



# Mātauranga in Practice: Kaupapa Māori Frameworks in Ngā Tikanga Whānaketanga – He Arotake Tuhinga

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When we translate 'mātauranga' as a Māori word, it means 'knowledge, wisdom, understanding or skill' (Moorefield 2011). When we consider mātauranga as a concept, it means we draw meaning from a Māori world view that interrelates with other concepts such as whakapapa (genealogy/histories) and tikanga (protocols based on values and mātauranga).

This article explains how Ara Taiohi – as a Tiriti-based organisation – privileged mātauranga to create two kaupapa Māori frameworks. The first was developed for the overall review of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA: Ministry of Youth Affairs 2002). The second was developed to frame Ngā Tikanga Whānaketanga – He Arotake Tuhinga: A Review of Aotearoa New Zealand Youth Development Research (Deane, Dutton and Kerekere 2019).

The following largely summarises our introduction to *He Arotake Tuhinga* (2019:7-14), where we look to Te Ao Māori youth development principles to produce a mātauranga-based framework for youth development policy and practice. Using the *He Awa Whiria – Braided Rivers* model (Superu 2018), *He Arotake Tuhinga* weaves mātauranga Māori with Aotearoa New Zealand-based research produced from other knowledge systems such as Pasifika and Western science. Once produced, *He Arotake Tuhinga* added to the mātauranga that helped shape the kaupapa Māori framework for the youth development principles of Mana Taiohi.

## The YDSA & Building Strengths Review

The YDSA and its accompanying literature review (McLaren 2002), provided a common policy platform to guide policy decisions and initiatives focused on young people (12-24 years). The YDSA itself was informed by extensive feedback from young people, youth workers, youth policymakers and other youth development experts across the country. While it was originally aimed at government agencies and service providers, the YDSA offered a vision, goals and principles for the

youth development sector. These principles provided the foundation for *The Code of Ethics for Youthwork in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Code of Ethics: Ara Taiohi 2011), and the competencies for accreditation by Aotearoa New Zealand's first professional association for Youth Workers, Korowai Tupu o Ara Taiohi (Ara Taiohi 2019). They have also shaped the core content of youth development education with certificates, diplomas and degrees requiring graduates to have knowledge of the YDSA. As such, they have provided a working definition of 'youth development' for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Nevertheless, the YDSA attracted critiques from Māori youth development scholars who argued it was Eurocentric in orientation with no visibility of mātauranga Māori (Keelan 2002, 2014; Ware 2009; Ware and Walsh-Tapiata 2010). This was particularly so for the research that informed the YDSA, because it focused on youth development from a narrow, Westernised and predominantly psychological perspective of individualised development. Youth voices and minority youth experiences were notably absent. The absence of a Te Ao Māori perspective of youth development was a glaring omission for a literature review meant to support the development of a strategy meant to be bicultural, and where the first principle highlighted the obligations we have to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi), as the nation's founding constitutional document.

## Kupenga Kete Framework for the Review of the YDSA

In order to encompass the range of contributions for the overall review of the YDSA and to reflect calls for a kaupapa Māori and Treaty-based concept, Elizabeth Kerekere (then Co-Chair, Ara Taiohi), developed the Kete Kupenga framework. She was inspired by the pictured kete woven by Gisborne artist, Toni Sadlier, which uses a kupenga (fishing net) weave. (reproduced in full from Deane et al. 2019:7-9).



The Kete Kupenga framework features a loose diamond weave which starts simply and develops into an intricate knot where double strands meet. The four double strands feeding into the knot represent the components of intersectional youth development, Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview), Taiohi (young people), Kaimahi (people who work with young people) and Mātauranga (knowledge, research). The knots themselves represent key points of whakapapa in those intersections such as events or publications. The space between the weave represents wairua, time and place. It builds on and contextualises the Whatu Raranga strategic framework of Ara Taiohi (Kerekere 2010) which features woven items to represent strategic goals: Rourou: connect the sector – whakawhanaungatanga; Kete: raise the standards – whakamanatanga; Korowai: champion youth development – taiohitanga; and Waikawa: promote sustainability – rōnakitanga.

