

Mana Kōhine, Mana Māmā, Mana Tinana

Curating collective (well)being in wānanga

Deborah Heke* || Jewelz Petley+ || Tracey-Leigh Te Paa~

Abstract

Ōkura Collective brought together the distinct pūkenga of three wāhine Māori, with a passion for wāhine and whānau wellbeing, to create a kaupapa that centred kōhine flourishing. Understanding the unique challenges of kōhine Māori in contemporary Aotearoa, we wanted to intentionally curate a space for them to experience ritual, learning, and healing alongside their māmā. Based on Ngā Pou Māreikura, a developing model of (well)being, we facilitated a series of wānanga, held in West Auckland, for kōhine Māori and their māmā to connect to mātauranga wāhine, atua wāhine, and taiao-based learning. In wānanga, kōhine and their māmā were able to learn about the inherent mana of wahine/kōhinetanga through movement, through taiao, and through pūrākau connected to our ancient feminine ancestors, but in their contemporary lives. In this manuscript, the three co-founders and facilitators share reflective vignettes of their experience with their pilot series and envision its future. This kaupapa demonstrates that when safe spaces are specifically curated for wāhine, kōhine, and whānau, healing potential is activated.

Keywords

Mana Wahine, kōhine Māori, body sovereignty, Ngā Pou Māreikura, wānanga, Indigenous healing, intergenerational wellbeing

Rationale

Rangatahi Māori girls (kōhine) face numerous intersecting sociopolitical challenges that impact their health, wellbeing, and educational outcomes. These challenges range from systemic racism, socioeconomic disadvantage, access to and engagement in services, and more (Came & Griffith, 2018; Greaves et al., 2021). There is a historical trend of underserving Māori at all levels, from education to health and wellbeing, and a range of other social outcomes (Bishop et al., 2009; Came et al., 2017; Fleming et al., 2020).

Systemic racism and the patriarchal influence of colonisation impact kōhine Māori uniquely—through the systematic disruption of Indigenous relationships to body, land, and identity (Mikaere, 2003; Redvers et al., 2020; Yates-Smith, 2003). Institutional racism and biopolitical control enable the imposition of dominant cultural norms reframing Indigenous women's bodies as sites of surveillance, regulation, and deficit (Jones, 2000; Million, 2013). In Aotearoa, this has manifested in the historical devaluation of mātauranga wāhine and atua wāhine; the erasure of Māori women's sovereignty over their bodies (and bodies of knowledge) (Pihama, 2001; Smith, 2012); and the complexity of their roles, significance, and prominence in Māori society and wellbeing (Heke, 2022; Murphy, 2019; Yates-Smith, 1998).

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Ashlea Gillon's (2019) critical Kaupapa Māori research centres body sovereignty and decolonising the body and it theorises body sovereignty at both an individual and collective level. She argued that, from a Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine perspective, it is a reclamation of power – centring kaitiakitanga, rangatiratanga, and mana tinana. In this context, it affirms the right of kōhine to define their own wellbeing and flourishing and reconnect with ancestral knowledge and practices that honour their bodies (and knowledges) as sacred and sovereign (Gillon, 2019). Body sovereignty arguably extends to wāhine bodies of knowledge – exercising individual autonomy, collective resistance, and cultural reclamation of our pūkenga, mātauranga, and generational knowledge systems (Heke, Vera, et al., 2026).

Recent data highlight the need to address the intersecting challenges faced by kōhine Māori. Māori students are twice as likely to leave school by age 16 and only 9% achieve university entrance qualifications compared to 34% of non-Māori (Ministry of Education, 2023). Addressing the mental health outcomes of rangatahi Māori also remains an issue, where despite rangatahi Māori reporting and experiencing high rates of depressive symptoms and serious self-harm injuries (Te Hiringa Mahara, 2023), they are less likely to be diagnosed or referred for treatment (Theodore et al., 2022). These outcomes are compounded for kōhine in state care, where over a third have attempted suicide in the past year and are six times more likely to be hospitalised for self-harm (Aroturuki Tamariki, 2025). These statistics reflect the ongoing impacts of colonisation and systemic racism, which continue to shape the lived realities of kōhine Māori through inadequate access and culturally inappropriate care, but also through the chronic disconnection from the cultural practices and knowledges that foster wellbeing.

