PEKA – Hauora Workstream Evaluation

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He oranga ngākau, he pikinga waiora.

Positive feelings within you enhance wellbeing.

O le tele o sulu e maua ai figota.

Through collaboration, the most difficult challenges can be overcome.

This report describes an independent evaluation of the PEKA Hauora Workstream Project (hereafter called the project). Background to the report including brief descriptions of the education system within which the project sits, the project goals, and the purpose of the evaluation is described to set the scene of the project evaluation and report. Next, the evaluation team, evaluation data gathering, and analysis methods are explained. Findings are then discussed in relation to the evaluation purposes as outlined in the evaluation workplan.

Background

Ākonga are the true centre of education. Various policies, resources, research, expectations, and professional development opportunities impact on how schools operate to serve ākonga needs within the education system of Aotearoa New Zealand. National education priorities include ensuring ākonga Māori and Pacific heritage learners can experience educational success as Māori and as Pacific people respectively. Policy support documents that provide guidance for schools and teachers to work in ways consistent with these policies include Tātaiako[1], Tapasā[2], Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia[3] and the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030[4]. Also impacting mahi in many schools are professional development projects such as PB4L[5], Restorative Practice[6], Pause Breath Smile[7], and Te Ara Whakamana[8]. Related research impacting practice in schools and initial teacher education is wide ranging and includes the work of Bishop[9] and Rimoni and team[10], and models such as Te Whare Tapa Whā[11]. Such policies, professional development, and research are intended to positively impact on personal holistic wellbeing, readiness for learning, achievement, and safe, positive, and productive learning environments. The PEKA Hauora project sits within the wider context of

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[1] https://teachingcouncil.nz/assets/Files/Code-and-Standards/Tataiako-cultural-competencies-for-teachers-of-Maori-learners.pdf
[2] https://teachingcouncil.nz/assets/Files/Tapasa/Tapasa-Cultural-Competencies-Framework-for-Teachers-of-Pacific-Learners-2019.pdf
[3] https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/ka-hikitia-ka-hapaitia/
[4] https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/action-plan-for-pacific-education/
[5] https://pb4l.tki.org.nz/
[6] https://pb4l.tki.org.nz/PB4L-Restorative-Practice
[7] https://pausebreathesmile.nz/
[8] https://tearawhakamana.com/
[9] e.g., *Teaching to the North-East, Leading to the North-East*
[10] e.g., *Pacific Educators Speak: Valuing our Values*
[11] Durie, 1984

education policy and practice, with many PEKA schools drawing on the work of various combinations of related professional development and resources.

The project and evaluation report arrive at a pivotal time as the concept of 'intergenerational trauma' gains recognition, highlighting its influence on initiatives like the Hauora Project. Historically, inequities have deeply affected Māori and Pacific heritage learners, and these impacts persist today. Understanding that intergenerational trauma stems from colonisation[12] and is perpetuated through educational practices like streaming[13], ability grouping, and deficit theorising, we see the need for change. The education system has not served Māori and Pacific heritage people well, but recognising this trauma offers a path to healing and improvement for current and future generations of ākonga.

The PEKA Hauora project arose from a desire to find new ways to support the mental wellbeing, attendance, engagement, and educational success for vulnerable ākonga[14]. The PEKA Hauora project model draws on the Neurosequential Model in Education (NME) reframed in terms of Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Pasifika. The approach embodies a trauma informed approach to support healing from the after-effects of trauma, stress, and disadvantage to help overcome emotional and cognitive barriers to learning. Teachers and school leaders in some participating schools are participating in related professional learning and qualifications. PEKA sees potential for the Hauora Project to contribute to system-wide learning that can benefit ākonga in New Zealand schools, particularly in areas facing persistent disadvantage.

In early 2021 the project Co-leads, Kathryn Berkett and Lynda Knight-de Blois began the process of applying for Ministry of Education (MoE) Counselling in Schools funding[15]. They designed the project from their belief that children and youth in Porirua East schools would be most likely to respond to, and heal with, regular connection and support from people in their schools that they shared community and culture with, and with whom they felt safe. Their training and research led them to believe that this form of intervention was likely to be more effective than students seeing a counsellor or psychologist for a short time every so often. It became evident to them that the project would not meet the funding criteria, however, PEKA was successful in receiving an Urgent Response Fund (MoE) grant[16] which enabled a pilot project to be implemented in six schools from Term 3 2021. Following the successful pilot, additional PEKA schools have joined the project. Since 2021 all funding for the project has come from non-government sources.

Hauora Strategic Goal

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[12] Thom, R. R. M., & Grimes, A. (2022). Land loss and the intergenerational transmission of wellbeing: The experience of iwi in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Social science & Medicine, 296*, 114804. and Moana Jackson – e.g., see article and video about the co-authored book *Imaging Decolonisation* BWB Texts, 2020: https://e-tangata.co.nz/comment-and-analysis/moana-jackson-colonisation-and-the-suffering-of-children/ https://e-tangata.co.nz/comment-and-analysis/moana-jackson-decolonisation-and-the-stories-in-the-land/
[13] https://www.maorifutures.co.nz/research/research-item-one/ https://tokona-wp.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2024/08/Kokirihia-Annual-Report.pdf
[14] Information drawn from the *Evaluation of Hauora Programme* document.
[15] https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/changes-in-education/counselling-in-schools/
[16] https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/information-releases/issue-specific-releases/urgent-response-fund/

The overall strategic goal of the Hauora Project Workstream, within which the Hauora project sits, is to 'develop trauma informed practice'. To achieve the goal, the desired outcomes of the project are:

- Improved educator and leader understandings and practice about trauma informed practice and neuroscience[17]; to support
- Increased learner wellbeing, hauora[18], positive engagement, and learning.

