

Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua

A case study of how Māori organisations support older workers

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1. SUMMARY

This report sets out a case study of a Māori organisation—Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua—and its approach to supporting older workers. The case study is part of a long running research programme at Massey University studying health, work, retirement, and ageing in the New Zealand population, with a particular focus on older workers. ‘Older worker’ in Aotearoa New Zealand is generally defined by the age of eligibility for the state pension (NZ Super at age 65 years) and is used as a proxy. In the Massey University study the threshold for inclusion was set at age 55 and over to include those older workers who had not yet reached eligibility for NZ Super. In this case study, older workers are referred to as *kaumātua*. *Kaumātua* combines age, experience, wisdom, dignified conduct, service, and community esteem and is generally understood to refer to an elderly man or woman who identifies as Māori. The age range for *kaumātua* in Māori culture is a little less clear. For instance, a younger person may be regarded as a *kaumātua* because they possess the qualities of *kaumātua*.

Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua is a kaupapa Māori health provider that has delivered home-based support services, *whānau ora* services, and primary health care since its formation in 1991. The organisation has grown rapidly, with annual income rising from \$3.4 million in 2015 to \$20.2 million in 2021. By the end of 2020, Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua employed 540 people, of which 40 were permanent full time staff and 500 were part time staff employed mainly as support workers. Cultural values in Te Poutokomanawa o Te Puna Ora are at the heart of the organisation’s approach to holistic health and wellbeing, which is reflected in training, support, and advice to help staff implement this framework. The home-based support service has 640 clients and 414 support workers, with the youngest support worker aged 18 and the oldest 76. Around 30% of the 115 in-house support workers are over age 50.

Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua employs *kaumātua* as support workers who deliver services often to *whānau*. A wide range of support services, incentives, initiatives, and programmes are offered for its employees, some of which are likely to be

especially appealing to *kaumātua*, for instance, free doctors’ visits via the organisation’s GP clinic. Flexible work arrangements and a managerial priority on the health, safety, and wellbeing of workers means *kaumātua* are supported to work within limits (hours and tasks) that are safe and comfortable for them. Training is customised to the needs of *kaumātua*, including use of *te reo Māori*. Training is encouraged because gaining qualifications increases pay, but also effectiveness. Inter-generational tensions between younger and older workers were noted, which appear to manifest as differences in perception and attitude toward work rather than conflict. With growth anticipated, there is scope for Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua to refine its policies, programmes, and initiatives in support of *kaumātua* workers, advisors, and clients, and their *whānau*.

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2.2. CONTACTS

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3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present a case study of why and how a particular Māori organisation-Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua-supports older workers to remain in work where it is their wish to do so.

3.2 HEALTH, WORK AND RETIREMENT STUDY

This case study is part of a Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) Endeavour Fund research programme called 'Maximising workforce participation for older New Zealanders: Opportunities, challenges and prospects' (hereafter 'older people in work'), led by Massey University's Professor Fiona Alpass as science leader between 2017 and 2023. The older people in work research programme builds on the New Zealand Health, Work and Retirement Study-a longitudinal postal and interview study run by the Health and Ageing Research Team (HART) at Massey University's School of Psychology. Since 2006, the Health, Work and Retirement (NZHWR) survey has been administered nine times (Health and Aging Research Team, 2022). The older people in work research featured Māori, Pasifika, and mainstream organisational case studies as well as research on senior entrepreneurship-Māori and non-Māori.

3.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This case study is intended to provide a Māori perspective on what a New Zealand Māori organisation is doing and can do to recruit, develop, and retain older workers who may identify as kaumātua. The primary research question is:

How can government, employers, and workers maximise older New Zealanders' ongoing participation in the workforce?

Secondary research questions are:

1. What are employers' attitudes towards older workers?
2. What do employers need to work with an ageing workforce and to support older workers?
3. What successful practices and strategies are used to recruit, retrain, retain, and support older workers?

3.4 DEFINING KAUMĀTUA

Kaumātua is a Māori language word which ordinarily means elderly person or people of either gender, which is not signified by the passing of an age threshold (Durie, 2003; Mead, 2003), but is generally associated with the role of being a grandparent (Moorfield, 2023), and whose parents are no longer living (Muru-Lanning et al., 2021). Kaumātua carries a meaning in te ao Māori (Māori society) beyond age, referring to elders who possess cultural knowledge and render support to whānau (family) and non-whānau members, and are recognised as esteemed community members for their longevity and leadership (Higgins & Meredith, 2013).

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

This research was conducted following the procedures approved by Massey University Human Ethics Committee on 12 December 2018 (SOA 18/75 refers). The ethics approval was for conducting research on older workers and kaumātua in Aotearoa New Zealand, which is part of a long-running research programme at Massey University studying health, work, retirement, and ageing in the New Zealand population. To align with the goal of Vision Mātauranga, which is unlocking the innovation potential of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) (Martin & Hazel, 2020), this case study adopted kaupapa Māori as it applies to organisational research (Henry & Pene, 2001) within the context of university ethical standards (Massey University, 2010, 2017) as the primary research paradigm. This paradigm means the research aims, processes, and outcomes are guided by Māori needs, priorities, aspirations, and expectations, ensuring the research is done in ways that are ethically and culturally appropriate, and beneficial to the participants and other Māori stakeholders. This research approach is achieved when Māori lead, conduct, participate in, and benefit from research with them, about them, and for them. Such an approach expects to reflect Māori aspirations for self-determination and wellbeing through tikanga Māori (Māori values), te reo Māori (Māori language), mātauranga Māori, kaupapa Māori (Māori philosophy), and wawata Māori (Māori aspirations) (Smith et al., 2016). A few essential measurements to achieve these expectations include respect for te tino rangatiratanga (Māori self-determination) under te Tiriti o Waitangi and provision for partnership-based approaches and power-sharing with Māori (Orange, 2011; Tawhai & Gray-Sharp, 2011). This means Māori should be informed to say yes or no to the research, adequately resourced as a partner, and benefit from research (Powick, 2003). Additionally, as kaupapa Māori were the guiding principles of this research, the mana of participants was acknowledged and enhanced through establishing relationships based on whakawhanaungatanga,

encouraging and supporting the use of tikanga and te reo, providing communication channels of feedback and research findings, and offering koha (gift) as an acknowledgement of time and knowledge.