What we also know is that a strong and affirmed cultural identity plays a critical role in lower depression and enhanced resilience in rangatahi (Greaves et al., 2021; Mocomoko, 2021), and enhances concepts of body sovereignty, self-esteem and overall wellbeing (Rakhkovskaya & Warren, 2014; Talwar et al., 2012). The integration of culturally responsive approaches enables learning and wellbeing contexts that allow previously marginalised rangatahi to participate in their hauora on their terms and in ways that contribute to better learning and wellbeing outcomes (Bishop et al., 2009). Kōhine Māori in contemporary Aotearoa are constantly navigating the challenges of their social realities, body image, and wellbeing – whether in whānau, community, or online. With the understanding that one of the strongest sociocultural factors relating to wellbeing is a strong mother–daughter dyad (Hershberg, 2006), there remains opportunity to support and activate this relationship in safe, culturally informed spaces.

Prior to colonial influence, ancestral parenting and childrearing were grounded in intergenerational and collective caregiving, with a strong emphasis on whakapapa and whenua. A key component to raising strong and resilient children was establishing the bond between children and their divine mother, Papatūānuku, and the other atua (Angeli-Gordon, 2025). Birthing and whenua rituals such as karakia, oriori, and karanga modelled the shift between tapu and noa. Practices such as pīkau pēpi, waiata, and pūrākau seeded and sustained identity (Angeli-Gordon, 2025; Ruwhiu, 2009). These everyday pedagogies were often imparted through the primary conduit of the mother–daughter relationship but also grounded in collective and intergenerational knowledge transfer, subsequently, raising girls who knew who they were and how to care for their themselves, their whenua, and their future whānau (Angeli-Gordon, 2025). In reclaiming mātauranga and mana wāhine today, we envision the māmā–daughter dynamic as one of the key components of intergenerational and collective wellbeing.

The Whakapapa of Ōkura Collective

The name *Ōkura* was gifted to us by Te Mete Lowman (Māori cultural and language specialist) to reflect our kaupapa and its connection to the ancient feminine. The name is derived from Ngā Uri o Kurawaka (descendants of Kurawaka), which acknowledges the sacred site of Kurawaka, the birthplace of Hineahuone (first woman formed from the red clay between the legs of Papatūānuku). This origin story asserts the mana and tapu of wāhine Māori, linking their bodies and being to the whenua and to atua wāhine. Ōkura carries this whakapapa, acknowledging and promoting the reclamation of body sovereignty, cultural identity, and intergenerational healing. It reflects our kaupapa and its intent to uplift kōhine Māori by reconnecting them to ancestral narratives that celebrate their innate power, potential, and connection to Kurawaka.

Ōkura Collective was formed by three wāhine committed to reclaiming, restoring, and revitalising the wellbeing of Māori women and their tamariki through Indigenous knowledge, connection, and aroha. Ōkura was envisioned to be a space of healing and empowerment, where intergenerational wisdom would be nurtured, and the strength of wāhine Māori celebrated. Ōkura Collective weave diverse expertise to create opportunities that uplift and sustain our people.

We were brought together by the vision of Jewelz Petley, who identified a need and realised the opportunity to engage with two other wāhine who she knew could bring complementary skillsets to the kaupapa. Jewelz facilitated our first hui and led most of the planning required to get us funding, recruit attendees, liaise with iwi, book venues, organise kai, and ensure we had a reliable online platform and brand. Her drive and enthusiasm inspired the realisation of Ōkura Collective.