Purposes of the Evaluation

The purposes of the evaluation were:

1. To test our results:
- To objectively describe the Hauora Project's impact on ākonga.
2. To define our tikanga and identify what we're achieving:
- To learn from the mahi of the participating schools and ākonga who have participated in the project.
- To pinpoint the things that really make a difference.
- To describe what good practice looks like across a range of schools.
3. To enquire and improve:
- To identify how the Hauora Project might evolve.
- What can we improve right now?
- What more – what are the next steps within schools and across the kāhui ako?
- What else – what other actions (outside the project) is required to support ākonga success?
- What's the best way to structure and deliver the project and related activities?
4. To inform long-term planning and funding:
- What can we do better?
- What next and what else?
- What do schools want to do individually, and what is best to do collectively?
- What resources are required to maintain the project?
- How do we measure performance and report achievements?
- To describe what good practice looks like across a range of schools.

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[17] Neuroscience – scientific study of the brain and its impact on behaviour and cognitive functions – how people think.
[18] hauora – Māori philosophy of health and wellbeing unique to Aotearoa, NZ. Taha Tinana (the physical dimension), Taha Hinegaro (the mental dimension), Taha Whānau (the family dimension), Taha Wairua (the spiritual dimension).

Evaluation Team

Dr Fuapepe Rimoni has experience in primary school teaching and currently works in primary and secondary initial teacher education and Master of Education programmes at Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington. Fuapepe's research focuses on Pacific learners' sense of belonging and identity within schooling environments.

Anne Somerville, Te Atiawa, Taranaki, Ngaruahine, has had a career in education including classroom teaching, advising, and working in the evaluation space. Anne is passionate about the positive achievement of Māori and Pacific children within their context and continually strives to connect whānau, schools, and educational places.

Jay Farris has experience in early learning, primary, secondary, and home school teaching and is a seasoned public servant and qualified community development practitioner and facilitator. Jay is a member of Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington's Initial Teacher Education Pacific Advisory Group. Her current work supports the capability building of educational providers, community groups, and teachers in Pacific immersion and bilingual education.

Dr Robin Averill has experience in secondary school teaching, primary and secondary initial teacher education, professional development, and research. Robin's work is strongly focussed on supporting achievement and wellbeing, in particular for ākonga Māori and learners of Pacific Nations heritage.

None of the evaluation team are directly involved in the implementation of the Hauora Project or the day-to-day work of the project schools. Anne was engaged by Glenview School for an unrelated project.

Method

The point of contact between the evaluation team and the project was Peter O'Connor, project fundraiser and factotum. Contact involved negotiation of focus questions to use in talanoa, interacting with school principals, and administrative communication.

Shared team thinking and decision making was used across all stages of the project, including in:

- identifying and refining interview questions,
- deciding on protocols for visiting schools and interview talanoa with ākonga, kaiārahi, kaitaki, and kaikokiri[19],
- determining a pilot school to test data gathering processes and tools,
- using pilot study data and processes to refine study questions and data gathering methods,
- analysis and report writing.

To maximise the quality of the data gained, pairs of evaluation team members visited each school together, one focussed on managing the discussion and the other on making notes of key ideas shared and capturing some verbatim quotes. Only qualitative data from talanoa interviews was

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[19] These are terms used in Peka Hauora documentation – In the report, we use ākonga, kaiārahi, school project lead, and principal as these seemed the most common terms for the roles that we came across in the schools.

collected for and used in this evaluation. Some artefacts such as goals setting sheets were shared with us but were not systematically collected. Between two to three hours were spent in talanoa within each school. Analysis was carried out by all team members reading all data several times to be fully immersed in the responses, several rounds of evaluator team discussions, the first after the pilot data gathering and then twice after all data was collected. A draft report was prepared and further discussion occurred across the team to ensure the draft reflected shared views.

A draft of the final report was shared with project leaders for fact checking and feedback.

Schools in the evaluation

Data for the evaluation was collected at 11 schools in the PEKA Hauora Project (Appendix 1). The duration of schools' participation in the project varied from one year to seven years. Across the schools, the target ākonga made up roughly 10% of each school's cohort.

Talanoa

Talanoa participants included 11 principals, four further school project leaders, 10 kaiārahi, and 32 ākonga (Appendix 1).

In addition, Lynda Knight De Blois and Kathryn Berkett were interviewed.

Ethics

Practices consistent with NZARE's Ethical Guidelines[20] were carefully adhered to.

Considerations

None of the evaluators are qualified practitioners in trauma informed practice or the NME, which may have led to some information being missed or misinterpreted. Talanoa were the only data source. We were not able to hear from all key people in every project school as it was not always convenient for schools to release each person or because of absence at the time of our visit. Further potential limitations of data gathering included:

- that talanoa were semi-structured,
- note taking priorities varied across schools, and
- different pairs of evaluators visited each school so there may be differences in the scope of the data collected from each school.

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[20] https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/education/pdf/nzare-ethical-guidelines.pdf

Findings

Findings are discussed in relation to the evaluation purpose questions. First, we focus on the impact of the Hauora Project. Next, we discuss how the project plays out in project schools, highlighting similarities and differences across schools. Key aspects of the project that made a positive difference for ākonga are a focus of this section. Third, we discuss how the project might evolve, raising possibilities for consideration. We close with a summary of key messages from the evaluation.

Hauora Project impact

Many of the project schools have been involved in a range of professional development projects over time (e.g., Restorative Practice, PB4L, Pause Breathe Smile, Te Ara Whakamana), some concurrent with the Hauora Project. Hence, it is difficult to be certain about which project caused which impacts, but it is likely that impacts of the Hauora project were enabled in part through previous projects helping create school cultures suitable for project implementation and success.

We start the findings section by sharing examples of what ākonga, kaiārahi, school project leads, and principals across many schools said to us about the project.

Ākonga, Principal and Kaiārahi voices

Ākonga shared many positive views of their involvement in the target ākonga groups, such as:

"I like how we take turns and share our ideas."

"We always get to do something different [in the group]."

"When I got angry, I started calming myself down – I closed my eyes and did breathing. The breathing gets the anger out of me."

