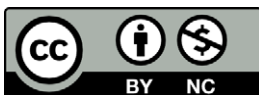


MARAE ORA, KĀINGA ORA: A MARAE-LED RESPONSE TO COVID-19

PROFESSOR JENNY LEE-MORGAN
KIM PENETITO
DR JO MANE
NGAHUIA ERUERA

<https://doi.org/10.34074/proc.2205013>

Resilience in the workplace and community



Marae Ora, Kāinga Ora: A Marae-Led Response to Covid-19 by Professor Jenny Lee-Morgan, Kim Penetito, Dr Jo Mane and Ngahuia Eruera is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

This publication may be cited as:

Lee-Morgan, J., Penetito, K., Mane, J., and Eruera, N. (2022). Marae Ora, Kāinga Ora: A Marae-Led Response to Covid-19. In E. Papoutsaki and M. Shannon (Eds.), *Proceedings: 2021 ITP Research Symposium, 25 and 26 November* (pp. 169–182). Auckland: ePress, Unitec, Te Pūkenga. <https://doi.org/10.34074/proc.2205013>

Contact:

epress@unitec.ac.nz
www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/
Unitec, Te Pūkenga
Private Bag 92025, Victoria Street West
Auckland 1142
Aotearoa New Zealand

ISBN 978-0-473-59389-6



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.

Enabling marae, communities and stakeholders to be an active part of developing the solutions and co-production of new knowledge and dissemination activities is a key part of this Kaupapa Māori research project and seen as critical if the research is to have maximum impact. Community participation is a prerequisite to understanding and enhancing community wellbeing and kāinga. In the MOKO project, the Marae Research Co-ordinators (nominated by the marae themselves) are pivotal members of the MOKO research team, and have become a strength and feature of the project.

When Covid-19 hit Aotearoa New Zealand, forcing a national lockdown in March 2020, the MOKO research was already halfway through the environmental scanning phase of, and with, the five marae and their surrounding communities of South Auckland. During the lockdown, the research tasks of the Marae Research Co-ordinators (MRC) to engage whānau and identify their aspirations would prove to be challenging; however, they were ideally positioned to observe the approaches of each marae in responding to their local communities.

This article will share insights to the resilience of the five marae throughout the adversity of Covid-19, showcasing the diversity of support provided to whānau in meeting the needs of their distinct communities, further demonstrating the adaptability of marae and some of the sustainable solutions in enhancing the wellbeing of marae and kāinga.

KEYWORDS

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

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND: MARAE ORA, KĀINGA ORA RESEARCH PROJECT

Marae Ora, Kāinga Ora (MOKO) was initiated following a research project titled 'Te Manaaki o te Marae' with Te Puea Memorial Marae and their support to homeless whānau in 2016 (Lee-Morgan et al., 2017; 2018). Through this work, MOKO was premised on the agency of urban marae to provide their own formalised response to the housing crisis in their distinct communities. This crisis is not independent of a number of social, economic and environmental determinants, and the experience with Te Puea Marae has guided Ngā Wai ā Te Tūi (NWATT) to ensure that the approach for MOKO is both future focused and strength based. MOKO seeks to identify the aspirations for marae and generate development opportunities to increase whole-of-community wellbeing.

The research aims are to invite collective marae perspectives including engaged marae members, whānau who are estranged from any involvement with the marae, relational stakeholders to the marae, and the surrounding marae community. The reconstitution of kāinga that has traditionally serviced marae will be the confronting inquest for research participants attempting to reimagine this possibility in the urban space of South Auckland. The project's intent is to investigate the insights of these contributing groups and enable each marae to delve into the potential advancement marae envisage in the provision of housing for sustainable marae communities. MOKO is designed to reveal opportunities for greater alignment with other agencies and community service providers to formulate collective solutions and co-produce shared approaches, strategies and activities through the production of new knowledge. Ultimately the desire is to enhance marae to provide whānau and community wellbeing.

Marae are the centre of the kāinga and thriving Māori communities (Salmond, 1972). Traditionally the kāinga was the 'village-like' community that sustained the marae and that interacted with the land and the natural environment, and where the people lived collectively as whānau and hapū (kinship group), guided by tikanga (customary lore and protocols) and kawa (rules, practices and protocols). Urban marae are a phenomenon from the 1960s established to retain cultural connectivity for whānau Māori who had relocated to the urban environment for employment. Marae is a cultural archetype that was reconstructed in the urban setting, and represented a cultural icon to provide a sense of belonging, identity and place to continue to practice Māori ways of being and living in the city (Walker, 1990).