Method[ological] Approach

The Ōkura kaupapa and the vignettes we present here are firmly rooted in Mana Wahine—an intentional focus on the unique and integral voice and experience of wāhine Māori, within thriving Māori communities. Mana Wahine theory derives from a Kaupapa Māori theoretical framework and serves as a critical approach to challenge and (re)address the enduring effects of colonisation and the patriarchal systems it stems from (Johnston & Pihama, 1995; Smith, 2012). Being wahine Māori in contemporary Aotearoa involves complex identity navigation (Heke, 2022). It is not a singular experience but one deeply rooted in whakapapa, where ancestral knowledge has the capacity to enable and support contemporary wellbeing (Heke, 2022).

Centred on empowering wāhine Māori wellbeing through the exploration of atua wāhine, mātauranga wahine, and taiao-based healing, Ngā Pou Māreikura is a developing model of wāhine (well)being and belonging consisting of five interactive pillars that connect wāhine with the natural environment and with themselves (see Figure 1). Ngā Pou Māreikura offers wāhine and whānau Māori the opportunity to engage with and reflect on how they relate to characteristics and stories connected to archetypes of atua wāhine/mana wāhine. The pou were initially derived from the korero of 19 physically active wāhine Māori (Heke, 2022) and were further developed to be inclusive of everyday and embodied practices.

Ngā Pou Māreikura currently exists as both a theoretical model and as an interactive installation of physical and digital works (Figure 2). These pou represent archetypes of atua wāhine and of wāhine, and pillars from which to position personal experiences or pūrākau. The pou also represent the diverse ways wāhine describe their connection to the natural environment, to wellbeing, and to themselves. Through pūrākau told via diverse traditional and contemporary practices, wāhine are invited to position themselves in physical, spiritual, or theoretical places of significance (wāhi tapu), collective knowledge systems (wānanga), and their own (wāhine) pūkenga. Ngā Pou Māreikura, as a theoretical model and as an interactive installation, seeks to empower Māori women's knowledges and capacity to connect to and heal through te taiao and through a better understanding of our relationships to/with te taiao – and consequently with ourselves.

