

Marae Ora, Kāinga Ora: A Marae-Led Response to Covid-19

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Abstract

Marae Ora, Kāinga Ora (MOKO) is a marae-led community development and wellbeing research project. Lee-Morgan et al. (2021) explain this three-year research project, stating: “MOKO investigates the potential of five marae to strengthen their provision of kāinga (village, settlement) in the contemporary urban context of South Auckland” (p. 2). Using a Kaupapa Māori (KM) approach to Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR), this project explores the ancient Indigenous innovation of marae (both a spiritual and physical location with a socio-cultural setting for Māori to be immersed in a cultural context) and kāinga to understand and co-create new culturally based initiatives and support the activation of community development and wellbeing initiatives.

While marae are highly valued by Māori communities as being critical to cultural sustainability and are recognised by government agencies as important community providers, there is a dearth of research about how contemporary urban marae operate and how they can work with, and for, communities (Kawharu, 2014; Tapsell, 2002; Thornley et al., 2015). The MOKO research aim is to enable marae to explore their potential role within their communities, to develop their own interpretation and opportunities for kāinga. These insights influence opportunities to partner with external agencies and services to achieve greater outcomes and collaborative advantages for whānau (family group) and community wellbeing, alongside marae. In brief, the MOKO project is focused on the intergenerational sustainability of the knowledge systems and replenishment of resources inherent within marae, our natural environment and kāinga ora.

Keywords: Marae Ora, Kāinga Ora; community development; Kaupapa Māori research; Covid-19 resilience; community wellbeing

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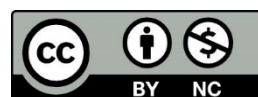
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