It is reported by Te Puni Kōkiri (2018) that South Auckland is the home to over 38 marae, which are there to serve the needs of approximately 80% of the total Auckland Māori population. Hoskins et al. (2019) argue that despite South Auckland being an area where the highest proportion of Māori live in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, the ideal of kāinga as the sustenance for marae is a difficult prospect within communities that have been constructed without consideration of this type of cultural lens to their planning.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, it took over 140 years before state planning legally identified the unique relationship between Māori people and their ancestral land as an important consideration in the planning decision-making process. (Henry, 2021, p. 115)

Marae in the contemporary setting are located in a number of different reconstituted images of the traditional marae. For example, schools and tertiary marae service the learning space (Lee, 2012), and marae based with health and social-service institutions assist holistic healing and wellbeing (George, 2010; Hall, 2012; Mead, 2003). Furthermore, marae are still societal constructs of historical and archaeological intrigue in museums and art galleries; marae are found overseas in foreign lands; armed forces and government organisations erect marae to represent commitment to partnership obligations and an aspiration of cultural inclusivity.

In the MOKO project there are five marae, in three distinct categories: mana whenua, mataawaka, and taurāhere marae. Mana whenua are tribal marae who whakapapa to the whenua; mataawaka marae are pan-tribal marae; and taurāhere marae are satellite outposts of tribal marae in the urban setting. The marae in the MOKO project are: Makaurau Marae, Mataatua Marae, Papatūānuku Kōkiri Marae, Papakura Marae and Manurewa Marae.

The Covid-19 pandemic arrived the shores of Aotearoa in 2020. which coincided with the very early stages of the MOKO research project being activated. In hindsight, this event created some opportunities to observe marae

perform at their best, and highlighted the diversity and unique nature of the five marae, consequently adding value to the research findings.

MOKO RESEARCH METHODS

The MOKO project methodologies, Kaupapa Māori and Community Based Participatory Research (KM and CBPR), have determined a collaborative approach that seeks to work in partnership with each of the five marae involved. As part of this approach, the leadership of each marae (Board, Chief Executive, rangatira [chief], kaumatua [elder]) participated in a formal signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Ngā Wai a Te Tūi. As articulated in an earlier article, “This project is a mixed-methods study (both qualitative and quantitative) exploring the ancient Indigenous innovation of marae and kāinga to understand and co-create new, culturally based initiatives to activate community development and wellbeing” (Lee-Morgan et al., 2021, p. 11). The methods applied have been centred on how best to respectfully complement the weaving together of skill sets and the various relationships and experience required to carry out this community-based research project.

The multiple research methods include pūrākau (case-study-type narrative inquiry) with each marae; co-created marae feasibility studies; statistical data analysis of national and local data; individual and focus-group interviews; and a survey of whānau and other households in South Auckland in relation to their perceived connectedness to the local marae. At the time of writing, the authors are still in the process of analysing quantitative and qualitative data.

Marae Research Co-ordinators

An integral part of the research project is the Marae Research Co-ordinator (MRC), nominated and appointed by each respective marae. This role is essential to bring together the contributions of relevant marae relational stakeholders both internal and external to their marae. The MRC became the ‘eyes and ears’ of the marae, representing the founders, drivers and influencers who have led and sustained the marae. They are the connectors bringing the historical and present-day context of their marae to the research. These positions were, interestingly, assigned to women across all five marae. These women named themselves collectively as Ngā Puna o Ngā Marae (NPoNM) – The Springs of Knowledge for each marae. This role has involved the MRC delivering on a research work programme that has included the collation of local data, the interviewing of research participants, the design of conference presentations and input to journal articles. Not only were the expectations of the research project for them to have a sound local knowledge and understanding of the culture and socioeconomic profile of the surrounding communities of their marae, they have also been responsible for leading MOKO on the ground as community-based researchers. This dual accountability has involved a weekly hui with members of the MOKO research team to maintain a whānau/peer-support base and a safe space to reflect, share, problem solve and grow research capability. The research benefits of working collaboratively with marae-based researchers has been profound for the project and, more importantly, advantageous beyond expectation for each marae to activate their development plans, and expand their network of research expertise to support each stage of progress into the future.

Whakawhanaungatanga (the process of establishing relationships) has been an essential practice to keep NPoNM connected, communicating, motivated and collectively supported through the work programme of the project. Bishop and Glynn (1999) articulate whanaungatanga as a reciprocal, mutual relationship where power is shared and negotiated.

Through whakawhanaungatanga, each marae has had the opportunity to host the MOKO research team and showcase their role in their local communities across South Auckland. This coming together has helped the marae to remain up to date with the research progress and has meant the wider MOKO research team who are not physically located in Tāmaki Makaurau have been able to deepen their understanding of each marae and contextualise the community environment.

While the authors are not ready to comment on the benefits of the presence of MRCs to whānau and hapū yet, this might become the subject of a future evaluative research investigation.

Pūrākau

Another method that has given voice to the people of each marae community is the medium of pūrākau. Lee (2009) champions this medium as a decolonising practice that enables Māori to assist the intergenerational transmission of histories, events and tikanga. As part of this Kaupapa Māori project, the methods applied have been selected to bring forward the opportunity, time and place for Māori to tell their lived experience and share their insights, filtered through a diverse Māori lens and worldview. These are the threads of pūrākau that weave together the marae connections to the whenua (the environmental scan), the histories of the people (the interviewing of whānau), the experience of the current inhabitants (the quantitative survey) and interests of the investors (stakeholder perspectives); all relative to the marae-scape.

