Hei Tikitiki
Traditional Māori Rites of Passage
& Youth Development
Te Ora Hou Aotearoa

1975
- DUNEDIN
- WAIKATO
- Taranaki
- Whangarei
- Murihiku

1980
- PORIRUA
- Hutt Valley
- Wellington

1990
- WHAKATANE
- TAMAKI
- STOKES VALLEY
- HERETAUNGA
- TAURANGA
- KIRIKIRIROA
- WHANGANUI

1996
- TE TAIRAWHITI

2000
- BLENHEIM
- HAWAI'I

2007
- MOTUEKA
Current Services

• weekly club programmes, small group mentoring
• home visitation, school liaison, transition and advocacy services
• teen parent support and education
• early childhood education (for tamariki of teen parents)
• alternative education and youth development day programmes
• community development, research, events and neighbourhood advocacy
• youth offending reduction programmes and support services
• social enterprise
MĀIA : The Way We Roll

CIRCLE OF COURAGE

WHAKAPŪMAU WHĀNAU
Hei Tikitiki
Māori Rites of Passage & Youth Development Research Project
Project Whakapapa

Te Ora Hou youth workers identified:
- unhealthy and/or unhelpful contemporary rites of passage;
- a gap in our knowledge about traditional rites of passage;
- few opportunities for access to the practices of our forebears;
- a shrinking window of time within which we could solicit stories from pakeke/kaumatua.
Project Whakapapa

- Survey of existing literature produced few resources specific to our areas of interest.
- Project proposal to investigate issues, build our knowledge and share the findings.
- Successful application was made to the Lottery Community Sector Research Fund for assistance.
Project Assumptions

1. Within traditional Māori societies there were child-rearing and youth development practices based on some common principles.
2. Some of these practices and the underlying principles may be unfamiliar to Māori youth workers and others.
3. Some of these principles and practices may be useful to inform contemporary youth development practice within Māori communities.
4. Kaumātua may be willing and able to provide some of their experiences and understanding of traditional practices and principles that will be of use to current and future generations.
Literature Review

Three key contexts for rangatahi development:

- **Urungatanga** – day to day exposure to common practices, knowledge & values

- **Pukengatanga** – special mentoring between an elder and a child

- **Whare Wānanga** – specialist training / apprenticeship
Literature Review

Two key findings:

Rites of passage...

- are the primary mechanism by which a community or culture ensures that its members have acquired the knowledge, skills and values necessary to be healthy, contributing adults in their society;

- are not for the benefit of the individual participating in the process but exist for the benefit of the community and culture to which s/he belongs.
Literature Review

Five lessons that male initiation teaches:

Life is hard.
You are not that important.
Your life is not all about you.
You are not in control.
You are going to die.

Five lessons that contemporary consumer culture teaches:

Life should be easy.
You are the most important person in the world.
Your life should be all about looking after you.
You should be in control of everything you can be.
You could live forever.

Interviews

- 30 interviews with pakeke/kaumātua/kuia
- Taitokerau, Tairāwhiti, Whanganui, Otautahi
- identified via whānau connections & local networks
- some well known nationally/locally, others less well known
- most raised with Te Reo as first language at home and in the community, others had little exposure to Te Reo

Mowhia Kerehoma (1927 – 2010)
Interviews

• most grew up in communities where Te Reo me ona Tīkanga still dominant
• only a few had direct experience of rites of passage rituals that have origins in pre-contact times
• many felt their experience was more a general process of development rather than an explicit event or an intentional set of lessons
• many wider issues touched on that put the rites of passage kōrero into a cultural, historical and social context
Interviews

Themes covered:
• pre-natal / birthing traditions and naming rites
• home and family life
• growing up with material deprivation
• food production / chores around the home
• adolescence, role changes, milestones & rites of passage
• education and employment
• mentors
• words of wisdom
• important relationships
• discrimination
• church and marae experiences
• Te Reo
• Tikanga, Wairuatanga and other traditions
• Te Ao Hou
Common Themes

Maramatanga / Essential Values:
• manaakitanga (hospitality)
• respect for and valuing the guidance of elders
• strong work ethic
• personal integrity
• contribution to the wellbeing of the whole community
• respect and care for the natural environment and other creatures
Common Themes

Mātauranga / Essential Knowledge:
• whakapapa (genealogy and how different whānau, hapū and iwi are connected)
• wahi tapu (sacred places, battle-sites)
• wahi kai (food sources)
• astrology, astronomy and patterns of natural phenomenon that guide certain activities
• roles and responsibilities of particular whānau within the hapū
• cross-cultural comparisons
**Common Themes**

Pukengatanga / Essential Skills:
- cultivating food
- hunting and collecting food
- preparing and storing food
- communication skills (whaikōrero/karanga/kōrero/karakia)
- hosting skills
- house building
- martial arts
- creative arts and crafts
- caring for the natural environment
Key Learnings

• Rites of passage can occur before birth, they can have wide-ranging implications not only on the individual but on the community that they are a part of.
• Family responsibilities and events (e.g. birth, tangihanga and marriage) are important milestones in shifting attitudes and roles within families.
• Cultural rights and responsibilities are core rites of passage and for Māori include things like taking on new roles on the marae such as whaikōrero, karanga, and responsibility for hosting others.
• Being gifted land or tuku whenua is a rite of passage, requiring new responsibilities for resources handed down through generations to care, nurture and grow.
Key Learnings

• Assume some meaningful connection exists between the participant and their kāinga, whenua and hapū
• Enhances expertise in tribal history and skills in karakia, waiata tawhito and tauparapara.
• Marae as physical and spiritual places play an important role in facilitating rites of passage for all age groups (from working in the kitchen to sitting on the taumata)
• Work and service is a rite of passage, even for children
• Passage from childhood to adulthood was marked by work – not only paid employment but responsibilities for making a contribution around the home, on the farm, at the marae and in the wider community.
Key Learnings

• Food production and preparation involved many rites of passage, particularly in communities with little reliance on monetary trading systems.
• Going to paid work, going to war, leaving home were all important rites of passage.
• Dances, fashion and biological changes around puberty were opportunities to transition from a state of child to maturity.
• Birthdays had little importance as rites of passage for most interviewees.
• Many rites of passage can be religious in origin and the churches provided some formal examples through confirmation, first communion and baptism.
Key Learnings

• Mentors within the immediate family and wider community were very important facilitators of developmental opportunities for most interviewees.
• Reliance on the older generation for advice to transition into adulthood seems to no longer be considered necessary by the current generations.
• In this contemporary context very few healthy rites of passage are celebrated today.
Case Study

A contemporary example of some of the traditional relationships between family and community members, the land, food and wider environment can be found at St. Francis Farm in the Hokianga:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=mf4iLx0GM-c
What have we done with it?

- feedback to interviewees & communities
- using similar questions in whānau planning
- being more intentional about ensuring key values are imbedded in TOH activities
- reflecting on the things we think are important
- reflecting on our own whānau processes
MĀIA : The Way We Roll

CIRCLE OF COURAGE

WHAKAPŪMAU WHĀNAU