



**poutama pounamu** equity, excellence and belonging

learning and achieving for the future

cultural identity strong and secure

## **POUTAMA POUNAMU: DRAWING FROM KAUPAPA MĀORI THEORIES**

### **Resistance and revitalisation**

Kaupapa Māori emerged from both a proactive movement of resistance to the hegemony of colonisation and the need to revitalise Māori language and culture.

Aspirations of self-determination, to embrace a Māori worldview and use the Māori language and metaphors to illuminate transformation are seen as essential.

At its heart, kaupapa Māori relates to 'being Maori' and is deeply connected to Māori principles and philosophy.

Kaupapa Māori takes for granted the legitimacy and validity of the beliefs and practices of Māori, the Māori language and the cultural, intellectual, political and the social legitimacy of Māori people.

### **Key principles**

Distinguished Professor Graeme Smith identified the following key principles within Kaupapa Māori:

1. tino rangatiratanga (the principle of self-determination);
2. taonga tuku iho (the principle of cultural aspiration);
3. ako Māori (the principle of culturally preferred pedagogy);
4. kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga (the principle of socio-economic mediation);
5. whānau (the principle of extended family structure);
6. kaupapa (the principle of collective philosophy);
7. Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the principle of the Treaty of Waitangi) and
8. āta (the principle of growing respectful relationships).

Professor Linda Smith extended upon these principles when describing Kaupapa Māori as it applied to de-colonising research methodologies:

1. the principle of whakapapa or the relationships between all things;
2. the principle of te reo as a vehicle for articulating the Māori world view;

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3. the principle of tikanga Māori or how one behaves in a Māori world;
4. the principle of rangatiratanga or autonomy;
5. and again, the principle of whānau.

**Ongoing dialogue** Poutama Pounamu endorses and adds to these principles in the Ako: critical cycle of change.

We include the principle of mauri ora – establishing ways to uplift wellbeing so that the mind is open, alert and inquiring, and the body is fit-for-purpose and free of pain.

We include the principle of whānau – opening up ways to benefit from the enduring stories and ways of knowing and relating that link whānau (family and extended family) to the land, waterways and mountains of their tribal region. These stories are part of the oral heritage of each hapū (sub-tribe) with connections still explicitly made during introductions and formal speechmaking on the marae (cultural meeting space). Connections between the past and the present are also recounted and maintained through multiple literacies such as waiata (songs), purākau (stories), pepeha (tribal saying), whakairo (carvings) and various other taonga tuku iho (gifts handed down i.e. cultural heritage).

We include the principle of ako - where the cultural responsibility and reciprocity of learners and teachers are involved in shared, conjoint construction of new understandings, skills and knowledge. Principles such as these ensure that we can engage in ongoing dialogue at multiple levels, always building from relational points of knowing. The principle of ako, provides us with opportunities to learn and reframe, to teach and share knowledge, to build and rebuild so that we are always moving towards a stronger, more enlightened position with others.

## **Decolonisation**

Kaupapa Māori challenges Western ideas of what constitutes valid knowledge. Rather than abuse and degrade Māori ways of knowing, it allows Māori communities to take ownership and support the revitalization and protection of all things Māori. This enables Māori to take a proactive role in bringing about the changes that they identify as being important, and taking responsibility for transforming their own situation. Therefore, they can reposition away from deficit positions about their status within colonisation, to positions of agency.