A pikitia (picture) series has captured the experience of each marae in action over the Covid-19 lockdowns. This is another creative method to express the important story of each marae's interaction with their communities during Covid-19. Through an animated series, the narrative from each marae is illustrated. The pūrākau is told through imagery, symbolism and a whakataukī/whakatauākī (proverb) or a statement that captures a snapshot of each marae and their activity in the pandemic of 2020–21. The process involved each marae determining their story, identifying visual messages of the marae setting during the past two years and highlighting their marae's response to their communities. It has involved several hui among the marae whānau to achieve collective agreement around the messaging. It has also required onsite observation from the artist and a synthesising of key discussion points, recognition of important icons for the marae and inclusion of symbolism in the imagery, characters, activity and statement from each marae.



Figure 1. *Mataatua Tawharautia* [drawing] is an example of the artwork drawn by R. Tinana as part of the MOKO research pikitia series [UREC 2020-1040].

Interviews

The qualitative research method of interviewing and the quantitative survey are the final methods discussed. Interviewing would prove to be a very challenging activity, with fluctuating access to interviewees due to lockdowns and the level of anxiety connected to social-distancing restrictions. Despite this, the majority of the interviews were able to be conducted in person, and face-to-face; a very important cultural consideration for Kaupapa Māori research projects.

Quantitative survey

The quantitative survey was designed to engage the surrounding communities of the five marae to contribute to the MOKO research. The demographics in each of the suburbs where the marae are located bring a diverse perspective that is essential to understand the perception of the role of marae in this multi-ethnic urban environment. Interestingly, the quantitative survey online would have a greater uptake than originally anticipated, potentially because of increased online activity and engagement, although the survey launch itself was also delayed due to Covid-19 interruptions.

Ngā Wai ā Te Tūi anticipate the findings from these intertwined and interdependent research methods will be invaluable for whānau and the development of each marae community, once the analysis phase of the data collected is complete in June 2022.

MARAE COVID-19 RESPONSE METHODS

The methods employed by each marae to respond to the needs of their whānau first and foremost, and then the wider community, during Covid-19 have varied from marae to marae according to their niche in the community, their capacity and their capability to divert their energies into crisis-intervention mode. What follow are the main methods, and how these were implemented during the lockdown periods.

Communication

For Māori, marae are central hubs of the community where community cultural events and activities occur; however, marae in general have become more known to the wider public through opening their doors to communities in crisis, with the likes of natural disasters (Phibbs et al., 2015) in particular and in more recent years offering shelter to homeless individuals and families (Lee-Morgan et al., 2018; Dennis, 2019). Marae are increasingly involved in community responses to crisis situations and emergencies as key sites of information and communication.

In the Covid-19 2020 pandemic the marae social-media platforms became the digital kūmara vine (localised version of the grapevine) of information dissemination. Notices about what services and supplies were available came via text and social media; up-to-date information about care and protection protocols were circulated regularly; promotion of specialist agency support services for various needs was made available; locations and times of how communities could access kai (food) were also shared.

Additional to this was the priority of communication with kaumātua, which required a different strategy. Concern for their social isolation and loneliness meant that contactless visits with rongoā (traditional herbal/healing modalities) and/or the provision of cooked meals became a way in which to support them but also a much-needed means of communication. The lack of confidence with digital communication means, and/or limited access to this technology, was definitely realised as a limitation for many kaumātua at this time. Their interest in upskilling when the opportunity arose, post the pandemic isolation phase, would be tested by each marae. The focus on kaumātua as a priority was seen as a Covid-19 response for Māori (Pihama & Lipsham, 2020; Pihama et al., 2020).

Te Kotahi ā Tāmaki, a network of 36 marae across the wider Tāmaki Makaurau isthmus, was also identified as playing a significant communication role. During the lockdowns this forum co-ordinated the relevant messaging for marae

and broke down the government communications to be user friendly and applicable for whānau Māori and South Auckland communities to follow. The network has been one of the lifelines for marae in Tāmaki Makaurau to filter the abundance of information being channelled to communities. This central point of communication assisted marae to get on with the frontline duties and built confidence that up-to-date information would continue to be received for each marae.

Sharing of resources

As a result of the research methodological approach that centres on Kaupapa Māori, a positive and open sharing of knowledge and resources occurred between the five MOKO marae. It was informal, supportive and effective. For instance, two of the five marae – Manurewa and Papakura – became recognised sites for Covid-19 testing and Covid-19 vaccinations. Recognised as successful health providers, both marae have existing hauora (health) clinics contracted by Counties Manukau District Health Board. Setting up testing and vaccinations (not a straightforward operation) was a significant achievement. Papakura Marae became the first drive-through vaccination service in Aotearoa (Mayron, 2021).