"I do it when I get angry on my own."

"If I don't get asked to share in class, I say things to myself, then I whisper it, and I feel like I've had my turn."

"It's better learning in here than normal class because I like doing the learning."

"I'd be wagging if I wasn't here."

"It is easier to learn here, there's not so many people, it is not boring, we can use online games and programmes, and she gives us word searches."

"We feel safe here".

"We want to come back here next year."

"It is good as it is – no changes needed. If I get stuck, I ask the teacher, talk with my friends, and we work it out."

"We are learning about our feelings – anger, joy, sad, we discuss."

Evaluator: What is the sleeping lion game for?
Ākonga: Teaching us to be calm. We learn to be calm by doing belly breathing, pretend to paint a rainbow with our hands and breathing.

Principals also strongly endorsed the project, with comments such as:

"The project is important. Learning about managing emotions is important." (Principal)

"Magnificent project, it really is. It is the most transformative project I've seen." (Principal)

"Anything that helps, we want to keep staying in the mix." (Principal)

"Teachers are asking more appropriate questions –not 'what is wrong with that kid? Rather 'how can we support that kid?'" (Principal)

"Kaiārahi have the relationships with the children and know what they need." (Principal)

"Works very well for some children, not so well for others. Some have a very positive change in ability to articulate. Some children have a marked positive difference in their confidence, both within the group and around the school." (Principal)

Kaiārahi gave specific examples of the positive effects of the project on target ākonga, and the ways they assisted ākonga to learn and use regulation strategies:

"Before there was no regulation, none at all at any time. Now I'm not called into class as there is no dysregulation. Now they're better at dealing with it themselves." (Kaiārahi)

With time in the group, "children become more open about their home life – some of it is difficult to hear, but shows, for them, [the group] is a safe place and they open up." (Kaiārahi)

"We encourage children to use phrases like "use your words", "accidents happen", "have a cry, use your emotions, don't throw things, that's not ok." (Kaiārahi)

"We give students choices and provide options and encouragement and let student make decisions. We have fun with them, show aroha, care for them, play with them." (Kaiārahi)

Indicators of Project Success

Indicators of success of the project noticed across some, most, or all project schools include:

Ākonga:

- Target ākonga we spoke with knowing how to regulate and used the strategies and demonstrated these e.g., breathing, having a run.
- Target ākonga being more focussed on learning than previously.
- Improved target ākonga happiness, behaviour, and self-esteem.
- Naming of target groups (e.g., Ahi Kaa, Puāwai, Avengers) indicates ākonga ownership and the group being part of the school fabric.
- Substantial reductions, in some cases to none, of dysregulated behaviours, and other behavioural incidents reduced in length, severity, or nature (e.g., one school reported there no longer being any physical fights, with verbal interactions instead. In another, students are now working out how to sort their own challenge rather than continuing to seek kaiārahi or principal support.)

Whānau:

- Whānau at some schools communicating they are happy with what the school is doing for their child (e.g., "they only come to school because of the group")
- Whānau at some schools being prepared to listen to an engage with their child's kaiārahi on ways they can help support their child using strategies for regulation.

School project leadership:

- All schools we visited were happy to facilitate our data gathering visit.
- All school leaders value the project and want to continue with project components as a priority, including whether or not the project funding was able to be continued.
- All principals, school project leads, kaiārahi, and target ākonga were happy to speak with us openly.
- Teachers and non-target ākonga not being distracted by dysregulated behaviour.
- Some principals and teachers are doing further NME qualifications and professional development in their own time.
- One school "no longer needed" the target ākonga groups due to the school culture and climate created through project involvement.
- Some schools continue to have full staff professional development in trauma informed practice.

Hauora project's impact on ākonga in target groups

The project appears to be highly successful for the target ākonga. Across schools with target student groups working with kaiārahi, target ākonga we interviewed were positive about their involvement in the project. They highlighted their positive relationships with their kaiārahi and how participating in the target group was helping them to enjoy school and learn more. They enjoyed various target group activities including circle time, settling and bonding activities, talking about things they liked, games, and being outdoors. They talked about feeling safe at school and wanting to be in and stay in

the group. Additionally, ākonga shared that other students in the school wanted to join the target groups. They talked about their learning through the project including now having useful strategies for regulating their emotions, discussing their feelings, and knowing how to help themselves.

The target ākonga discussed using a range of regulation strategies including belly breathing, painting a rainbow in their mind, taking time out when they felt they needed to, knowing they had a specific place to go to have time out, such as a building, room, part of the playground, or couch. Some discussed strategies that helped them regulate their thinking and feelings, such as showing a target group card to their teacher to indicate they needed time out and knowing and using their personal plan and goals. Across groups, children talked about not getting angry when something happened that could make them angry or upset, but instead thinking about how they are feeling and recognising a need to spend some time to think about what was happening to them and consider strategies they could use to work towards deciding how to respond to the situation, having a sense of likely consequences of different responses. These children talked about enjoying and looking forward to learning. They knew their kaiārahi would listen to them, hear them, and be on their side.

Impacts of the project on target ākonga reported by kaiārahi, principals, and school project leads included these children being happier, more settled, more communicative, and more focussed on learning and supporting others than previously (Appendix 2).

Researchers found the target children across schools appeared to feel safe, comfortable, and happy to contribute in the talanoa with us and be themselves. These children seemed to be on a trajectory to being more introspective and understanding of how they were feeling and what triggers their emotions and how to approach calming down or seeking support.

A substantial reduction in the number of dysregulated incidents and the length and severity of these is shown in analysis of data collected across the PEKA Hauora schools group as part of the management and monitoring of the project. Our evaluation did not collect this type of quantitative data, however, the interview responses at each school regarding decreases in the numbers of incidents and length and severity of these was entirely consistent with this analysis.

