states of mauri moe, mauri oho and mauri ora, through drama, through personal experience, through photos and through korero. By then it was expected that had basic knowledge and understanding of mauri and the skills of drama and performance needed to present their understanding in a context that they co-wrote in their groups.

“The processes of writing, talking, listening and reflecting, invite hearts and minds to connect, apply and internalise, holding the prospects of moving understandings to greater heights.”

(Mauri – Rethinking Human Wellbeing - Taina Whakaatere Pohatu)

Alongside the 3 one-minute performances from each group, a spoken-word poem was constructed from the korero of Ngatiwai taitamariki throughout all wananga. The korero was sorted into mauri moe, mauri oho and mauri ora and presented by a volunteer group of young people. The programme of the presentation was designed and performed by all roopu members and was co-constructed from the many activities that we have all participated in throughout the 6 wananga. Please see the programme at the end of this report for reference. It was lovely to be involved with this performance but it was a bit “hit-and-miss” mostly because the attendance of taitamariki and team leaders was fluid throughout the 6 wananga to say the least. Very few were there at all wananga so the concept of building on prior learning was challenging. Thankfully, by the sixth wananga, there were some who had grasped the skills and ideas, and with a small amount of feedback from the tutor. The presentations to the manuhiri were understood

and appreciated for the ideas that the groups intended. The feedback was powerful and heartfelt, giving a review of the performances with deep understanding so many congratulations to the young people who began this journey with no understanding of the tools of drama, but after 6 wananga, moving manuhiri in a way that we did not expect. Marsden, (cited in *Mauri – Rethinking Human Wellbeing* - Taina Whakaatere Pohatu) MAI Review, 2011, 3 Page 1 of 12 <http://www.review.mai.ac.nz>) has suggested that a person can control their state of mauri if they are connected with their centre.

“All subjects, no matter how specialised, must be connected with that centre where our most basic convictions are found”.The centre is where a person must create for himself an orderly system of ideas about himself and his universe in order to give direction and purpose to his life. and he will exhibit a sureness of touch that comes from inner clarity. (Marsden in Royal, 2003, p. 27)”

All in all this research experience has been harrowing but incredibly rewarding and very, very informative. The openness of taitamariki to willingly share their stories and experiences was like gold and the drama and other experiences planned throughout the wananga; hikoi to mana whenua at each marae; hip-hop dancing; spoken work poetry; breathing yoga; visualization; swimming; group games; waiata; kapa haka and much more, really showed how much the world has to offer to help us find our centre and create our own state of mauri ora. Very loudly and strongly, we have been told by the roopu, that being together and practicing the uara of our ancestors, is the most effective way to support them through any rough patches. Using social media in a very positive way with manaakitanga, awhi and arohatanga, and shutting down negative and bullying korero where possible, will have positive effects. To continue the wananga in some form or other, so we can all continue to support each other, taitamariki and adults alike, treating everyone as family and not shunning anyone no matter what, that is what the roopu have taught us, the researchers. Are we open to this learning, are we researching in a kaupapa maori way or inflicting other ideals and values onto these young people?

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Whakakotahi Aoteara Whakapiri

He ara toiora

Performance Programme

Tukaiaia Whakatauki	Matua Rod
Tukaiaia formation	Roopu
Nga Iwi E in formation	Roopu
Mauri Moe – Mauri Oho – Mauri Ora	Rod
Waiata	Ismalia/Brezae/Jodi/Geri
Our journey and the significance of Mauri	Whaea Lily
Mauri Moe - Spoken Word Poetry	Monique/Brezae/Clayanne/Kaya/Aisha/Ismalia
Drama segments depicting Mauri Moe	Roopu
Poetry - Growing up	Cinta
Mauri Oho – Spoken Word Poetry	Monique/Brezae/Clayanne/Kaya/Aisha/Ismalia
Drama segment depicting Mauri Oho	Roopu
Poetry - Growing up and understanding	Matua Wi
Rangi's Waiata for his Mum	Rangi
Pukana	Sarah/Te Waka
Mauri Ora – Spoken word Poetry	Monique/Brezae/Clayanne/Kaya/Aisha/Ismalia
Drama depicting Mauri Ora	Roopu
Ki Mai	Leaders & Roopu
Haka	Taitama Tane
Original Waiata	
Whakakotahi Aotearoa Whakapiri	He Ara Toiora Roopu

Gayle Dowsett - Director