The response of Papatūānuku Kōkiri Marae, known for their work with organic kai and food security, to the community was to receive provisions from food suppliers and to set up a drive-through fresh-produce distribution service. Their whole philosophy is to teach people how to grow their own kai and develop sustainable-living know-how; therefore, their distribution of fresh produce enhanced the notion of a foodbank service and came with the opportunity to propagate seedlings and be given recipes to learn how to cook different vegetables.

Makaurau and Mataatua Marae whānau continued to work with traditional Māori healing modalities on site. Both these marae were able to reciprocate the provision of kai supplies that were shared from the other marae, with rongoā Māori.

Super service hubs

While highlighting, above, some of the many specific service activities of each marae, every marae found it necessary to move out of 'business as usual' to respond accordingly to the needs of their communities during Covid-19. All five MOKO marae extended themselves to host different services on site. Importantly, each marae became a food outlet, and worked collaboratively with government and other community agencies, to review their modus operandi and to redeploy their workforce to frontline essential-worker duties.

The MRC weekly forum served as a unique space for each to share their experiences, to reflect on their respective marae capabilities in their Covid-19 responsiveness to their communities, and deliberate on their commonalities. This has fostered a strong solution-seeking culture that has grown in the collective as the need to work together across South Auckland has become increasingly necessary and beneficial for each marae. The diversity of responses from each marae over this period has illustrated the versatility of marae as community hubs that have been led by their intrinsic role to look after the wellbeing of people, to lean into the space of support, relief and assistance, unlike many mainstream services that simply closed their doors to protect their employees. The methods each marae employed have been cultural responses within their capability. When approached by external organisations with collaboration options and resources, marae have usually taken up the challenge and modelled their ability to adapt, co-operate and override any risk aversity on the part of these organisations (Durie, 2001).

DISCUSSION – PAKARI

Resilience can be measured by the ability for a socio-economic system to function in crises and adapt to change without major structural collapse, as articulated by Kawharu et al. (2015). The MOKO marae are exemplars of adaptation and self-organisation and therefore, in relation to this definition, resilient. Penehira et al. (2014) provide a critique of the notion of resilience through a Kaupapa Māori lens that offers a definition that Māori communities can

resonate with, and shape what resilience can look like to them in reconciling the response of places like marae to times of ongoing adversity in their communities:

We seek a concept of resilience that emerges from our own realities, that speaks to our individual and collective selves, that recognises colonisation as a constant adversity, and that supports acts of resistance in order to dismantle colonialism and re-establish Māori and Indigenous self-determination. (p. 108)

The mātaawaka marae of South Auckland in this project (Manurewa, Papatūānuku and Papakura Marae) are products of urbanisation, as part of the colonisation process. Alongside these urban marae are the mana whenua marae that have been the original inhabitants and kaitiaki for hundreds of years. When we examine the idea of resilience in this landscape, we must look to the past to understand the extent of change that has impacted the marae and kāinga in South Auckland.

Of the five marae involved in MOKO, Makaurau is the only mana whenua marae. The people of this whenua are Ngāti Mahuta, Te Ahiwaru and Te Waiohua. Ihumātao is the oldest continuously occupied papakāinga (original homebase, communal Māori land) in Tāmaki Makaurau (McKibbin, 2019). The city has grown up around this site and urbanisation has encroached on the kāinga with intensive industrial activity and the establishment of Auckland International Airport. The waste disposal that saw the development of sewerage treatment in Ihumātao in the 1950s, and air pollutants from the close proximity to the airport and motorway, has had a serious impact on the traditional food sources and quality of water that sustained many generations at Ihumātao. The land where Makaurau Marae is situated once provided acres of maara (gardens) that supplied both hapū and early settlers in Auckland (Stone, 2001).

The resilience factor for this community is that they still exist. There are approximately 87 homes that remain as part of the papakāinga and 80% of the residents have whakapapa (lineage, genealogical) connection to the land and the marae (Ngā Wai a Te Tūi, 2020). Their history pre-dates that of the other four marae in the MOKO research project, and they have the lived experience of defending their land, protecting their natural resources and building a future of hope for their mokopuna (grandchildren, descendants). They have relationships with all the other marae in South Auckland as mana whenua and have been subjected to the various pressures directly related to the government's land development and housing policies. They have had to accommodate the cultural demands of the surge of Māori population to the city, to adapt and acclimatise to built environmental changes, and to extend their manaakitanga (generosity) to the manuhiri (guest, visitor) marae in their local vicinity.

At the same time, there is the phenomenon of the *rapidly* increasing population of Māori in South Auckland communities who have left behind the safety and stability of their iwi roots, encountering a whole new conglomeration of economic, social and cultural disconnection. Subjected to assimilation schemes like 'pepper-potting,' in which affordable or social housing is distributed among privately owned dwellings, Māori have suffered cultural dislocation and been driven to re-create spaces to live, socialise and cohabit as Māori (Haami, 2018).