4.2 CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

The principal researcher (Dr Jason Mika) conducted four interviews online with Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua members in January and November 2022. The positions of interviewees in Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua varied between board, managerial, operational and advisory roles, which enabled the researcher to obtain different perspectives on how the organisation supports its older workers. Each interview was approximately 90 minutes and was conducted in the form of kōrero, informal and fluid conversations intended to establish whanaungatanga, common connections through whakapapa (genealogy) and shared interests. Interview questions were developed and asked during interviews (see Annex 3 for the interview schedule).

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

Upon completing each interview, the participants were acknowledged for their time and whakaaro (thoughts). All interviews were audiotaped, then transcribed independently. A thematic analysis of the transcriptions was undertaken to identify key themes, assessed against research questions and aims, discerning themes from the associated quotations. A draft report was shared with the organisation and a hui to discuss findings and feedback was held November 2023. This process was to include confirmation of the level of identifiability of the organisation and the use of general role 'labels' on comments from interviews.

5. ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

5.1 KAUPAPA MĀORI PROVIDER

Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua (the trust or the organisation) is a kaupapa Māori provider based in Whakatāne, mainly serving Māori clients in the Eastern Bay of Plenty (EBOP) region. Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua is dedicated to improving and enhancing the holistic wellbeing of all whānau, hapū, and iwi within the Mātaatua rohe through a kaupapa Māori framework (Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua, 2021). This purpose aligns well with the trust's mission of "me kawē tātau ki te wai-Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua is a fountain of wellbeing for our whānau who we will uplift spiritually, physically and mentally" and vision "ki te whakapiki ngā ora o te hāpori-to improve and enhance the holistic health and wellbeing of our community" (GHA, 2020, p. 69). The mission and vision of Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua further illustrate its purpose of providing quality, accessible and relevant health and wellbeing services to its clients and their whānau.

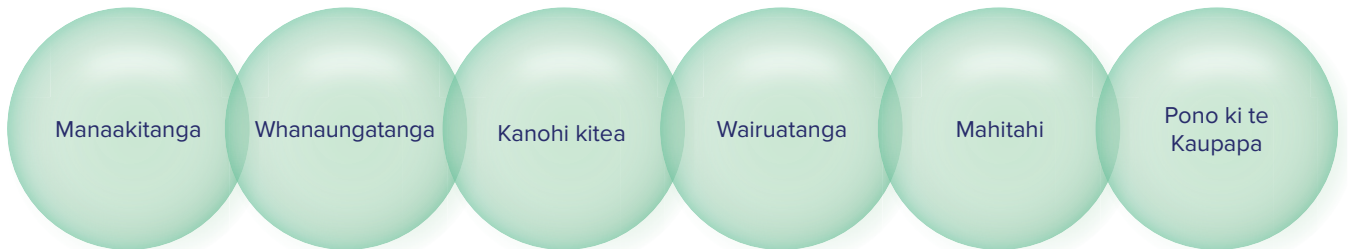
Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua values the hauora of its staff as important as its clients. "Of paramount importance is the hauora (health) and toiora (wellbeing) of our staff, clients, hāpori (communities) and the immersion of our cultural framework Te Poutokomanawa o Te Puna Ora throughout our services" (Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua, 2021, p. 5). Professionalism, integrity, and sustained work ethic reflect deep engagement and commitment to the kaupapa of Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua. For example, the management of Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua tends to explore options to support staff in areas that reflect their interest and capability rather than simply release them. Moreover, in return, the staff are responding with enthusiasm to the inclusion of Te Poutokomanawa by participating in te reo and tikanga training opportunities (GHA, 2020). This approach reflects all six values of Te Poutokomanawa o Te Puna Ora.

5.2 SERVICES AND ACTIVITY

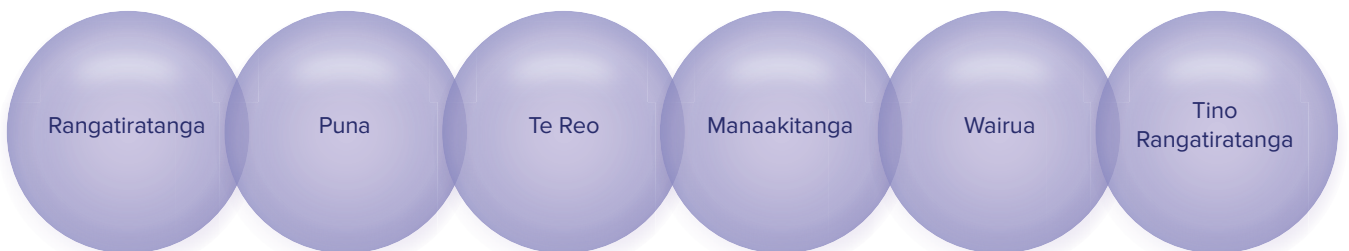
Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua has provided home-based support services, whānau ora services, and primary health care since its formation in 1991. To achieve its mission and vision (improve and enhance the holistic wellbeing of Māori communities), Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua has extended the range of services it provides to meet the needs of its communities. The organisation's services align with its values, mission and vision, which include the Health & Medical Academy, Healthy Lifestyles, Home-based Services, Covid Response, Driving Academy, He Poutama Rangatahi, Kai Programme, Ngā Mata Wai Ora, Whānau Ora, and Housing Services (Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua, 2021).