Hauora project target ākonga we spoke with:

- Appreciated being in the target group and wanted to continue
- Knew why they were in the group
- Were open, honest, and in touch with their feelings
- Were bonded and comfortable with one another, took turns to speak, were caring about one another, inclusive, and their interactions indicated they had mostly good times and some more difficult times with one another – they were open about this and accepting of this
- Were positively engaged, happy to be at school and valued and enjoyed learning
- Explained the target group activities with some enthusiasm
- Explained their regulation strategies (e.g., belly breathing, painting a rainbow with their arms and breathing through it, taking time to think about the situation, taking time to be calm, removing themselves from a situation for a time)
- Some explained that they had helped friends use the strategies

- Had a strong positive relationship with their kaiārahi

We did not interview ākonga not identified as target children. However, principals, project leads, and kaiārahi reported positive impacts the project has had on non-target children across the school. These impacts include there being fewer disruptive incidents in classrooms, a calmer school environment, and, in some schools, other project actions such as instituting a calm and intentionally relational start to the school day. Teacher professional development in trauma informed approaches and increased use of classroom practices consistent with these contributed to these positive changes.

The evaluation team believe the Hauora Project to be highly successful in improving the hauora of target ākonga, and through this, enhancing the overall hauora of the project schools and learning and school experiences of non-target ākonga, as well as of teachers.

Hauora Project's tikanga

Learning from the mahi of participating schools

There is flexibility in how schools are able to implement the project. Most schools have one or two groups, each of around seven target ākonga working with kaiārahi, sometimes with daily roughly 40-minute sessions all together, sometimes several times each week (Appendix 2). In some schools the groups are combined with two kaiārahi working together across the two groups. In several schools kaiārahi are able to touch base with target children daily outside of the target group times, through interactions at breakfast club and through support in classrooms. The timing of target group meetings also varied across project schools, for example, with some schools choosing the start of the day and others choosing straight after lunch. There are some differences across schools in the people involved in identifying the target ākonga. In some schools, the principal decides, while in others, the principal decides in liaison with the kaiārahi or in liaison with kaiārahi and teachers.

All schools were deliberate and strategic about the timing to best work for the purposes of the project within their school context. In most schools, decisions were made at least annually about how to implement the project to maximise its effect – such as through choice of kaiārahi for the specific target ākonga needs, timing of the target group meetings, or location of the group meetings. Some schools used names for the target groups and in some cases, these were decided by ākonga. Most schools did not have a defined exit strategy or process to graduate ākonga from the target groups. Two schools have no target ākonga groups. Instead, they have a whole school focus on all teachers and kaiārahi being aware of the project focus and strategies and ākonga knowing who they can go to when they need to and how they can use regulation strategies.

Similarities of practice across target ākonga groups across schools included:

- Kaiārahi touching base daily with target ākonga one-to-one showing care and consistency
- Circle time including discussion about favourite things, talk about their day (e.g., three questions: something special, what did they learn today, thigs they like....)
- Ākonga being listened to
- Learning and practising regulation strategies (informally such as through modelling and repetition, formally through explicit instruction, or both)
- Kaiārahi providing high expectations, high support, and focussing on learning and the importance of learning, while incorporating a focus on fun
- Development of ākonga having fun and developing resilience through games and other activities which kaiārahi take part in with them and which naturally gave opportunities for emotion regulation in ways that maintained interpersonal respect and trust
- Most schools informing whānau that their child is in the group but not sharing much more information than this with whānau
- Strategic decisions made about the timing of target group meetings
- Half hour to 1 hour target group sessions with kaiārahi, except one secondary school which has gone beyond the project scope to have a designated full-time room and teacher

Differences in practice across target student groups across schools included:

- The make-up of groups (e.g., children who are silent and lack personal confidence and with loud dysregulated behaviour, girls' group and boys' group vs mixed gender group, younger children group and older children group vs mixed ages in a group, students with additional needs)
- The timing of the group (e.g., morning, start of school, or after lunch)
- The frequency of the target group times (e.g., once a day or twice a day for shorter check ins, or several times a week)
- Kaiārahi working with a group or with an individual ākonga
- The nature of activities (e.g., games Friday vs same schedule each day, using 'I feel happy when….' sentence starters, sharing around the whole circle in circle time vs sharing in pairs and reporting back to the whole group)
- The nature of artefacts and documentation (e.g., some schools had artefacts used by ākonga such as planning and goals co-constructed by ākonga with their kaiārahi and teacher, some kaiārahi kept written records, some did not)
- Incorporating cultural ways of being such as focusing on behaviour being consistent with cultural values and use of tikanga me te reo Māori (e.g., the ha ki roto, ha ki raro song)
- Whether or not there was an exit strategy or graduation from the group

Features of project implementation specific to each school include artefacts used, group naming, hauora focus vs hauora and curriculum learning focus, focus on behaviours being consistent with cultural values, whānau involvement, and naming of the kaiārahi role (Appendix 3).

Learning from ākonga who have participated in the project

Ākonga were honest and open in their responses in the talanoa discussion. They knew which activities they enjoyed and learnt from, which strategies worked well for them, and recognised that different ākonga preferred different strategies for regulation. They could describe how and when they used regulation strategies and how their interactions in school are different since they have been involved in the group with their kaiārahi. Some described sharing strategies they have learnt in the group with ākonga outside the group when they saw the strategies could be useful for them. They shared that other ākonga in the school wanted to join the group. Some had variable attendance in the group but knew they could attend when they wished to.

Key aspects that made a positive difference for ākonga and schools

The main aspect of the project that evaluators believe enables making a positive difference for ākonga and schools lies in the project focus on the holistic wellbeing of ākonga and a specific strategy to approach focussing on and developing this, including to help ensure each ākonga feels seen, heard, and valued. This approach is in contrast to a more traditionally Euro-centric punitive approach to dysregulated behaviour or doing nothing. Project strength appears to be maintained when the project is embedded in a school's way of doing things (e.g., principal or lead is actively engaged and thinking about and moving the project forward) and when there is evolving teaching practice to better respond to school contexts which include children who have experienced trauma. The positive difference being made in schools from the project seemed to be stronger in schools where all practitioners are part of this journey into recognising and responding to ākonga holistically rather than see the school's role as predominantly to develop cognition.