Durie (2011) best describes pepper-potting as a housing policy that in effect sprinkled Māori families amongst Pākehā families in the urban centres as a way to disperse Māori families and assist full integration and actively discourage tribal organisation. Hence, the resolve for Māori to urgently and purposefully seek out the development of marae in the urban environment:

Disruption of communities shifting away from the papakāinga due to internal and external forces led to adaptation. The Urbanised Māori were forced to examine what they needed to do to survive this disruption. This self-examination led to innovation and the growth of a strong resilience; they survived by re-creating a cultural paradigm for living in new urban environments. (Haami, p. 244)

The five MOKO marae are testimony to the level of conviction that their forebears had to endure to assure the survival of their descendants in this urban environment. Their resolve to reassign the marae as a known infrastructure and cultural bastion of Māori resistance and endurance has served to support the progress of future generations in this setting. In order to create communities of resilience, a response is needed to combat the

detrimental effects of urbanisation, which has isolated kāinga and communities from their marae, subsequently constraining the ability for marae to enable Māori to fully 'live as Māori' (Durie, 2001). Māori communities traditionally cohered around the marae and the notion of kāinga ora as the basis for wellbeing.

This research has highlighted that during 2020–21, the role of these marae in servicing whole communities during Covid-19 has been no mean feat, and indisputably a demonstration of resilience. Covid-19 has inadvertently provided a spotlight on just how versatile, adaptive, agile and capable marae are in providing relief and support in so many different ways, for the masses. Kukutai et al. (2020) reiterate the long experience that marae and their well-established networks have in dealing with impacts of natural disasters, pandemics and ongoing impacts of colonialism.

Reflecting on the stance of resilience for Indigenous peoples by Penehira et al. (2014), the learning for government agents and agencies has been huge and immediate as a result of working in collaboration with Māori communities responding to the pandemic. The government's need to draw from the strengths in communities to mobilise and protect themselves has provided innovative, proactive and practical solutions to their usual decision-making protocols. Initial findings suggest that this experience has challenged government services to do things differently, and support effective and resourceful approaches to protect whole communities from adverse health outcomes.

Some of the other initial positive themes emerging at this stage in the project, particularly from the stakeholder interviews, concern:

- A recognition of the reach of marae to the most marginalised and vulnerable people in their communities
- A new appreciation and acknowledgement of the capacity of each marae to mobilise a workforce
- An easy sharing of power to achieve the same outcomes
- More meaningful understanding of how to collaborate with shared leadership
- Exercising a model of higher trust and relinquishing of needing to be in control
- Learning to do things differently
- A genuine desire to work together more proactively with marae in the future

For the marae whānau themselves their experiences has led to:

- Becoming more strategic in how to access resources
- Collaborating with other services to be effective in their communities
- Working to strengths and working within their specialised niche
- Recognising a priority role has been to provide cultural stability – tangihanga (protocols for caring for their loved ones passing during lockdown), māuiui (in poor health, or ailing), karakia (spiritual guidance and protection), wairuatanga (spiritual wellbeing)
- Manaaki tangata (care for people) is whatever it takes – kai, care, communication, employment, education, advocacy, transport, rongoā (traditional modes of healing)
- Keeping lines of communication open from marae to marae
- Being available and responsive to the highest needs – kaumātua (elderly), whānau with children, those experiencing loss of income, those without a fixed abode
- Having ultimate confidence and assurance that the marae is the place to seek help
- The opportunity to review the marae's continuity policies on maintaining tikanga to support whānau, e.g., tangihanga and hui (gatherings)

The analysis is ongoing for MOKO and the emergence of common themes will enrich the accounts of how the five particular marae in South Auckland have featured positively in the pandemic support and recovery reflections.

RESULTS

The initial results discussed here relate to the experience and response of the five marae during Covid-19 in the early stages of 2020, to the latest experience of the Delta lockdown in the final months of 2021. A report due later in 2022 will present the full results of the research.

The MOKO research project has been in a prime position to have an overview of these developments, and to be able to give a commentary of observations at many levels for the five marae in this pandemic response space.

Firstly, the increased collaboration with government agencies, not-for-profit community-sector organisations and services has demonstrated for all parties the fruits of working closely together with a shared kaupapa (purpose). For the marae it has brought the opportunity to not only be recognised, but resourced accordingly as community hubs, and enabled a Kaupapa Māori approach to wellbeing to be actualised, and recognised by their non-Māori partners (Pihama et al., 2020). In contrast to the conventional and risk-averse nature of contracting with government agencies, whereby marae are accustomed to a very formalised, transactional contracting relationship, the urgency and enormity of the task to provide relief and service provision to huge populations on the ground in South Auckland has deemed it necessary to relax some contracting formalities and demonstrate an increase in trust. In discussion with one of the MRCs (H. Ropati, personal communication, June 10, 2020), it was suggested that this has impacted positively in removing the competitive nature of marae needing to prove their benefit and reach in order to resource their community activities, not only in comparison to other marae, but also with other local community-service providers.

Secondly, marae have had to become more strategic in order to operate within their capacity. Some have expanded their specialist roles, as previously stated, resulting in hauora/health clinics and services in Manurewa and Papakura Marae becoming sites for Covid-19 testing and vaccination.