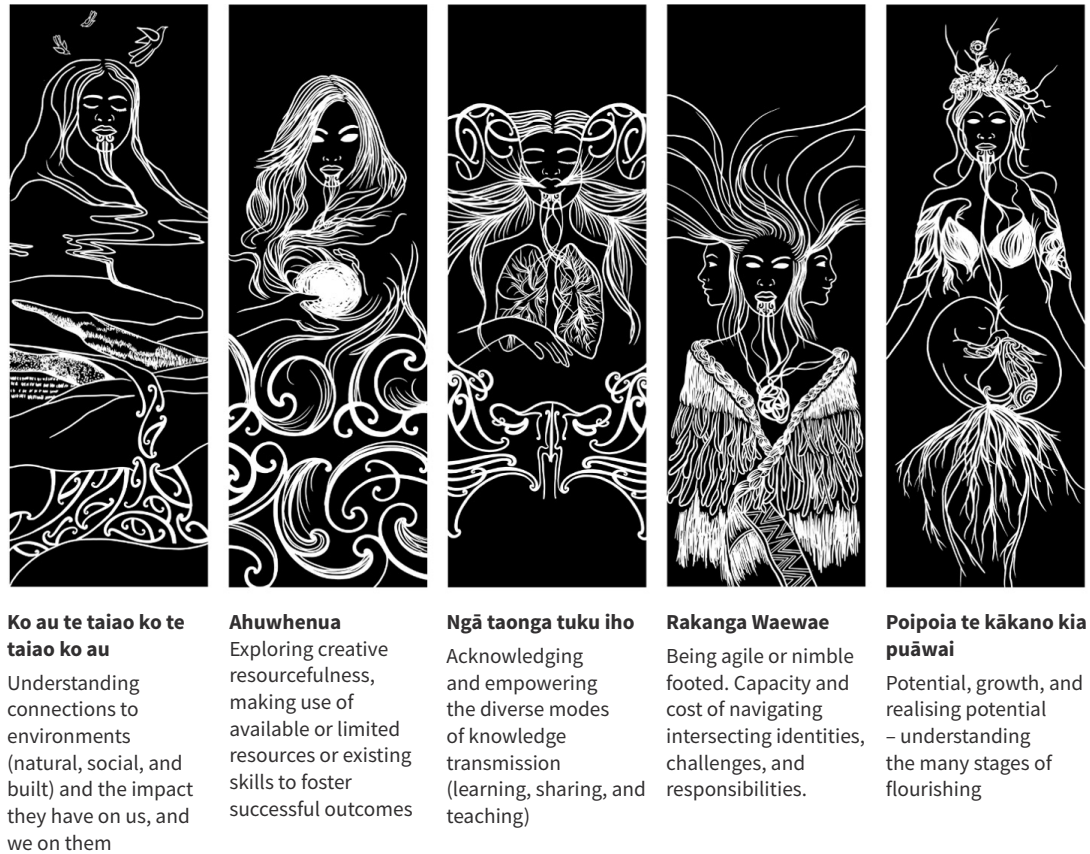


Figure 1 Ngā Pou Māreikura illustrations – by Jordan Tane

The physical pou (still in development) have been exhibited as an interactive installation, providing an intentionally safe space of reflection and learning, allowing both an individual and collective experience – immersing into a sensory space that celebrates wahinetanga (Figure 2). The space is about whakawhanaungatanga: building connection with self and others.

Ngā Pou Māreikura forms the foundation from which our wānanga series evolved. We planned wānanga to align with each pou: attributed atua wāhine and then developed a set of activities that would encompass learning associated with both. Kōhine and their māmā would begin a journey of learning about ritual practice (pure), maramataka, pūrākau from local mana whenua, (taonga) tākaro, taonga pūoro, rongoā, and atua.

While we do not provide in-depth detail of each wānanga here, an outline of some of the activities is provided in Table 1. Primarily, we reflect on how we, as facilitators and co-founders of Ōkura Collective, contributed to the evolving alchemy of this powerful kaupapa. Our individual contributions here mirror those we offered in wānanga – diverse, optimistic, and grounded in hope for our future mana wāhine.

In this manuscript, in addition to an initial background and outline of our collective and kaupapa, we provide reflective vignettes that invite the reader into our personal insights into our opening Ōkura Collective wānanga series. This means of collective writing provides an autoethnographic account where each author is invited to write freely to share their own perspective and experience (Stewart, 2023), or pūrākau (Lee, 2009) – in this case, the voice of mana wāhine. Reflective writing allows a departure from the usual conventions of academic writing to offer a unique perspective and a rich retelling of a collectively held story (Stewart, 2021, 2023). We offer these personal reflections to disseminate our learnings but also to better understand our kaupapa and its potential future iterations.



Figure 2 Exhibition of Ngā Pou Māreikura at Ngā Wai o Horotiu Marae, where attendees were invited to respond to visual and sensory prompts

Table 1 Brief outline of Ōkura wānanga delivered

	Location	Activity	Pou	Atua wāhine
Wānanga 1	Cornwallis Beach	Pūrākau and kōrero about ritual, maramataka, and karakia.	Ko au te taiao ko te taiao ko au	Parawhenuamea, Hinemoana
Wānanga 2	Old St Michaels Church, Henderson	Ngā Pou Māreikura Immersive experience, Active Whakapapa hikoi (Te Kawerau ā Maki)	Ngā taonga tuku iho	Mahuika
Wānanga 3	Corban’s Estate Grounds	Pūrakau, tākaro. Ukutangi (taonga pūoro) claywork. Led by Nikki Penetito-Hemara (Kori Collab)	Rakanga waewae	Hineahuone, Hinepūtehue, Hinetītama
Wānanga 4	Te Pae o Kura	Romiromi, Ikura and sustainable menstrual products, creating personal ritual with rongoā	Ahuwhenua, Poipoia te kākano	Papatūānuku, Hinenuitepō