Te Ao Māori strands are reflected in the use of te reo Māori and Māori frameworks. In addition to gathering Māori voices across all of the strands, Ngā Tikanga Whānaketanga – He Arotake Tuhinga (roughly translated as “document review on the principles of youth development”) is guided by Māori youth and community development models.

Taiohi strands are reflected in the survey that was conducted by youth-led organisation, ActionStation (2018), Ngā Kōrero Hauora o Ngā Taiohi, that engaged over 1000 young people and youth development professionals to examine what youth well-being looks like in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Ministry of Youth Development also facilitated a youth focus group (2019). He Arotake Tuhinga was informed by taiohi Māori critiques of the YDSA, and young people took part in the Pacific talanoa.

The Kaimahi strands are reflected in a national online survey and a workshop with over 300 participants at Involve 2018, the national youth development conference. In 2019, a series of regional consultations with young people and people who work with young people were held across the country. Alongside the regional hui, were specific hui for Ngā Kaihoe, Māori working with young people, with one talanoa for Pasifika youth practitioners and young people.

The Mātauranga strands are reflected in He Arotake Tuhinga and in the evidence review of the youth development landscape that was conducted by the Centre for Social Impact (CSI 2018). CSI's review reflected on the status and relevance of the YDSA since its introduction; characteristics of effective youth development programmes, such as early intervention, youth mentoring; and inclusion of whānau and community. The review also presented findings from

Involve 2018, and a smaller co-design workshop involving civil servants and practitioners interested in child and youth well-being.

## Developing a Framework for He Arotake Tuhinga

With a huge range of Aotearoa-based youth research available 17 years on, and awareness of the existing YDSA critiques, we enlisted a group of research-engaged youth development experts as sounding boards. Based on their feedback and critique, we agreed that the scope and structure of He Arotake Tuhinga feature:

- A Te Ao Māori orientation that engages with Māori youth development
- Attention to other diversity and equity perspectives (eg Pasifika, Disability, LGBTIQ)
- Aotearoa New Zealand research
- Multidisciplinary perspectives and qualitative research
- Direct perspectives of young people, marginalised young people, and people who work with them
- A loose organising structure based on the existing YDSA principles, while remaining open to additional principles or frameworks supported by research.

We then began categorising literature according to the existing YDSA principles, as recommended, while noting some of the challenges we encountered in doing this. In particular, we initially struggled to categorise young people's experiences of identity exploration and development within the contexts of family/whānau, peers, culture, sexuality, gender, programme and community participation, and a globalised world. The description of the third YDSA principle that “youth development is based on a consistent strengths-based approach” was also limiting with respect to categorising relevant research.

We saw that a strengths-based approach cuts across many of the YDSA principles and we considered that the organising frames used for He Arotake Tuhinga should collectively represent a strengths-based approach.

## Inspiration from Ngata and Māui

The three authors then met to discuss these challenges and opted to set the YDSA principles aside. In a creative process, we began by reviewing the principles discussed in Māori youth development literature by Keelan (2002, 2014) and Ware (Ware, 2009; Ware & Walsh-Tapiata, 2010) — researchers that have explicitly critiqued the YDSA from a tangata whenua perspective and challenged us to first look to Māori approaches.

Keelan's (2002) *Taiohi Māori Development Toolkit*, developed as part of a set of resources associated

with the YDSA and to inform a national youth suicide strategy, takes its inspiration from Sir Apirana Ngata's whakataukī – E Tipu e Rea. Keelan's full text on Māori Youth Development, Nga Reanga, draws on lessons from pūrākau (stories) of Māui, and inspiration from whakataukī and mātauranga Māori concepts (2014 pV). Her MĀUI model of youth entrepreneur development proposes that development stems from:

- Mauri (the inherent life force or spark)
- Mana (authority derived from relationships with others)
- Āta (careful reflection and planning) and
- Arataki (leadership).

Ware (2009) also used Māui pūrākau to identify constructs that were relevant to taiohi Māori and guide discussions about tikanga (cultural values) and āhuatanga (characteristics or qualities). Ware and Walsh-Tapiata's research emphasised the importance of:

- Mana (collective integrity and responsibility)
- Manaakitanga (collective wellbeing) and
- Whanaungatanga (relationship building).

