**Mātai mokopuna –**

**he tirohanga wairua, hinengaro, tinana, whatumanawa**

**Project Director:** Hoana McMillan; Linda Mitchell (Advisor)

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**Partnerships:**

Te Kōhanga Reo ki Rotokawa

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**Background:**

In 2017 Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo was published in collaboration with Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust, formalising assessment or ‘mātai mokopuna’ practices within kōhanga reo. Mātai mokopuna makes visible the mana of mokopuna through discussions relating to the taumata whakahirahira (cultural settings), and the Māori dimensions of wairua (spirituality), tinana (physicality), hinengaro (cognition) and whatumanawa (emotion), hereafter referred to as ‘te katoa o te mokopuna’. Underpinned by Kaupapa Māori principles the participatory action research project explored how whānau and kaiako used the taumata whakahirahira and te katoa o te mokopuna to give expression to the mana of mokopuna.

**Aims of the Research:**

The overarching research question for this project was: How do whānau and kaiako give expression to the mana of mokopuna through the dimensions of hinengaro (cognition), wairua (spirituality), tinana (physicality) and whatumanawa (emotion)?

**Research Questions:**

This question was explored through the following sub-questions:

1. What do whānau and kaiako understand in relation to mana, the taumata whakahirahira and the dimensions of hinengaro, wairua, tinana, and whatumanawa?
2. How does the Te Tauira Whāriki model support whānau and kaiako discussions of hinengaro, wairua, tinana, and whatumanawa?
3. What are whānau aspirations for their children and how do these influence whānau and kaiako discussions of mana, hinengaro, wairua, tinana, and whatumanawa?

**Why is this research important?**

Assessment within kōhanga reo has not been afforded the same attention and support as has been received by the early childhood sector. The limited research on assessment within kōhanga reo has consequently led to expectations that kōhanga reo approach assessment in the same way as their early childhood counterparts. This research acknowledges mātai mokopuna as the approach used by kōhanga reo. The opportunity to recognise how the mana of mokopuna is strengthened through the taumata whakahirahira and te katoa o te mokopuna acknowledges the legitimacy of Māori value systems.

**Key Findings:**

The key findings of the research showed whānau and kaiako expressions of mana were represented by one of three progressive stages. At each stage whānau and kaiako expressions increased in complexity as they gained confidence and knowledge about Te Whāriki a te Kōhanga Reo, specifically the taumata whakahirahira and te katoa o te mokopuna (the dimensions of hinengaro, wairua, tinana, and whatumanawa).

**Potential Research Impact?**

This project has offered insights into how kaiako and whānau can give expression to the mana of mokopuna. The findings suggest there are many ways to give expression to the mana of mokopuna as influenced by the aspirations of parents, knowledge of the taumata whakahirahira and te katoa o te mokopuna. To give expression to te katoa o te mokopuna is also a progressive learning journey as whānau and kaiako find new ways to carve and shape out mātai mokopuna from Māori perspectives.  Generating understanding will help avoid hegemonic discourses which impact on Māori lives, and the ongoing prejudice of kōhanga reo. Beyond kōhanga reo, the project invites conversations within educational services to reconsider the way in which we see the role of whānau in the lives of learners.