Papatūanuku Kōkiri Marae diversified with their provision of fresh vegetables, fruit and fish supplies, and increased the promotion of cooked meals being prepared at the marae and offered out through a social media notice and collection system. Today they are receiving an increased number of donations from food suppliers and businesses on a weekly basis, and therefore have needed to become an organised distribution point. They have also maintained a meals-on-wheels type service for kaumātua and disabled community members. Manurewa Marae retained their foodbank facilities, which were initially a temporary Covid-19 relief initiative in 2020, and now operate with volunteers and paid staff as a result of learning that the demand in their community for food security needs to have more long-term investment. Papakura Marae have streamlined their kai distribution to a contact, korero (discuss) and drive-through-and-collect system. Their wraparound services for whānau have also increased due to demand. Mataatua Marae's experience from 2020 was centred around looking after the kaumātua – providing someone to talk to, doing shopping and runs for medication or doctors' appointments, as well as delivering cooked meals. The experiences of Mataatua Marae highlighted the limited access and knowledge that many of the kaumātua have around digital technologies, and the socially isolating factors that Covid-19 presented. They found that kaumātua were not receiving information as regularly as everyone else, for example health and safety notices, nor did they have access to services. There was a grieving, too amongst kaumātua for the loss of contact with their whānau, their peers and, in particular, contact with mokopuna.

Mataatua Marae knew from the first Covid-19 lockdown that kaumātua needed help to be digitally connected to reduce their social isolation. Utilising their strong working relationship with Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, the marae was able to be proactive in hosting a programme called Kanorau Digital, specifically designed to help kaumātua become confident and familiar with their digital devices and in using the internet. This programme was brought to the marae, and kaumātua were supported to attend; they learned to increase their use of digital technology as a strategy to keep them connected to their whānau. Increased online communication has become a reality for all five marae, to keep their whānau safe and connected.

Makaurau Marae do not consider themselves to be a service-provider marae. The marae happened to be closed during the first lockdown in 2020 for car-park renovations, therefore the support extended to their papakāinga was

generated at a whānau level. Whānau mobilised to keep close communications using social media and they drew on support from whanaunga/relatives' marae to supply hygiene packs and kai supplies. Their focus was on:

- Keeping their maara and seed banks attended to
- Production of rongoā Māori
- Providing online entertainment and outdoor activities for tamariki (children) wellbeing
- Sharing skills and advice around property maintenance
- Kaitiaki responsibilities on the whenua
- Recognising the entrepreneurial skill-sets that were harnessed and developed to create self-employment
- Strategic planning that resulted in designating project teams to get moving on hapū development projects

For many whānau of Makaurau Marae, in particular those that live within the papakāinga of Ihumātao, their time was productively utilised in reflection, re-setting, and building future plans as a hapū.

In this longest and most recent lockdown in 2021, Makaurau Marae were actively prepared to respond to their whānau needs and had the good fortune of observing the kind of interventions other marae had taken on to support their local communities. Compared to the first Covid-19 lockdown, Makaurau Marae have felt more prepared in the second Covid-19 wave of the Delta variant. According to the whānau, the marae infrastructure has been more co-ordinated, with pandemic policies put in place. This, alongside strengthened stakeholder relationships, has resulted in improved communication across the papakāinga and the provision of wraparound support for whānau.

CONCLUSION

He toka tū moana

As durable as a rock pounded by the sea

Respected Kaupapa Māori academic Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith encourages us to appreciate the role of researchers during a pandemic; in our case, the privileged position that the MOKO research project has had as being both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in this time of change. Smith argues that the role of researchers is to think, observe, reflect, and observe some more. It involves stepping back a bit and documenting what is happening, and looking at what is not happening. She says the Covid-19 incident "throws up a range of issues that researchers will be drawn into" (Knowledge in Indigenous Networks, 2020). It is with this insight that we have been able to reflect on the experience of our marae partners in the MOKO project, and observe their proficiency in taking care of their communities, in their own way, in a time of worldwide pandemic.

The wellbeing of South Auckland communities has been a huge responsibility for community leaders, in mobilising services while engaging government for resourcing and being open to the natural convergence of a collaboration roll-out (Knowledge in Indigenous Networks, 2020). Marae have had a key role in the Covid-19 response for communities, as illustrated through the five MOKO marae. The interaction and alliance of community services across communities and with government agencies has been a shared response. Within the MOKO project we have witnessed that the existence of open lines of communication, shared resources, co-operative action, and pooling together intelligence and expertise within communities and alongside marae, has set a new and healthy precedent for community-led development.

However, the disparity between local council and government resourcing of community services and the level of funding allocated to marae still exists and is one example of the issues that continue to plague marae development. Another is the hardship, poverty, increased domestic violence, loneliness, confinement and stress, and many whānau struggling to keep their heads above the waterline in South Auckland. The five marae have come to witness this first hand.