5.3 CULTURAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural values and identity are the backbone of Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua. The trust implemented a framework called Te Poutokomanawa o Te Puna Ora, within a broader vision for Māori health and wellbeing and the organisation's way of working (GHA, 2020) (see Figure 1). As a guiding philosophy, the framework identified six core ūara (values), which established the foundation of the organisation: manaakitanga (caring for others), whakawhanaungatanga (people come first), kanohi kitea (integrity), wairuatanga (spirituality), mahitahi (inclusivity), and pono ki te kaupapa (accountability) (Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua, 2019).

Figure 1 Te PoutokomanawaSource: *Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua* (2019, p. 2)**Ngā Pou o Te Ora—Horizontal Axis**

The vertical axis emerges from a kaupapa Māori methodological approach to working with Māori whānau and forms Ngā Puna o te Waiora the elements of which are whakapapa, whanaungatanga, wānanga, whakairo, and whakairihia ki te pakitara o te whare. The framework has dual facilities - it can be utilised and applied at both the operational level (i.e. on a service-by-service basis) and the strategic level (i.e. management and governance).

Ngā Puna o Te Waiora—Vertical Axis

5.4 ORGANISATIONAL GROWTH

The organisation has experienced substantial growth, with annual income rising from \$3.4 million in 2015 to an estimated \$20.2 million in 2021 (Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua, 2021). To ensure its intent is well executed and aligns with its values-based kaupapa, Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua appointed trustees who bring unique knowledge, expertise and skills, providing valuable insights, guidance, and strategies. Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua board consists of six trustees: Fiona Wiremu (Chair of Te Puna Ora & Medical Central), Brain Simpson (Deputy Chair), Karl Smith (Trustee & Chair of Finance & Audit Committee), Amohaere Tangitu (Trustee), and Kataraina Monika (Rangatahi Representative).

Apart from existing practices and strategies, Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua is also constantly reviewing its position and operations, finding ways to further improve support for its employees and clients. In an organisational review conducted in 2020, three organisational cultures that require attention were identified. They include: (1) managerial communication with employees about organisational issues; (2) tensions over payroll and billing processes; and (3) fear of being personally challenged when offering contrary views.

Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua believes that through daily communication, interaction and observation among employees, managers, and the board, highly engaged staff, clients, whānau and funders is achieved. Furthermore, Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua implements a recruitment policy to ensure the employees support the organisation's kaupapa when recruiting, ensuring the cultural values are consistent across the organisation.

workers in EBOP region (GHA, 2020).

5.5 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Employees and support workers are valued people at Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua. By the end of 2020, Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua employed 540 people, of which 40 were permanent full time equivalent (FTE) staff and 500 were part time staff employed as support workers (GHA, 2020). With the anticipation of further growth, Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua plans to keep investing in its administration, finance, communications, human resources, integration teams, and systems to fulfil worker and client needs (GHA, 2020). Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua provides training, projects, and professional development to provide employees and support workers with the resources and tools to thrive in their roles. For instance, Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua offers a distinctive support service called whānau choice, which allows the client to choose a whānau member to be their support worker. Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua provides a five-year training and development plan when a support worker accepts an employment agreement with the organisation to care for one of their whānau. This programme offers support workers sufficient time and resources to attain a level-4 qualification, with further health qualifications within reach. A Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua trainer provides industry training and assessment to support this programme. The whānau choice programme also has the potential to increase the pool of support

5.6 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Furthermore, in 2021, Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua launched its He Poutama Rangatahi (youth) programme as part of the trust's Tū Māia Rangatahi Hub in Kopeopeo and Te Ara Mahi (adult) programme which is part of the Toitū Hauora Toitū Rongoā (the Health and Medical Academy) at the campus of Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi in Whakatāne. The academy is expected to provide employment and professional development pathways for over 150 people annually into jobs across the Bay of Plenty region's health and medical sectors (Te Puna Ora o Mataatua, 2021). Another significant event that shows Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua's commitment to its employees and workers is the signing of a memorandum of understanding with Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi. The memorandum aims to "facilitate cooperation, establish and promote collaborative and mutually beneficial activities to enhance the education, training and employment goals of both institutions" (Te Puna Ora o Mataatua, 2020, p. 1).



6. FINDINGS

This section sets out the findings from interviews with four members of Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua. The four participants were asked questions about who they are and where they come from, how they define kaumātua, their role in the organisation, the employment of kaumātua and how they were supported in their roles. The first participant was an esteemed kaumātua who had been on the board for a long time, and who had been instrumental in devising the cultural framework that Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua uses to guide its governance, management, and operational activity. The second participant is a senior cultural advisor whose work moved from management to cultural advice and support. The third participant is a manager with responsibility for the delivery of the homebased care service, which employs kaumātua who care for kaumātua. The fourth participant is a coordinator with responsibility for teams who deliver homebased care for kaumātua as clients. The findings reflect the views of the participants.