Secondly, another key aspect of the project evaluators see as crucial for its success is that kaiārahi and ākonga are suitably chosen, and that kaiārahi are empowered to do the job in the way they see best, their mahi and skills acknowledged. One school gave kaiārahi the name 'Social and Emotional coach' to help state and acknowledge their role. The target groups gave ākonga shared experiences of their new learning and a peer group to help support and reinforce these ideas. The group focus enabled kaiārahi to work with a number of ākonga at a time, through modelling and explicit explanations, encouragement, developing shared understanding and ownership of the ways their groups work together.

Understanding and use of trauma informed practice is fundamental to the success of the project. Ideally the whole school and whānau need a working understanding of this model, some understanding of the theory behind it, and working understanding of the regulation practices. The importance of this to the project was shown by the level of professional development schools and individual teachers and school leaders have been doing in NME and are continuing with.

Funding is essential for the success of this project. Funding use includes: kaiārahi time, rooming space in the school, resources for ākonga to use in target group time, staff professional development (kaiārahi, teachers, and other school staff). Schools were grateful for the project funding. Most schools reported topping up project funding through their operations grant money. Further project developments will need further funding to enable success. For example, more funding would be useful for each school for further compensation for project leader/kaiārahi planning time, communication/sharing across whole school, and sharing between schools.

Key aspects of the project the data indicate make a positive difference for target ākonga include the project's focus on:

- Strong ākonga 1-1 relationships with one or two community-linked kaiārahi who know them, care about them, and regularly listen to and support them
- Target ākonga understanding why they are in the target group in relation to the purpose of the project and what they are learning with their kaiārahi and peers
- Development of ākonga's strategies for identifying and regulating their emotions and actions
- Development of ākonga's strategies for listening to and caring about others, such as through circle time
- Positive feelings and experiences, such as through sharing about their favourite things, what makes them feel good
- Attention to the whole person, in relation to all aspects of Te Whare Tapa Whā, in attention, activities, and care
- Consistency between target ākonga experiences and learning in the target groups, their classroom, and more widely across the school

Key aspects of the project the data indicates make a positive difference for schools include:

- Funding time for kaiārahi to work with target ākonga
- Funding resources to enable kaiārahi work (e.g., rooming, resources/equipment/games)
- Flexibility for schools to implement the project in the ways that best suit current target ākonga needs and characteristics

- Highly suitable kaiārahi who are embedded in the wider school community
- Kaiārahi having autonomy to work in ways that are culturally appropriate and feeling strongly supported by the principal and school project lead
- Professional development in trauma informed practice of all school staff alongside school project leader or principal implementing related strategies across the school

What does project success look like?

- Happy school, happy children, happy teachers
- Target ākonga having positive relationships with school staff and school leaders
- Target ākonga being able to verbalise strategies for self-regulation, valuing that they can control their own needs, and being able to see when others could benefit from learning self-regulation strategies
- Target ākonga knowing a safe place to go to and safe adults to support their self-regulation when needed
- Kaiārahi having new ideas to include in their work with target groups and being able to connect with other kaiārahi
- Shared understanding of the project across the school
- Reduced frequency of dysregulated incidents
- Reduced severity and length of dysregulated incidents
- Increased calmness across the school
- Awareness of the positive impacts of the project in the school for specific ākonga and others (e.g., increase in attendance, positive emotions and behaviours, increase in learning disposition and learning, decrease in incidents disruptive to learning, decrease in negative behaviours, fewer stand downs, less need for principal intervention)
- Stakeholder belief in the benefits and importance of the project, such as shown by teachers undertaking further related study and qualifications

How the Hauora project might evolve

What are possible next steps within schools and across schools?

Project leads, principals, school project leads, and kaiārahi were asked what next steps might be for the project. The most common responses focussed around further sharing of and learning from practice across the project schools. Further school-wide developments, increased involvement of target ākonga whānau, a manual of shared project practice, and further documentation of ākonga progress were also identified as potential next steps.

Reflections of the evaluation team on potential next steps the project leads and participating schools could consider follow:

1. *Keep to the Kaupapa* – Strengths of the PEKA Hauora project include the focus on Hauora and positivity, its emphasis on strong caring relationships, and the flexibility schools have to implement the project in their school in ways they feel best. Any developments should have the potential to enhance hauora, strengthen relationships, and be able to be adopted by schools flexibly, or not adopted, as each school sees fit.

2. *Use synergies with national priorities and policies* - There are national strategies and understandings that the project that can align with (e.g., alignment with Tātaiako, Tapasā, Kahikitea, The Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030, research such as carried out by Bishop and team, concepts such as whanaungatanga and vā, models such as Te Whare Tapa Whā, and other projects/approaches such as Restorative Practice), that are not yet overt in the project. Such alignment could help to strengthen project understanding and implementation in schools, emphasise the importance of ākonga voice, reduce the load on each school identifying these alignments, and sharing across schools in and out of the project. Investigation into how the project can be discussed in light of and aligned with such policies, research, models, and resources (such as through a short literature review or document analysis) could be helpful for embedding and spreading implementation.

3. *Keep seeking funding* – Funding external to usual school funding has enabled what has been achieved and will be needed to continue with the status quo, with further funding needed to support any further steps. The Ministry of Education needs to be kept aware of the crucial need for financial support for the Hauora Project to enable project schools to support hauora of ākonga who have experienced trauma so that they can feel safe to be at school and ready to learn.