Figure 3 Rongoā, taonga, and sustainable ikura products displayed from Wānanga 4



Figure 4 Participants learning whai (string games) with facilitator Nikki Penetito-Hemara

Reflective Vignettes

In these personal vignettes, each author was invited to share who we are and what magic we brought to the collective, what we learned from the process, and any aspirations we had for the future of the kaupapa. This provocation continues the whakapapa of Ōkura: knowing that we descend from atua and that our potential to activate that whakapapa lies in relationality and in the collective. We introduce ourselves below to identify our tribal affiliations and organisational ties.

Jewelz Petley

An Atlantic Fellow for Social Equity with a master's in social change leadership, I specialise in decolonising economic structures and co-designing solutions that reflect Indigenous values of reciprocity, collective wellbeing, and sustainability. With over 20 years of experience in youth development, community work, and systems change, my focus is on creating regenerative, equitable futures for Māori communities. I am passionate about structural change that uplifts wāhine Māori, fosters innovation, and ensures communities thrive for generations to come. My main contributions in this project were leading planning sessions, engaging collaboration, programme design, and leading the alignment with youth development principles. As a wāhine Māori with Chinese and Pākehā ancestry, I've been on a journey to understand my own identity in a world that often told me I wasn't enough. I can see the same struggle happening now with my teenage daughter (15). I wanted to find a way to support her to understand who she is while also working on the relationship we have together as māmā and daughter. I've watched her struggle with confidence, turn to vaping, and even self-harm. As hard as that is to share, I know we're not the only whānau walking this path. Our taitamāhine are growing up in a world that doesn't always reflect back their worth as wāhine Māori, and it shows in their hauora.

With my background in youth development, I knew I wanted to bring something together that felt different – something that spoke to who we are as Māori. For me, the things that truly feed our hauora are movement, connection to culture, and rongoā Māori. That's where the idea came from for Ōkura – a programme for taitamāhine Māori in West Auckland to explore their mana through these things, and to do it in a way that's fun, safe, and grounded in atua wāhine stories.

Ōkura is grounded in Kaupapa Māori principles. It centres mātauranga, tikanga, and whakapapa, and is about collective wellbeing, strong and trusted relationships, and making sure our taitamāhine have the tools to navigate the world as Māori. These values are woven through the programme so taitamāhine can explore their own mana and identity in a space where being Māori is not just accepted but celebrated.

What Magic I Brought to the Kaupapa.

My role was to pull together a rōpū of amazing wāhine, some old friends, some new, who could bring this vision to life. Together, we created a space where taitamāhine could move their bodies, learn about hauora through a Māori lens, and connect with atua Māori in ways that made sense to them. Thanks to Sport Waitakere, we were able to run our very first pilot programme this year and offer it for free, so cost wasn't a barrier.

Learnings.

From running Ōkura, a few big things stood out for me:

- Atua wāhine are healing: The stories of atua wāhine show us that strength, vulnerability and transformation are all part of our whakapapa as wāhine Māori. These pūrākau gave our taitamāhine role models that spoke directly to their own struggles and aspirations.
- Wāhine-only spaces are healing: When the space is safe and just for wāhine, something shifts. Our taitamāhine could relax, be themselves, try new things, and know they would be heard and cared for. This sense of safety made space for honesty, bravery, and deep connection.
- Cultural identity is healing: Using te reo Māori, waiata, karakia, and whakapapa-based practices gave taitamāhine a stronger sense of who they are. It's like giving them solid ground to stand on in a world that can so easily pull them off balance.
- Rongoā Māori is healing: Focusing on holistic wellbeing helped taitamāhine feel connected to their tinana, wairua, hinengaro, and whānau. Learning about rongoā was not just about plants but about the whenua and the interwoven relationships that sustain us.