6.1 A KAUMĀTUA PERSPECTIVE- PARTICIPANT 1

Defining kaumātua

As a kaumātua, you acquire a lot of respect, a lot of mana, they expect you to behave in a certain way. They want you to sit there and look serene. They don't like you interfering in their operations. Whilst your body might be frail, your mind never loses its acuteness. A lot of young people fail to realise they could harness a lot of wisdom, not just stories of yesteryear, but things of which they have no experience. They are things of tikanga. My advice in appointing CEOs is to appoint a kāhui kaumātua (a council of elders) to support them. Young people might have the qualifications, but they don't know how Māori think and work. Kaumātua support them to get a place where they can make a safe decision. My role is passing on wisdom that has been passed down to me; that knowledge is not mine, I'm a kaitiaki of that knowledge and its my responsibility to pass that on.

Role in organisations

Organisations have a monocultural view, they might see kaumātua as having important things to say, but they see us as past it. The older you get the more discerning your brain becomes, you don't waste time, you go for the jugular. As you age, because of your selectiveness and ability to cut to the chase, people think you're a grumpy old fulla, but you're conscious that your days are numbered, and you need to get the information out before that happens. Your duty as a kaitiaki is to the tuku (release) that information, rather than leave it for beyond the world of the living to go dry.

Cultural frameworks

Mai te whanautanga ki te mutunga (from birth to death)...all aspects in life Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua should be able to cater for. Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua has a poutokomanawa-based approach. Times are changing, the value of tikanga never changes. It behoves my generation to inculcate the younger generation about their responsibilities to be tika (right). Ko ngā poutokomanawa te takatūranga (the ridge poles are the basis for preparing people), adaption and adoption. It is this framework that explains why and how we do things. There is always the sociological question why we do things. I kitea e koe te pātai he aha i pēnei ai tēnei mea? (You will see the question, why is this thing like this?) That's the main question of science. You observe phenomena over time and you build a body of knowledge to explain it, Pākehā call it science, but Māori also did this. Te pānui i te hau, i te marama, koirā ngā mea hei oranga mōna (Reading the winds, the moon, those were the things that provided for his or her wellbeing). Koinā ngā taonga e mate haere (those treasures are vanishing), few rangatahi know this and practice it.

Me tuku te wairua (to release the spirit), you have to have a poutokomanawa (central ridge pole, a metaphor for a foundational framework). The one at Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua is based on adaption and adoption. As our people island-hopped to Samoa and Tonga, we adapted and adopted their knowledge and practice to our own. Centuries later,

we adapted and adopted Pākehā knowledge. It's ever evolving, not set in stone, its values are, but its practices are not.

Importance of relationships

Without whakapapa (genealogy) there is nothing. If you look at the tree, you see Tānemahuta (god of the forests), Tāwhirimātea (god of the winds). Me kapu tī, me whakawhanaungatanga te tuarua (we should have a cuppa tea, and secondly, establish relationships). Pākehā asked why is that? We need to establish a relationship, love. Me whakawhanaungatanga i te tuatahi, ki te kite he tangata pai koe (We need form a relationship first, so we can see whether you're a good person).

Māori health

It is extremely important we recognise the cultural capital of the Māori. We have institutional racism so Māori initiatives tend to die at the bureaucratic table. They won't answer the hard questions. For example, why is it that Māori are featuring high in our negative statistics? There is a threefold answer. Māori health is judged from a monocultural view. Māori don't ask kei hea te mamae? (where does it hurt?) How are your whanaunga (relations)? Pākehā will say why are you asking that? They don't realise without whanaunga ka mate te Māori (without kin, the Māori will perish). Ko taku toa ko te takitini (my strength is in the many)...your power and health is in your whanaunga (relations). My power lies not within myself, but within all my relations. The saddest case is to see Māori in old people's homes...where are the mokopuna to awhi (embrace), to manaaki (care). A doctor at the Rotorua hospital realised that Māori would recover faster if they had their relatives around them. He convinced Te Arawa to give horse paddocks to other iwi so they could come and camp. Ngāti Awa still has a paddock at Whakarewarewa. Ki te kore he whanaunga, kaore e taea te whakaora te tangata (Without relations, a person is not able to get better). Today, it's two people at a time please.

6.2 A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE- PARTICIPANT 2

From teaching to management and back again

Participant 2 grew up in Rūātoki and showed an eagerness to learn as much as possible from a young age and was one of few Māori in the valley to receive a boarding school scholarship. After realising that boarding school was not just a chance to live somewhere else, that she was carrying her parents' aspirations with her, she applied herself and trained as teacher. After graduating, she worked for three years as a primary and secondary school teacher. It was in management roles, however, that she spent much of her career, later becoming a lecturer. Her dream job was leading the Tūhoe Education Authority working with 13 schools to design a curriculum that was Tūhoe. The role at Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua has become an opportunity to embed Te Poutokomanawa in the organisation at all levels. The organisation has become highly visible in the community, which has caused some tension with other providers. The goal is to make the values live in the people, to implement the poutokomanawa framework.

Supporting older workers

An example of the kind of support Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua provides older workers is enabling this participant to transition from a management role to an advisory role with a focus on a critical question of cultural values and their impact in the organisation. Other people at the same age have retired and wonder why I am still working, it's because I love the work. The priority is making sure staff have all the skills necessary to perform well. We have a kāhui kaumatua group that sits alongside the board providing advice to the leadership team and protection for the workers because when they go out into communities you never know what they are going to face. We are bringing kaumātua in from other parts of the region as members of the kāhui. It's important that our leadership team take time to reciprocate the support they receive from kaumatua by acknowledging them and making time for them.