4. *Enhanced whole school approach* – Whole school involvement was variable across project schools. We found that teachers' knowledge and understanding of the project varied across the schools, and that in some cases, some teachers were reluctant to release a child to take part in the target ākonga group. Consideration could be given to working towards all staff understanding that children cannot be taught well if they are not well and not ready for learning for whatever reason. Consideration could be given within and across schools to enhancing the whole school involvement in the project towards further enhancing the mana of the project through further whole school understanding of, for example, trauma informed

practice, regulation strategies, kaiārahi expertise and involvement, and ākonga voice. Such sharing could further develop shared of understanding of and expectations for ākonga regulation, engagement, and learning. For example, as in some schools, by incorporating aspects consistent with the project focus into the school day or week (e.g., karakia, focus on one-to-one teacher-ākonga connections at the start and end of each day), school singing, setting up ways to regularly ask target ākonga how things are working for them and for staff to hear student voice (e.g., through more time for kaiārahi and teachers to liaise).

5. *Further involvement of whānau* – The voices of marginalised ākonga and their families are often excluded from the development, design, and operations of programmes meant to support them. Their insights from their lived experiences of trauma are important for understanding and overcoming these challenges. In the project, we found whānau were generally made aware that their child was part of a target group but information about the project, including how they could support their child's learning and use of regulation strategies varied. We encountered a range of experiences and thoughts on the potential further involvement of whānau, and that there is potential within and across schools for further consideration of how whānau can be involved in supporting the project and their children. Examples included individual ākonga plans co-developed between kaiārahi, ākonga, teacher, and whānau. If further whānau communication and involvement is sought, consideration can be given to ākonga hauora and who in the school is most suitable to communicate with whānau (e.g., a kaiārahi, teacher, or both - as between them they may have greater scope across professional and cultural understandings), and financial support for the time taken for this mahi. Some interviews indicated that there may be challenges in relation to the project of interacting more directly with some whānau, as some of the trauma ākonga experience may be related to their home situation. Therefore, care may be necessary in working in this area of development. Consideration could be given to PEKA-wide community liaison or information sharing which can foreground and support school connections with whānau. Whānau are an integral component of the hauora tapa-whā model. This kaupapa has the potential to be healing for all of the whānau and perhaps to contribute to some of the change needed to make our education system more equitable and appropriate. Consideration could be given to creating a whānau learning programme or trauma informed whānau programme that can sit alongside the project.

6. *Lead structure for kaiārahi and/or further sharing across kaiārahi* – Kaiārahi are key to the success of the target groups and target ākonga regulation. Many kaiārahi thought further sharing across kaiārahi from different schools would help enhance their work with their ākonga groups. Consideration could be given to funding time and process for a lead or co-lead kaiārahi to share and further develop expert practice across kaiārahi that could mirror the lead structure for school principals across the project and contribute to project development across PEKA. We feel such lead role/s could help strengthen further the work of kaiārahi, because the kaiārahi collectively have shared deep understandings of the community/ies they are working within, common experiences of what can work well in target group time, and ways of problem solving in relation to things that have not worked well. We see the potential for lead kaiārahi to support kaiārahi across schools, for example, in time to visit with kaiārahi in other schools promoting, for example, ways to share

information with teachers and whānau about the project and ākonga, and facilitating discussions of practices, challenges, and successes between schools. We are aware that some kaiārahi are intending moving into further study or teaching and realise there will be new kaiārahi across schools over time. Lead kaiārahi may also be able to support those new to working with target ākonga groups.

7. *Incorporating tuakana teina support within target student groups* – Tuakana teina relationships were in place within some target ākonga groups, perhaps formally or informally. Consideration could be given to further formalising this culturally sound learning strategy to both acknowledge the learning and skills experienced target ākonga have gained and encourage them to share this learning with newer target ākonga.

8. *Exit strategy* – Some schools had an exit strategy and graduation process for target ākonga and others did not. Consideration could be given to sharing thoughts across project schools on exit strategies for target ākonga, such as who decides when ākonga are ready (ākonga themselves, shared decision-making between ākonga and kaiārahi, or between ākonga, kaiārahi, principal, whānau), how leaving the group can be handled for those leaving and those staying, having follow up check-ins to touch base with exited ākonga to provide further support if needed (e.g., an open type of exit where ākonga can attend/rejoin the group if needed).

9. *Electronic gathering and sharing of how schools are implementing the project* – Having current information about what is happening in project implementation in schools could be useful to all. Such information has been shared in hui to date. There may also be a place for brief, swift collection across schools, perhaps electronically in a format that can be easily shared and updated over time. Microsoft forms, for example, could be used to collect what is happening across schools, or a simple email with specific questions to reply to in the email, then collated and shared with all. Such information gathering could include whether there are target ākonga groups, when they meet, how often, main group activities, brief descriptions of any whole school developments within the project, how student voice is collected, how whānau are involved, best idea/biggest success from student perspective, from teacher perspective, from kaiārahi perspective, biggest challenge etc. The completed form could be returned to each school each year for checking and updating, removing the need to enter all information each year. Such a survey could be completed by kaiārahi and school project lead in partnership.

10. *Written documentation about the structure and processes of the project* – There may be a place for brief written information about the project within or across project schools, potentially compiled in partnership between kaiārahi, project lead/s, ākonga, and whānau representation. Such material could draw from current documentation and focus on brief overview of the professional development and strategies and practices known to be successful. Challenges associated with such documentation can include keeping the information up to date and many teachers' and kaiārahi preferences for verbal and observational ways of acquiring and sharing information. The Hauora the project is relational, schools are flexibly developing their own ways forward in relation to the specific

context of their school, and there may be a danger of project documentation being seen as the 'one right way' of implementing the project.

11. *Further clarification of the role of external expert* – Some schools have had many years of support from an external expert. Other schools have stepped back from drawing on the expert's time and expertise. Clarity regarding the external expert's role may be evident within the project but was unclear to the evaluators. We are concerned that continued reliance on an external expert could become a risk to the sustainability of the project. Consideration could be given to checking there is shared understanding across project schools of the role of the external expert and perhaps how schools can reduce extended reliance on this support.