Ultimately, the efforts of many marae whānau contributing to the manaakitanga of other whānau is a phenomenon observed by the MOKO researchers, with mahi aroha (provision of food, healthcare and social connectivity) providing relief for those in need. Cram (2020) argues that in these Covid-19 times a vital indicator of Māori capacity to participate in mahi aroha has been affordable housing, providing a secure home base. She attributes the ability to reach out and support others to people having a sense of tūrangawaewae (place of belonging) by way of their housing circumstances. Without financial burden or health worries due to insecure housing circumstances, whānau Māori are more actively engaged in mahi aroha (volunteering) and the uplifting of others. We have seen the outcomes of this mahi aroha through the MOKO project.

The whakataukī (proverb) above is a testimony of the resilience each community has demonstrated and, in South Auckland, how the concept of marae and all it stands for has been the rock.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special acknowledgement goes to the five South Auckland marae involved in the research: Makaurau Marae, Ihumātao, Māngere; Papatūānuku Kōkiri Marae, Māngere; Mataatua Marae, Māngere; Manurewa Marae, Manurewa; Papakura Marae, Papakura. Most importantly, a particular mention to Ngā Puna o Ngā Marae who contributed to this article. Tangata ako ana i te kāenga, te tūranga ki te marae, taua ana; a person nurtured in the community contributes strongly to society. Nei ra he mihi mahana ki Ngā Puna o Ngā Marae.

Our gratitude extends to our colleague Marie Shannon with Tūāpapa Rangahau for her support.

We also wish to acknowledge the funding from Resilience National Science Challenge that has enabled the creative pikitia series to be produced, an example of which has been showcased in this article.

REFERENCES

- Bishop, R., & Glynn, T. (1999). Researching in Māori contexts: An interpretation of participatory consciousness. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 20(2), 167–82.
- Cram, F. (2020). Mahi Aroha; Aroha ki te tangata. *MAI Journal of Indigenous Scholarship*, 9(4), 3–6. <https://doi.org/10.20507/MAIJournal.2020.9.4.1>
- Dennis, H. (2019). *Aue te mamae: Exploring Te Puea Memorial Marae's 'Te Manaaki Tangata Programme' as an Indigenous response to homelessness in Tāmaki Makaurau* [Master's thesis]. Unitec Institute of Technology. <https://hdl.handle.net/10652/4806>
- Durie, M. (1998). *Te mana, te kawanatanga. The politics of Māori self-determination*. Oxford University Press.
- Durie, M. (2001). *Mauri ora: The dynamics of Māori health*. Oxford University Press.
- Durie, M. (2011). *Ngā tini whetu: Navigating Māori futures*. Huia Publishers.
- Elkington, B., Jackson, M., Kiddle, R., Mercier, O., Ross, M., Smeaton, J., & Thomas, A. (2020). *Imagining decolonisation*. Bridget Williams Books.
- George, L. (2010). *Tradition, invention and innovation: Multiple reflections of an urban marae* [Doctoral thesis]. Massey University. <http://muir.massey.ac.nz/handle/10179/1251>
- Haami, B. (2018). *Urban Māori: The second great migration*. Oratia Books.
- Hall, A. (2012). Kāinga: Healing home with Indigenous knowledge. *Āta: Journal of Psychotherapy Aotearoa New Zealand*, 16(1), 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.9791/ajpanz.2012.04>
- Henry, L. (2021). Whenua Māori and state planning. In C. Hill (Ed.), *Kia whakanuia te whenua: People, place, landscape* (pp. 107–17). Mary Egan Publishing.
- Hoskins, R., Lee-Morgan, J., Know, W., Dennis, H., Henry, L., Nathan, L., Smiler R., & Ratana, M. (2019). *Tūranga ki te marae, e tau ana: Reimagining marae-based kāinga in Tāmaki Makaurau*. Ngā Wai a Te Tūi Press.
- Kawharu, M. (2014). *Maranga mai! Te Reo and marae in crisis?* Auckland University Press.
- Kawharu, M., Tapsell, P., & Woods, C. (2015). Indigenous entrepreneurship in Aotearoa New Zealand. The takarangi framework of resilience and innovation. *Journal of Enterprising Communities, People and Places in the Global Economy*, 11(1), 20–38. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEC-01-2015-0010>
- Knowledge in Indigenous Networks (KIN). (2020, April 7). *This is not our apocalypse. Dr Linda Smith gives her take on COVID-19* [Webinar]. KIN. <https://www.indigenouknowledgegenetwork.net>
- Kukutai, T., McIntosh, T., Barnes, H. M., & McCreanor, T. (2020). New normal: Same inequities or engaged Te Tiriti partnership? *MAI Journal*, 9(4), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.20507/MAIJournal.2020.9.4.3>
- Lee, J. (2009). Decolonising Māori narratives: Pūrākau as a method. *MAI Review*, 2(3), 1–12.
- Lee, J. (2012). Marae ā kura. Tracing the birth of marae in schools. *Te Māori | Ngā Ara Rapu Mātauranga – Māori Education*, 2, 3–11. <https://doi.org/10.18296/set.0375>
- Lee-Morgan, J. B. J., Hoskins, R., & Mahuta, N. (2017). Kāinga tahi, kāinga rua: A kaupapa Māori response of Te Puea Memorial Marae. *Parity*, 30(8), 13–14. <https://hdl.handle.net/10289/12517>
- Lee-Morgan, J., Hoskins, R., Te Nana, R., Rua, M., Knox, W., & Te Puea Memorial Marae. (2018). *Ahakoā te aha, mahingia te mahi: In service to homeless whānau in Tāmaki Makaurau. A report of the Manaaki Tangata Programme at Te Puea Memorial Marae*. Ngā Wai a Te Tūi Press.
- Lee-Morgan, J., Penetito, K., Mane, J., & Eruera, N. (2021). Marae Ora Kāinga Ora: Indigenous health and wellbeing solutions via time-honoured Indigenous spaces. *Genealogy*, 5(4), 99. <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy5040099>
- Mayron, S. (2021, September 1). First drive-through vaccination centre opens in Auckland's Papakura. *Stuff*. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/coronavirus/300396676/covid19-first-marae-drivethrough-vaccination-centre-opens-in-aucklands-papakura>
- McKibbin, Philip. (2019). *Pania Newton: Interview with Philip McKibbin*. He Ika Haehae Kupenga. <https://www.heikahaehaekupenga.com/panianewton.html>
- Mead, H. (2003). *Tikanga Māori: Living by Māori values*. Huia Publishers.
- Ngā Wai a Te Tūi. (2020). *Marae – activators of manaakitanga. Stories of aroha from South Auckland*. Unitec Research Symposium 2020 [PowerPoint slides].
- Penehira, M., Green, A., Smith, L. T., & Aspin, C. (2014). Māori and Indigenous views on R and R: Resistance and Resilience. *MAI Journal*, 3(2), 96–110. <https://hdl.handle.net/10289/10016>