6.3 A MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE- PARTICIPANT 3

From mainstream to Māori health providers

Participant 3 has a background in the finance sector, but also provided homecare services for Pākehā kaumātua for 18 years. I found that they were without whānau support, which was unusual for me growing up on the marae. This caused me to think about how we could support our kaumātua-Māori and non-Māori. My thoughts ran to how we could influence the way in which Pākehā think about Māori in order to change the way things were done. Participant 3 started working in homecare for three months, but her ideas soon attracted the attention of her managers, and she became a regional manager in a mainstream health provider providing support to Māori across the motu (country). However, changes in the company meant changes for me too. During Covid-19, my children lost work. Having a home and whenua, I was able to provide space for her children to come home to. Then, we had to look for work. A job at Te Puna Ora came up and I have been here for a year. Participant 3 has seen the beautiful mahi (work) from inside and outside the organisation and she is intent on using her experience to better service the whārua (valley-based communities). The homecare services director is a new role created because of the service growth in Te Puna Ora across the Bay of Plenty region. Most homecare clients live in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, but Western Bay of Plenty is also growing. Delivering kaupapa Māori services has been beautiful, but over-servicing presents a financial risk. Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua employs seven coordinators who manage 400 homecare staff across the Bay of Plenty region.

Working in a mainstream provider was hard at first, banging your head, tick box, but contracts required them to work with Māori. At first, a Māori policy was developed, but was put on the shelf. We developed a Māori advisory board to have the ear of the board. We had senior leaders who were inclined to consider Māori kaupapa. When the organisation listened, kaupapa Māori was able to be embedded into their job descriptions and they had to action it, which was a significant advance. Relationships with Māori

were not just a one-off, but the organisation had to support and enable Māori by developing policies and services. Māori staff in the organisation was one way to achieve this, but partnerships with hapū and iwi provided influence in the region and support for the organisation. The concept of koha is used wherever you go, not in money but in terms of tautoko (support).

Partnership approach

In the Bay of Plenty, the mainstream provider of homecare developed a partnership with Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua and two other providers, an iwi and Māori provider in Tauranga, through which we were able to secure a large contract for all providers-Māori and non-Māori. An equal partnership was worked into the funding agreement, which meant no decisions could be made without equal agreement. Despite the limitations of government contracts, the partnership has been operating well for six years. The Pākehā mainstream providers allowed Māori to have an equal say at the table, to have access to resources, including sharing knowledge of their financial and client management systems, which Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua has been able to use to support its growth, going from 100 to 600 homecare clients. One of the goals of the agreement was to help Māori providers to grow, which was hard for the mainstream provider.

Whānau looking after whānau

Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua employs whānau to look after whānau. The benefit of employing whānau is that they are most likely to be honest about what is going on in the home. The service is monitored to ensure whānau receive the service. The homecare services contract was not going to work for Māori because rurality was not taken into account. Township clients had good access to other services, but Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua has clients living in Ruatāhuna, for example, who are expected to be in the same category of support to clients in Whakatāne who have good access to a GP. The evidence showed that this was not working. The funder modified the contract to reflect rurality, but homecare was still provided even if it was outside set budgets. Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua can provide wrap around support where whānau agree to this, but we seem to make do. For example, Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua has

counselling, hauora, rongoā, whānau ora, rangatahi services, and networks with other providers, to support whānau in remote areas.

Define kaumātua

Kaumātua is a title that is earned; it is not necessarily just someone who is elderly. The kaumātua that leads our whānau, leads and advises our whānau, but being seen in their whānau is something I respect and honour. Kaumātua who stay in the home, but are watching the generations they have raised, they are kaumātua. Kaumātua who are not active become weaker.

Employing kaumātua to support kaumātua

Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua employs kaumātua to provide homecare to other kaumātua. The oldest one is in his 80s. He looks after his wife who was a teacher, both of them serving their community for over 60 years. The wife did not want anyone else in the home, but to minimise the risk of him injuring his back, another support person was introduced to help with the heavier tasks. For personal care, the wife as the client wants her husband to do this. In a kaupapa Māori service, there is respect for the elderly. Kaumātua do not want others to see them and enter their personal space. When employing kaumātua it makes us think differently about our services and care. Our people were getting lonely, but care workers could only visit for 20 minutes. Whānau can provide more social and cultural support.

Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua does employ workers in the mature age groups. Some of them cannot get jobs elsewhere because of their age. The relationships, the whanaungatanga they build, is the highlight for kaumātua. Many non-Māori want to come to Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua because of the whakawhanaungatanga (relationships). That is the main difference with mainstream, Pākehā do not have whānau around. So they start to build whānau relationships with our workers.

Needs of kaumātua workers

Literacy is particular need of kaumātua workers. Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua provides training because the service requires level 2 training in the health

of the older person. We have kaimahi (workers) who provide this training as well as one-to-one computer literacy and written literacy training. We have a tutor who explains the learning and demonstrates it in te reo Māori. With qualifications, comes a pay rise, so incomes increase. Workers must have a driver's licence.

Kaumātua workers know their limits in terms of how much mahi (work) they can do each day. They do not work full time, perhaps 2-3 hours per day. The hardest part of the job is being able to vacuum a three bedroom house. Annual leave and sick leave are new kaupapa (matters) for our kaumātua. They are used to working because their whānau are the clients. Some were concerned that they would lose their pay if they took leave. We check workers to see if they need a break. There is enjoyment for whānau doing this mahi. Support workers almost become like a brother or a sister to the client. Clients have male on male preferences, but we have a wāhine dominant field. The coordination team readily supports workers, which starts with whakawhanaungatanga, asking what the support worker what they need help with to do what is hard work and an essential service. The coordinators would go to the regions once a week, taking hygiene packs, food packs, and other resources for the workers, so clients know they have wider support services available to them.