Aspirations for the Future.

Ōkura has shown me there's a real hunger for this kind of kaupapa. My dream is to see it run not just in West Auckland, but across Tāmaki Makaurau and eventually the whole motu. I want taitamāhine and their māmā to know the stories of our atua wāhine, to carry that mātauranga with them, and to use it to care for their hauora in ways that feel right to them. Because when our taitamāhine are connected to culture, to whenua, to each other, they can do anything they set their mind to. Toitū te mokopuna.

Tracey-Leigh Te Paa

I am the creator of Māreikura Rising, a kaupapa dedicated to guiding wāhine through deep healing, reclamation of whakapapa, and the celebration of their sacredness. With 17 years of experience as a māmā and Indigenous healer, I blend ancestral wisdom with spiritual insight to create safe, powerful spaces where wāhine feel seen, supported, and free to heal on their own terms. As a healer, mentor, and respected lecturer at the South Pacific College of Natural Medicine, I am known for my real, raw, and grounded approach. My magic lies in helping wāhine remember who they are and where they come from, holding space for them to journey through both the dark and beautiful places only they can reach, always knowing I'm there with them, every step of the way.

I have a passion for wāhine and our womb sovereignty through all our different stages of wahinetangata – from reconnecting, reclaiming and reimagining our relationship, our beliefs and our connection to the beauty and power of our whare tangata, to how we celebrate and create rituals and medicines that help release trauma, emotions, stress, and pain from our bodies.

I was extremely lucky to have a māmā who fostered open conversations around sexuality, who supported my whakaaro from a young age: that my ikura was actually my superpower; and who was open to sharing her deepest trauma, so I felt less shame around my own. We shared many experiences that shaped who I am today, my view of the world, and the magic that I was created to share and contribute. Losing my mother was the very catalyst for the path and journey that I now understand was created for me and how that experience supported me into the māmā, teacher and the Indigenous healer I am still becoming.

What Magic I Brought to the Kaupapa.

My pūkenga is definitely being unapologetically myself and I have a very real, raw and open approach to teaching, supported by my mātauranga, my experience, and my ability to reframe generational trauma within healing spaces. I create beautiful spaces that encourage wāhine to empower and trust themselves more than anything or anyone else, to connect to their bodies and their whare tangata so they remember who they are and the beauty of whakapapa which they come from.

Teaching wāhine to understand that the whare tangata is the accessway to our innate power, and by healing and connecting these sacred spaces, we heal and empower not only ourselves, and our whānau and communities, but we're healing future generations – that becomes a game changer!

Learnings.

My biggest learning was the importance of consultation and guidance from mana whenua when we are working within their rohe. A kaupapa that I was leading at our first wānanga was a pure; we were organised and were ready to roll when a beautiful friend from Te Kawerau ā Maki called informing me that a rangatira had said kō to all pure being held within their rohe. It threw everything and to be honest it threw me, but the learning and growing was the importance of building our relationship with mana whenua so we could be guided and informed of their tikanga. Knowing this tikanga not only honoured the mana of Te Kawerau ā Maki (which we should all be striving to do with all mana whenua in our areas), but it also honoured the kaupapa and, most importantly, kept everyone within it safe, ā wairua, ā tinana, ā kikokiko.

Aspirations for the Future.

What I'd love to see is these empowering spaces becoming the norm for our kōhine, so they feel more connected to themselves and more comfortable in their own skin. The thought of these spaces being led by kōhine, with us still there, but in the background supporting them as their pou, brings me joy!