- Phibbs, S., Kenney, C., & Solomon, M. (2015). Ngā mōwaho: An analysis of Māori responses to the Christchurch Earthquakes. *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, 10(2), 72–82. <http://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2015.1066401>
- Pihama, L., & Lipsham, M. (2020). Noho haumarū: Reflecting on Māori approaches to staying safe during Covid-19 in Aotearoa (New Zealand). *Journal of Indigenous Social Development*, 9(3), 92–101. <https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/jisd/article/view/70788>
- Pihama, L., Smith, L. T., Smith, G. H. (2020). *Kaupapa Māori theory and methodology series 16 04 2020*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKUuX1PFbSc>
- Salmond, M. A. (1972). *Hui: A study of Maori ceremonial gatherings*. University of Pennsylvania.
- Stone, R. C. J. (2001). *From Tamaki-Makau-Rau to Auckland*. Auckland University Press.
- Stuff. (2022). *Auckland Star Archives*. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/pou-tiaki/300532442/a-state-of-denial-and-the-ongoing-impact-of-generations-of-damage>
- Tapsell, P. (2002). Marae and tribal identity in urban Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Pacific Studies* (July), 141–171. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279186299_MARAE_AND_TRIBAL_IDENTITY_IN_URBAN_AOTEAROANEW_ZEALAND
- Te Puni Kōkiri. (2018). *Annual report for the year ended 30 June 2018*. <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/a-matou-mohiotanga/corporate-documents/annual-report-for-the-year-ended-30-june-2018>
- Thornley, L., Ball, J., Signal, L., Lawson-Te Aho, K., & Rawson, E. (2015). Building community resilience: Learning from the Canterbury earthquakes. *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*, 10(1), 23–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2014.934846>
- Walker, R. J. (1990). *Ka whawhai tonu mātou: Struggle without end*. Penguin New Zealand.

AUTHORS

Professor Jenny Lee-Morgan (Ngāti Mahuta, Te Ahiwaru) is the Director of Ngā Wai ā Te Tūi, Māori and Indigenous Research Centre, Unitec, Te Pūkenga, and has a PhD in education. Jenny leads the Marae Ora, Kāinga Ora (MOKO) Project. In 2016 she was given Te Tohu Pae Tawhiti Award in recognition of high-quality research and significant contribution to the Māori education sector by the New Zealand Association for Research in Education.

Kim Penetito (Ngāti Hauā, Ngāti Tamaterā) is a Research Assistant with the Marae Ora, Kāinga Ora research project for Ngā Wai ā Te Tūi, Unitec, Te Pūkenga, and has an MA in Māori development.

Dr Jo Mane (Ngāpuhi) is a Researcher for Ngā Wai ā Te Tūi, Unitec, Te Pūkenga, and has a PhD in Education. Jo's key research interests are with Kaupapa Māori research, community development, Māori education and Māori development.

Ngahuia Eruera (Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Tūhoe, Tūhourangi) is the Research Manager for Ngā Wai ā Te Tūi, Unitec, Te Pūkenga, and has a Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Management. She has worked in operations management and leadership roles within the tertiary education sector for 20 years.