The evaluation purposes included questions around the respective priorities and timing of next steps. The evaluators believe that the PEKA Hauora Project members are best placed to make decisions about next steps and the timing of these, and which are best across all schools and which for individual schools. Given the flexibility of the project, it may be that each school may have different priorities and practicalities relating to decisions on next steps and timings, which may also need to be considered in light of available funding.

How can project performance be measured?

The evaluators understand the project leads' focus on data collection as a way to measure the success of the project. We understand data collected focusses on the prevalence and severity of dysregulated behaviours. Out of those we interviewed, only one principal and one kaiārahi talked about collecting data of the number of dysregulated incidents, severity of incidents, or the length of incidents or other written recording. However, all described increased ākonga use of successful regulation strategies and reduction in these dysregulated behaviours in a general way alongside sharing specific instances of individual ākonga whose characteristics, school lives, and life chances, had changed markedly for the better as a result of being in the project.

Given ākonga are brought into the project because of challenges with dysregulation, consideration could be given to project success measures being focussed on exploring desirable outcomes related to hauora, such as individual student success stories including with ākonga voice, regulation strategies ākonga report using, increases in ākonga confidence, general happiness, focus on learning, how many days each week there were no disruptions to learning, positive engagement with others, and contributions to others. Simple survey Likert scales[21] could be used to capture ākonga, kaiārahi, and teacher perceptions of these. These aspects are only suggestions, but such measures may be better aligned to the Hauora Project focus on hauora than are counting and measuring dysregulated behaviours.

How could achievements be reported?

Aspects of the project would be helpful in all schools. Reporting can be at school, Kahui Ako, community, and wider New Zealand community levels. Achievements of the project are its successes. Success is when leaders and kaiārahi can easily articulate and share gains made in relation to individual and group success stories, highlighting powerful examples of kaiārahi work with

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[21] E.g., see https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/likert-scale/

ākonga, increased ākonga attendance and engagement in learning, ākonga confidence in the use of regulation strategies, increased sense of wellbeing across the school, as well as fewer instance of negative measures, such as fewer standdowns, less need for principal intervention, and less severe, fewer, and shorter dysregulated behaviours.

Other achievements of the project that could be reported include enhanced teacher knowledge and understanding of the project and their use of project-linked strategies in their classrooms through modelling and explicit explanation, and celebrations of project success across PEKA schools, such as through identifying and acknowledging individual and group successes in wider sharing of success within school communities or across PEKA schools.

What other actions (outside the project) are required to support ākonga success?

We saw the project working well in schools where the whole school is part of the kaupapa and every student has opportunity to engage with kaiārahi and ākonga relationships with kaiako are improved. Further involvement of whānau would be a suitable next step to support ākonga success. Communication about the project in the wider PEKA community could also help generate further understanding of what the project is aiming for, how it is working towards ensuring ākonga success, and help enhance consistency for ākonga in their lives within and outside school.

Enhanced funding can help enable next steps which we believe can also support ākonga success. None of the project funding (which has used in the main for professional development, kaiārahi time, and managing the project) has come from specific Ministry of Education central funding for schools. However, this report shows the crucial importance of such work to cater suitably for at risk ākonga - such work is vital and should be centrally funded.

Further evaluation would be important for gauging effectiveness of continued use of project aspects and any further project developments, as well as for supporting reporting of project successes.

What resources are required to maintain the project?

Funding and time are required to enable success of the Hauora project.

Summary

There have been substantial achievements of this project evident in each school visited as part of this evaluation. It is clearly apparent that substantial mahi has occurred in this project in ways that are strongly benefitting the target ākonga the project was established to support, and through this, other ākonga, teachers, and school communities. The achievements of this project and consistent support for it across project schools are impressive. Achievements include increased understanding of practice that ensures each whole child is cared for, particularly for those in most need of this.

Strengths of the project include:

- that the project provides ākonga in need of it with caring, consistent, supportive people who are encouraging them daily in ways that work for them
- positive changes in ākonga demeanour, capabilities, confidence, and learning

- that the project reduces stress and demands on teachers and other students as it leads to fewer incidences of dysregulated behaviour in and out of class
- strong consistent leadership focus on the project and shared understandings across PEKA
- that it was created within the PEKA context, designed to meet the needs in the PEKA context
- flexibility of approach within a specific and defined project structure and focus
- increased understanding of the importance of hauora, NME, dysregulated behaviours and regulation strategies that can be understood and used by children
- kaiārahi and their work with target ākonga being funded and prioritised
- personal study by teachers in PEKA schools
- that the project is seen by project schools as consistent with, and being a strong next step from, previous projects they have been involved in

The Hauora Project kaupapa appears to be helping practitioners better understand cultural responsiveness and the importance of identity, culture, and language in teaching Māori and Pacific ākonga. It highlights the value of cultural relational pedagogies and emphasises the need to focus on the whole child, considering their social, cultural, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional needs.

Key contributions of this project to education in Aotearoa New Zealand include strong illustration that the focus on hauora needs to be embedded within education settings, particularly for the wellbeing and learning of ākonga at most risk and who have experienced significant trauma, stress, and disadvantage.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Participants in Evaluation Talanoa

Participants School	Principal (Y/N)	Leader of project	Kaiārahi working with target students (Y/N and number of kaiārahi working with ākonga)	Students (#)
Brandon Intermediate	Y	Y (teacher)	Y, 1	4 children
Cannons Creek School	Y	Y (Principal)	N (2 are working with target students)	N
Corinna School	Y (acting)	Y (Acting Principal)	Y, 1 (2? kaiārahi are working with target students)	3 children
Glenview School (Porirua East)	Y	Y (Principal)	N/A	N/A
Maraeroa School	Y	Y (Principal and Deputy Principal?)	Y, 2	5 children
Natone Park School	Y	Y (Principal and kaiārahi?)	Y, 2	4 children
Porirua College	Y	Y (TIC Ahi Kaa unit)	N (2 kaiārahi are working with target students)	2 children
Porirua East School	Y	Y (Principal)	Y, 1 (2 kaiārahi are working with target students)	4 children
Russell School (Porirua East)	Y	Y (Principal)	Y, 2	4 children
Tairangi School	Y (oversight)	Y (teacher)	N (2? kaiārahi are working with target students)	4 children
Windley School	Y	Deputy Principal	Y, 1	2 children
Totals of school-based people interviewed	**11 Principals**	**Principals + 4 other project leaders**	**10 Kaiārahi**	**32 children**
Lynda Knight de Blois and Kathryn Berkett also interviewed				