Deborah Heke

I am first and foremost a Māmā to my own beautiful kōtiro. I earned my PhD from Auckland University of Technology (in Māori health) and am now associate professor and director of Ngā Wai a Te Tūi Māori and Indigenous Research Centre at Unitec. My work centres on Mana Wahine scholarship and the connection between movement, te taiao, and wellbeing. Recent research involves leading an inter-institutional team of wāhine with diverse skills in the creation of Ngā Pou Māreikura – a developing model of (well)being and belonging. I am passionate about Māori and Indigenous research and building the capacity and capability of future Indigenous thinkers and doers.

As a māmā to a 6-year-old daughter and someone who has tried to pack a lifetime of cultural reconnection into the last 8 to 10 years of my life, I was instantly drawn to the kaupapa of the Ōkura Collective. The opportunity to contribute to a space for kōhine empowerment through atua wāhine and Mana Wahine was an opportunity to activate my research and contribute to a kaupapa that could benefit my own daughter, one day. Although I am blissfully unaware of what awaits my daughter when she grows into this world not necessarily designed for her cultural identity to thrive, I am not willing to passively wait for it. My own journey was one that I have tried to ensure my daughter will not have to experience, so her reo is not foreign and knowledge of atua is not abstract. The spaces Ōkura fosters for kōhine and their māmā, are spaces that I would want to share with my own daughter, to grow and flourish together.

What Magic I Brought to the Kaupapa.

As an academic, I'm often engrossed in the theoretical writing, teaching, thinking, and writing again. I know that was one of the key strengths I brought to our wāhine trio, but initially it felt like a deficiency when faced with the real-life application of my research. The excitement of seeing our three sets of pūkenga starting to weave together in our first few hui, was also tinged with apprehension that I was no youth development practitioner, nor was I particularly well-versed in anything to do with teenage girls. I felt a distant but familiar fear of not really knowing what teenage girls were even like. My own, first-hand experience was more than 25 years ago. But as someone who never really felt like a "normal teenage girl" in the first place, this was going to be a potentially triggering process for my inner introverted kōhine.

I would soon realise my expertise was at the core of this kaupapa. I had a deep knowledge of Ngā Pou Māreikura because I was the one who originally developed it out of kōrero from 19 wāhine Māori (Heke, 2022) and then further developed in a wāhine collective (Heke, Mato Bartlett, et al., 2026). I would be just one part of a trio of wāhine whose distinctly unique but intersecting pūkenga would eventually foster a space of creativity, healing, and connection. Knowing that I brought the nerd-factor to our group was comforting. I could bring clarity around the concepts of Ngā Pou Māreikura, which would help guide our collective kōrero to design a wānanga series based on each of the pou.

Learnings.

What we were able to achieve, in the space of our short wānanga series, was more than I could have imagined. Despite some of the challenges around the availability of teenagers on their precious weekends, we were able to facilitate a space where kōhine and their māmā could be, learn, and start a healing process, together. I saw the genuine desire of māmā to learn alongside their daughters, to grasp the deep mātauranga wahine that they had never been taught, to watch the flourishing of young minds seeing themselves reflected in ideas, activities, and pou.

In wānanga, we realised and activated the healing potential of the collective. Māmā and their daughters were able to take tangible steps towards deepening mātauranga wahine. Kōhine and māmā were empowered by extending their knowledge and understanding of atua wāhine and te taiao, and the healing potential of engaging with/in both.

Aspirations for the Future.

As a researcher, I see the potential for this kaupapa to inform and be further informed by research: Mana Wahine research. With prospective opportunities to apply the learnings of Ngā Pou Māreikura with kōhine, I envision a model of wellbeing that encompasses the complexities of wāhine and kōhine Māori, alike. I'm excited about the potential to work alongside Te Kawerau ā Maki, to embed their kawa, tikanga, pūrākau, and hītori into future wānanga.

My aspiration for the future of Ōkura Collective is to build on the existing alchemy and bring more wāhine magic into our wānanga. I want to see kōhine step into their mana. I want them to be confident in their bodies (of knowledge), knowing they are descended from atua and their potential is endless.