### Te Whare Takatāpui

We then considered Kerekere's research (2015, 2017a, 2017b) that discusses youth development from a takatāpui (Māori with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics) perspective. Her definition of takatāpui speaks to:

- Whakapapa (descent from ancestors with sexual and gender fluidity),
- Mana (authority and power to be who we are)
- Identity (claiming all of who we are – culture, gender, sexuality and ability), and
- Inclusion (unity across all iwi, genders, sexualities and sex characteristics).

Kerekere's Whare Takatāpui model (2017b) describes a place of well-being and safety that addresses the historical impact of colonisation on people with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics. It incorporates values of:

- Wairua (interconnectedness of all things in the universe particularly ancestors and atua)
- Mauri (life spark, identity choice and expression)
- Mana/Mana Wāhine (restoration of gender balance and the basis of eliminating homophobia, transphobia and biphobia)
- Tapu (maintaining safety and boundaries)
- Tikanga (processes based on sound mātauranga).

### Maia Model

Te Ora Hou's model of practice with youth and whānau shares a great deal with the above

frameworks. Their Maia model emphasises concepts based on Durie's essential principles for Māori whānau and community wellbeing, and the Circle of Courage, a well-known youth development model grounded in Native American principles (Baxter et al 2015; Brendtro 2014; Te Ora Hou 2011; Wayne Francis Charitable Trust – Youth Advisory Group 2011). The core of the model illustrates essential ingredients for identity, belonging and support of young people as embedded in whānau, hapū and iwi, including:

- Ohaoha (generosity and contribution)
- Pukengatanga (mastery and competence through elder-youth mentoring relationships) and
- Mana Motuhake (independence and mastery).
- These ingredients are nourished through Whakamana (empowerment and participation)
- Whakatakato Tikanga (future planning)
- Manaakitia (whānau care)
- Pupuri taonga (effective resource management)
- Whakapūmau Tikanga (cultural integrity and affirmation), and
- Whakawhanaungatanga (whānau consensus and cohesion).

### A New Framework

Taking all of these models into account and considering the research we had already amassed in relation to the existing principles, we distilled a kaupapa Māori youth development framework for He Tuhinga Arotake that consisted of:

- Mauri (potential, passion and identity)
- Mana (agency, integrity and inborn value deserving of respect)
- Manaakitanga (care, generosity and investment in relationships where the collective responsibility lies with the side with greater power or authority); and
- Whanaungatanga (inherent need for connection, sense of belonging and positive relationships, particularly with those considered whānau)
- Interconnectedness is also represented through Whakapapa (systems that link cultural heritage, historical events, stories, and policies that have culminated in the here and now)

Finally, Mātauranga speaks to the importance of sharing the valuable knowledge we have accumulated from different perspectives and different sources over time to inform the way forward.

In this way, research literature, consultation feedback and the existing principles mutually informed the kaupapa Māori framework for He Arotake Tuhinga.

## Whakamutunga

The six kaupapa Māori concepts: Whakapapa, Mauri, Mana, Manaakitanga, Whanaungatanga, and Mātauranga derived for He Arotake Tuhinga arose out of a kaupapa Māori process. Although the Mātauranga principle aligns closely with the sixth YDSA principle “youth development needs good information,” they are not direct translations of the six existing YDSA principles. Instead, the concepts reframe the principles of youth development moving forward – now encapsulated in Mana Taiohi.

These concepts provide a framework for weaving together the rich, diverse and multidisciplinary research that now exists on youth development within Aotearoa New Zealand. However, there continues to be limited youth development research on the experiences of Asian, migrant and refugee, and Rainbow young people, young people with disabilities, those living rural contexts, and those who face compounding challenges due to their intersecting marginalised identities. We need more research on effective youth participation and on young people and the digital world, given increasing acknowledgement of the centrality of these experiences for young people today.

Big picture effects and trends are only one small part in the mātauranga of youth development. Young people in Aotearoa New Zealand are better served through multidisciplinary, multi-method, and multicultural research that incorporates multiple stakeholder perspectives. As the Kete Kupenga framework, the Mana Taiohi principles and He Awa Whiria suggest, the outcome is strongest when we weave the information produced through research and evaluation with the mātauranga gained through cultural and practice wisdom, direct experiences and stories.

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