Any negative aspects

We did get some feedback from a mainstream provider about the age of our support workers, but if they can do the job, there is no problem. Independent reviews of the services are conducted and workers are supported in their roles. If workers have a disability that might prevent them from performing a task, then Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua will look at what can be done.

Cultural framework

The poutokomanawa framework was new to me. The main question for me was how the framework aligns with service and what is the evidence that it works. Whaea Haromi facilitated some training with workers to understand the framework and how it aligns with our service. The home-based support service aligns very well with the framework. The kōrero (advice) from support workers is that

the values and practices of the framework are what they do everyday in the way they welcome people, talk on the phone, or in person. The poutokomanawa is an approach unique to Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua; the training on the framework with all teams has been beneficial, including non-Māori staff who can appreciate and apply the framework. For instance, an employee originally from overseas has been inspired to learn te reo and tikanga. She was a little nervous at first but has never felt so much manaakitanga (generosity) and aroha (love) and is in awe of the working environment.

6.4 AN OPERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE- PARTICIPANT 4

Defining kaumātua

Kaumātua are well-respected in the community. If you want an age, I would say 65 and over. Another measure is that if you get into the kīrimate (mourners) and nobody kicks you out, you are a kaumātua. But if they tell you, “haere, get in the kitchen,” then you’re not ready yet. If you’re grey, you’re old. It’s that age thing aye. We’ve got a 70-year old support worker, she’s fitter and more motivated than someone much younger. I would not even call her a kaumātua, she would say “I’m not going in here (by the kīrimate),” she’d be back in the kitchen giving orders because she doesn’t think she is.

From Poroporo to Perth and back again

I was born in Whakatāne and lived at Poroporo and moved to Australia after intermediate. I met my husband, who is Tūhoe, in Perth and later returned to New Zealand. I completed a business degree in Perth and worked in disability services for 10 years starting in reception, then coordination. Te Puna Ora home-based support service is expanding into Tauranga Moana because of Te Whatu Ora referrals. Support workers provide home help, which comprises household management for elderly clients who choose to remain independent as much as possible in their own homes. Services include meal preparation, basic housework, washing, laundry, wiping, dusting, vacuuming,

personal care; shopping assistance, doctor’s clinics, and a mobile clinic. The mahi is rewarding and the older workers love it. The service operates from five sites. The oldest client is 100, a few who are 98, and the youngest is a new born.

Support for older workers

Participant 4 manages home-based support services, which has 640 clients and 414 support workers. At Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua we do not discriminate. The youngest support worker is 18, the oldest is 76. We have 115 in-house workers, and about 30% of them are over 50. Health and wellbeing of the rōpū (group) is paramount for people to be able to do the work. Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua offers wairuatanga (spirituality) sessions, holistic counselling, one-to-one mentoring, romiromi (massage), mirimiri (massage), and aerial yoga. Additional training is available for workers 50 and over. We have 70-year old support workers because the whānau have requested them. The training is open-book learning, it is not like going back to school. We offer discounted eye, hearing, vision checks for support workers. Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua has its own medical centre and as an employee doctor’s consultations are free, which is a significant benefit. We have subsidies for diabetes checks. We do not have health insurance or tangi (funeral) insurance, but it’s in the pipeline. A creche for support workers mokopuna is a future aim. We have motivational wānanga (learning sessions), but our 50 and over support workers are looking after elderly clients and want to learn about dementia. Subsidised gym fees are available for staff. The pay for support workers is good. Some support workers receive the pension but choose to work because it keeps them going. Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua has had a sponsored dinner for older staff, but it would be good to hold a kaumātua ball annually.

When workers start at Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua they do not want to leave. Managers aim to keep staff safe, happy, and well. Coordinators and staff are offered support. In homebased support, is a team of 14 staff in-house, including six coordinators, three registered nurses, two administrators, team leader, and the director. In my team, five workers are over 50. The team is offered the flexibility to work from home if they have to; whānau first. The most valued support are the cultural sessions because we are working in a

Māori organisation, we have karakia (prayer), we have waiata (singing) twice a week, and learn haka (dance). There is a competitive spirit among staff who enjoy sport, we play netball.

Covid-19 impacts on services

The service did not stop. Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua issued PPE (personal protective equipment) gear. We travelled to wherever the workers were. Support workers were given full PPE gear so they could provide services even if the clients were Covid positive. We had kai packs, whānau packs, and petrol vouchers. The only time support workers stopped was if they were Covid positive. The wage subsidies covered Covid-19 related illness. The majority of workers wanted to work through Covid-19. We issued letters to all 600 workers and that enabled them to drive around during level 4 lockdowns. For our older workers, that was better than staying home. The mature workers picked up the relief work from the younger ones. They did not have a problem working through Covid and got the jab. The younger ones challenged it.

Challenges

The workers have diverse personalities, which can be challenging as a manager. Despite the support, flexibility (working from home), and access to services, there is an attitude of wanting more. Staff are enthusiastic in their services, but sometimes go beyond what is expected of their role because they feel personally obliged to solve difficult problems. For example, a client was about to become homeless and there was no immediate solution, but other services needed to be activated. There is an interesting dynamic between younger workers and older workers. The younger ones get involved in sports, the older ones cheer them on; the young one's minds are still sharp and they are tech savvy and help the older ones with tech problems.