(Workplan interview goals: 11 schools, 11 Kaiārahi, 11 proejct leaders, at least 50 ākonga, PEKA Representative and Programme Practitioner)

Appendix 2: Target ākonga involvement in trauma informed project groups and impressions of project impact drawn from data and evaluators' reflections

Note – schools continue to modify their approach – the table provides information at the time of data collection

School	Kaiārahi working with target students (Y/N)	Wish to continue (Y/N)	Benefit for target students (Y/N)	Benefit for non-target students (Y/N)	Benefit for teachers (Y/N)
A	Y, two kaiārahi, two groups which work together	Y	Y	Y	Y
B	Y, two kaiārahi, vulnerable students, including students with additional needs	Y	Y	Y, more settled classes	Y, more settled classes
C	Y, two kaiārahi, one now working with individual but intention is to start with group again	Y	Y	Y	growing
D	Y, two kaiārahi, 10 students, groups together	Y	Y	Y	Y
E	Y, two groups, two kaiārahi, lot of community in and out at the school	Y and concerned about needing to use other funding to support project	Y, e.g., student self monitoring	Y	Y, substantial
F	Y, two kaiārahi	Y	Y	Y	Y
G	Y	Y	Y	Y, growing, they are encouraging this	Y, long term project, staff have high level of awareness of project
H	Not now, did earlier	N/A	N/A	Y, through changed environment and changed teacher practice	Y, through changed environment and changed teacher practice, teachers understanding their own emotions and ways to regulate
I	N, whole school approach, worked with individuals, all kaiārahi in the school are seen as the ones to take ākonga out of class when needed	Y	Y	Y	Y
J	Y	Y	Y	Target children modelled strategies to other children	Some reluctance in the process, but as teachers seeing target

					students more settled, they are becoming more involved
K	Y teacher and 2 kaiārahi and working with ākonga (with some focus on literacy and numeracy achievement), students choose which classes to attend	Y, already given more funding to enable this than received	Y	Y, more settled classes	Y, more settled classes

Appendix 3: Some features of Hauora program specific to each PEKA school noted by evaluation team members

School	Some features specific to each school noted by evaluation team members	Type
Brandon Intermediate	Written cards of regulation strategies	Physical support
	Written goal setting – child/adult worked on goals/zones of regulation and strategies for coping with trauma (for child, teacher, kaiārahi, SENCO) children referred to goal setting and used terms e.g., red hat, green hat (hat or brain?) each had a card to keep that had their strategies)	Structure
	Exit strategy/graduation (aim is to graduate children with them knowing their teacher is the go-to person, children had enough strategies to cope but were able to stay linked to group and were still monitored)	Exit
Cannons Creek	Boys' group and girls' group, as girls did not always get enough time and space in previousmixed gender group	Grouping
	Lots of projects happening in the school concurrently, intending to work to align projects	Context
Corinna	'Wayfinder' group name	Name
	Target children had cards – each child had one with what to do when they felt anxious – one side generic, other side specific to that child – strategies to use was the focus on the card	Physical support
Glenview School	Whole school approach to wellbeing and emotion regulation, was the first school to start the project, blue couch for children to sit on when needed	Holistic - school
	No target students or kaiārahi led groups as no longer needed	
Maraeroa	Whole school development is focussed on hauora and continuing to develop, engaged principal/deputy principal leading next steps for whole school through developing their own lerning through further profesisonal development/conferences/working together	Holistic – school
	Soft start at start of school	Holistic - school
Natone Primary	Specific home-room set aside for the target children to meet in, students collected from class by the kaiārahi, target students identified collectively, group sessions help in afternoon to help calm ākonga, project is part of wider contextual factors – social worker, police, principal discussions with individuals, whānau basis of school (e.g., open staffroom, open principal office)	Space – rooming
	Focus includes vulnerable students including students with additional needs	Target children
Porirua College	Specific homeroom classroom space and teacher available all day everyday, acknowledged as beyond the scope of the project	Space – rooming

	Teacher and kaiārahi teaching (including focus on literacy and numeracy achievement) and working with ākonga, students choose which classes to attend outside the 'Ahi Kaa' space and can stay for all or part of lesson, decided by them	Literacy/numeracy focus
Porirua East	Kaiārahi communication with whānau	Whānau
	Deliberate teaching kids the strategies for regulation and how to use them. Students were comfortable to use as needed and to share with other children.	Explicit teaching of strategies
Russell	Teaching of values as well as regulation for target children (e.g., honesty, treatment of others)	Values
	Selected some children as target children to increase their confidence.	Target children
	2 afternoons a week for 40 minutes but touch base/support daily in breakfast club and classroom support – all the target children happen to be in two classes so this is possible.	Mixed approach
Tairangi	Whole school approach with whānau involvement working with more that can be done, lots of success stories (e.g., a child moving from seeming introverted to competing in Samoan language competition)	Whānau
	Focus on using what is available/usual practice in the school (e.g., did have shared lunches for all)	Using school strengths
Windley	Talk a lot with whānau, have whole school approach and on all children - incorporated into the daily practice and operations of the school curriculum and culture, kaiārahi along with caretaker are all part of the learning and teaching that goes on in the kura.	Whānau
	Built into PB4L	Structure
	The nine kaiārahi - Social and Emotional Coaches - work with every ākonga to develop a 'te ara whakamana plan' (child, DP, SENCO, NME expert) to set individual goals for target children.	Coaches
	Ongoing PD on NME	PD