Discussion

Ōkura Collective was curated to be a space of potential and powerful intergenerational healing. The reflections from each contributor reveal a shared commitment to creating safe, transformative spaces for kōhine Māori and their māmā to reconnect with their whakapapa, atua wāhine, and their bodies as sites of sovereignty. The kaupapa is grounded in Ngā Pou Māreikura, a model of wellbeing that offers both theoretical and experiential pathways for flourishing.

Our collective aspirations envision a future where these wānanga are sustained and scaled up/out, embedded within communities, and eventually led by kōhine themselves. The importance of intentional relationships is a critical foundation for the integrity and growth of the kaupapa, acknowledging the integral roles of mana whenua, whānau, and ancestral knowledge. The reflective vignettes also highlight the healing potential of dedicated wāhine spaces and taiao-based movement and learning as tools for empowering resilient cultural identity.

Importantly, Ōkura wānanga demonstrate a living expression of body sovereignty theory in practice. By centring kōhine and māmā in spaces that honour their bodies as sacred, relational, and sovereign, the kaupapa challenges colonial narratives of deficit and disconnection. Ngā Pou Māreikura provided a framework through which participants could begin to explore their own mana tinana, whakapapa, and embodied knowledge. This praxis centres wāhine Māori autonomy and wellbeing, and builds potential pathways for future application in education, health, and youth development. We have already begun a partnership with a West Auckland secondary school to offer in-school wānanga delivery of the Ōkura kaupapa – an evolution of the magic we offered in community. There is further opportunity to explore the impact of body-sovereignty praxis in wānanga, and the development of kōhine-led models that extend this kaupapa into other schools or community wellbeing initiatives.

Conclusion

Ōkura Collective has demonstrated that when wāhine Māori come together to curate intentional spaces of healing, learning, and connection, the ripple effects can be profound. Through Ngā Pou Māreikura and the collective pūkenga of Ōkura, this kaupapa follows and builds on an ancestral blueprint for culturally grounded wellbeing that is relational, regenerative, and steeped in whakapapa. The journey ahead holds promise for wider impact, deeper healing, and the continued flourishing of kōhine Māori.

Moving forward, the integration of research, deeper iwi partnerships, and youth-led leadership development will be essential to ensure the kaupapa continues to evolve in ways that honour its origins and meet the needs of future generations.

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GLOSSARY

Atua	Deity
Ikura	Menstruation
Hauora	Wellbeing
Hineahuone	First woman
Hinengaro	Mind
Kaitiakitanga	Guardianship
Karakia	Prayer
Karanga	Call
Kaupapa	Purpose
Kikokiko	Flesh
Kōhine/ kōhinetanga	Girlhood
Kurawaka	Ancestral homeland
Māmā	Mother
Mana	Authority/prestige/power
Mana tinana	Physical authority
Mana wāhine	Women's authority
Mana Wahine	Māori feminist theory
Maramataka	Māori luna calendar
Mātauranga	Knowledge
Oriori	Lullaby
Pākehā	New Zealander (European)
Papatūānuku	Earth Mother
Pou	Pillar
Pūkenga	Skill/expertise
Pūrākau	Narrative/traditional narratives
Pure	Ritual cleansing
Rangatahi	Youth
Rangatiratanga	Self-determination
Reo	Language
Rōpū	Group
Rongoā	Healing/traditional medicines
Taiao	Natural environment
Taitamāhine	Adolescent girl
Tamariki	Children
Taonga pūoro	Musical instruments
Taonga tākaro	Play treasures/traditional games
Tapu	Sacred
Tikanga	Customs/protocols
Wāhi tapu	Sacred site
Wāhine	Women
Waiata	Song
Wairua	Spirit/spiritual
Wānanga	Learning forum
Whare tangata	Womb
Whakapapa	Genealogy
Whakawhanaungatanga	Relationship-building
Whānau	Family
Whenua	Land / placenta

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