7. DISCUSSION

7.1 AIMS AND CONTEXT

This case study set out to understand why and how Māori organisations support older workers. The case is intended to address the primary research question of how can government, employers, and workers maximise older New Zealanders' ongoing participation in the workforce? Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua agreed to participate in the research as a case study organisation after a discussion with the late Maanu Paul, who was a trustee and chair of the board's research committee called Huraina i te Ao and co-chair Dr Hiria Hape. Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua is a Māori health provider that has grown rapidly in terms of its services, funding, staffing, and clients in recent years. Growth has challenged the organisation to maintain its kaupapa Māori approach to healthcare, its financial sustainability, consistently high quality of service, and to improve Māori health outcomes. The case study research occurred during a volatile period with significant effects from Covid-19 on human health, as well as providers like Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua who were at the front line of the pandemic. The case study essentially combines analysis of documentation shared with the research team and interviews with members of the board and management team on the research questions outlined in Annex 3.

7.2 DEFINING KAUMĀTUA

When referring to older workers, the term kaumātua is also used in this research to mean older person. Thus, a definition of kaumātua as it relates to Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua is relevant. Kaumātua in the literature is defined as an elderly person or people of either gender which is generally associated with being a grandparent (Moorfield, 2023) and whose parents are no longer alive (Muru-Lanning et al., 2021). Kaumātua is also someone who is recognised as possessing valued cultural knowledge, which is applied for the benefit of whānau and others. Thus, kaumātua is ambiguous on the age threshold, but it is characteristic of age, experience, wisdom, dignified conduct and service, and whānau support.

Participant 1 is acknowledged by the organisation as a kaumātua. The role of kaumātua comes with much respect, but also expectations not to interfere in operational matters. He saw kaumātua as having an important advisory function to management beyond sharing history and heritage to facilitating Māori thinking in a Māori organisation. The sharing of wisdom to future generations was also a key role. Participant 2 viewed herself in the age range associated with kaumātua and is employed in a role that involves helping staff understand and apply the poutokomanawa. Kaumātua were also engaged to fulfil an advisory function within a kāhui. Participant 3 considered kaumātua an earned title, often through an active presence in whānau lives. Similar to participants 1 and 3, participant 4 considered kaumātua people who are respected, but also aged 65 and over. The arbiter, however, of whether the age and status of kaumātua had been reached is your own whānau, hapū and marae, and an intrinsic perception of how one feels.

7.3 EMPLOYING KAUMĀTUA

Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua employs kaumātua who are part of a 400-strong workforce providing home-based care to other kaumātua. Whānau caring for whānau arises in homecare support services because clients prefer to have family members personally care for them. Kaumātua can be perceived as sometimes curt, impatient and irritable, but participant 1 says this is not intentional, it is a consequence of feeling the pressure of time and the urgency needed to deliver a message under such circumstances. Participant 2 focuses on ensuring staff have the cultural and technical knowledge needed to perform their roles and to provide spiritual protection. Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua is an organisation that prioritises care for kaumātua both inside as employees and outside as clients and whānau of clients. Financial constraints are less important than health and wellbeing of kaumātua. As whānau of clients, kaumātua support workers provide social and cultural support beyond the limitations of service scope because whakapapa

and whakawhanaungatanga are paramount. Thus, whanaungatanga (relationships) is a critical cultural capital for client wellbeing and satisfaction generated by having kaumātua support workers. The older age set of support workers was noted by another provider, but Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua has supportive systems to enable them to perform well.

7.4 CULTURAL DIMENSION

As a kaupapa Māori organisation, Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua has invested in the development of a values-based framework to guide decision making, actions, and results that resonate with being Māori. The framework is called Te Poutokomanawa, which is intended to support the health and wellbeing of clients and staff (Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua, 2019). The framework contains old knowledge that is guided to contemporary practice in Māori health and wellbeing through cultural facilitation from kaumātua within the organisation and potentially other areas. Support workers interpret the poutokomanawa as aligning well with their services and clients' needs. Māori and non-Māori are benefitting from the teaching of poutokomanawa and its application in their roles inspiring cultural capability building beyond the scope of the internal training. There is evidence that the diverse array of support and incentives align with the poutokomanawa framework.

7.5 SUPPORT FOR OLDER WORKERS

As employees, kaumātua are entitled to a wide range of employee benefits, some of which have significant relevance, for example, free GP visits and health checks. Further innovations in support of kaumātua workers are being considered, including insurance, early childhood education on-site for mokopuna, as well as flexible work arrangements, and regular cultural sessions. Health, safety, and wellbeing of all employees, including kaumātua, is a priority of managers and the organisation. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the full range of support was offered to kaumātua workers, including kai and petrol vouchers.

Engaging kaumātua in meaningful work has purported health benefits, primarily keeping their minds and bodies active.

7.6 YOUNGER AND OLDER WORKER DYNAMICS

Younger and older workers at Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua do complement one another and play to their strengths, with kaumātua acknowledging the energy and skills of younger workers, but there are generational tensions. For example, relationship conflict can arise from socialising outside work, and differences in attitudes toward productivity and learning. There is a respect for elders. Kaumātua have the option to work fewer hours and access support services and incentives to manage whānau health.



8. CONCLUSION

This report set out to address the research question of how government, employers, and workers can maximise older New Zealanders' ongoing participation in the workforce? This question was addressed in the context of a Māori health provider, Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua, in the Eastern Bay of Plenty town of Whakatāne. A number of distinctions can be discerned about how Māori organisations approach the issue of how employers can continue to provide meaningful work for older workers. We conclude that:

- 'Older worker' offers an incomplete classification of such workers because it generally focuses on age as a threshold linked to retirement and experience as inferring competency. However, older worker does not account for cultural knowledge, community recognition and respect, whānau responsibilities, and the importance of whakapapa, whanaungatanga, and whakawhanaungatanga in work and non-work settings.
- Kaumātua is variously articulated among participants as people who are respected for their knowledge, experience, and wisdom and their willingness to contribute the same in service of others, whether they are whānau who are clients of Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua or non-related community members. Self-appointment as kaumātua is not possible, but self-removal from fulfilling community duties beyond those of formal job roles is. Whether kaumātua workers is an acceptable alternative to older workers is something for Māori organisations to determine.
- Te Puna Ora o Mātaatua as a Māori health provider offers a tremendously supportive organisational environment for kaumātua as workers and kaumātua as clients. The kaupapa Māori approach to healthcare, underpinned by a cultural framework that integrates values and principles, appeals to Māori and increasingly non-Māori who appreciate the quality of care and support. The range of support services, incentives and benefits employees are entitled to is impressive, but is also likely necessary to attract workers given the organisation's recent growth. Flexible work arrangements, training and support, socialisation, and additional remuneration provide an attractive workplace with suggestions of high retention.
- Kaumātua are employed to provide support services to other kaumātua who may also be whānau – family members. In this instance, whānau are looking after whānau, which is natural in a Māori community setting and is recognised and provided for in funded homecare support. This is a successful approach because it supports client preferences and the quality of care and service provision is independently verified. A limitation on the capacity of the employer in this instance to expand this approach is the funding model, which has unevenly resourced services for clients living in rural and remote areas.

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ANNEX 1

INFORMATION SHEET



Maximising Workforce Participation for Older New Zealanders: Employer Needs and Practices

Information for case study research

Researcher(s) Introduction

Tēnā koe and greetings.

My name is Dr Jason Paul Mika. I am a researcher on the Maximising Workforce Participation for Older New Zealanders project led by Professor Fiona Alpass within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Massey University. Professor Alpass co-leads the Health and Ageing Research Team (HART) (<http://www.massey.ac.nz/hart/>).

One part of this research is to identify strategies and practices that businesses use to support older workers to remain in the workforce. This information sheet invites your organisation – Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust – to participate in this research. You are under no obligation to accept this invitation to participate in this study. We would like to produce a case study your organisation's approach to supporting kaumātua in work, especially into self-employment and enterprise ownership and development.

What will the study involve?

We would like to you to participate in a focus group interview for approximately 90 minutes at the trust's premises. During the focus group interviews you and other trust employees would be asked questions about the policies and practices at the trust that support older workers to remain in the workplace. At the start of each focus group interview, we will also seek some data on your own background, such as age, gender, length of employment with the trust, educational and general career background with a short anonymous questionnaire. The interviews will be recorded.

ANNEX 2

CONSENT FORM



Maximising Workforce Participation for Older New Zealanders: Employer Needs and Practices

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - Individual Interviews

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Full Name -
printed _____

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ANNEX 3

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



Maximising Workforce Participation for Older New Zealanders: Employer Needs and Practices

Interview Schedule –Focus Groups and Individuals

The aim of the focus group interview is to explore policies and practices of your organisation in terms of supporting older workers. We are interested in knowing about your observations and experience in your employment role, as well as general age-related issues which you identify in your organisation. The prompts below will be used to initiate discussion. Following this, participants will be encouraged to expand, to give examples, and to describe situations in response to each of these topics.

Employer

1. What is your current role in the organisation?
2. How do you define kaumātua?
3. What is the role of the organisation in relation to kaumātua as employees and clients?
4. What is the organisation's approach to employing older workers?
 - a. How does the organisation recruit and retain older workers?
 - b. How does the organisation support the development of older workers?
5. What are some of the needs of older workers in the organisation?
6. How does the organisation respond to these needs?
 - a. Recruitment
 - b. Employers' attitudes
 - c. Supporting or representing older workers
 - d. Retention
 - e. Training
 - f. Preparing and planning for 'flexible working arrangements'
 - g. Retirement
7. What has worked well in terms of support for older workers?
8. What has not worked well in terms of support for older workers?
9. Do you see yourself as an older worker?
10. What might influence your decision to continue or cease work as you age?

Employees

1. What is your job role in the organisation? (hours of work, tasks, flexibility)
2. What is the role of the organisation in relation to kaumātua?
3. What is the organisation's approach to employing older workers?
4. How does the organisation identify older workers?
5. What are some of the needs of older workers in the organisation?
6. How has the organisation responded to these needs?
7. What has worked well in terms of support for older workers?
8. What has not worked well in terms of support for older workers?
9. Do you see yourself as an older worker?
10. What might influence your decision to continue or cease work as you age?

Clients

1. What does being a kaumātua mean to you?
2. How would describe your current situation in terms of how you use your time?
3. What is the role of the organisation in relation to kaumātua?
4. What has been your experience of the organisation's services and support?
5. What worked well in terms of the organisation's services and support?
6. What has not worked as well in terms of services and support?

Work and self-employment

7. Are you presently engaged in paid employment?
8. What might influence your decision to continue or stop work as you age?
9. Do you or have you set up and run a business as an older person/kaumātua?
10. What kind of business did you run?
11. What were some barriers and enablers to running a business?
12. What support, if any, made the most difference for you?