

Te Kura Tūtahi

Mana motuhake and Māori leadership in education

He whakarāpopototanga | Executive summary

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This rangahau explores how mana motuhake is lived, learned, and led within kaupapa Māori education. Drawing on kōrero with Pou Māori across four kura—Te Kura Māori o Ngā Tapuwae, TIPENE, Kia Aroha Campus, and Te Kura Māori o Porirua—the rangahau reveals diverse, yet interconnected, perspectives of Māori leadership in action.

Through pūkōrero with tumuaki, ākonga, graduates, kaiako, and whānau, the findings show that leadership in kaupapa Māori education is collective, relational, and grounded in values such as whanaungatanga, aroha, and whakapapa. The rangahau highlights how each kura enacts and nurtures mana motuhake through language revitalisation, intergenerational commitment, centring identity, and upholding Māori ways of being and doing.

Each case study demonstrates the role kura play in growing confident, capable Pou Māori, leaders who are well connected to their iwi, hapū, and whānau, and who are supported to lead in both te ao Māori and te ao whānui.

Key findings include:

- Leadership is relational and collective—grown through service, example, and shared responsibility.
- Leadership is lived—shown through everyday acts, roles, and contributions.
- Mana motuhake is foundational—demonstrated through te reo, tikanga, expectations, and autonomy over learning.
- Whānau are active partners—often across generations, with many returning to kura as kaiako or mentors.
- Success is defined by Māori and for Māori—where identity and achievement aren't separate concepts, but are deeply interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

Kaupapa Māori education nurtures mana motuhake by providing the conditions to grow leadership in ways that are deliberate and connected to te ao Māori. These kura are places of learning, they are “kāinga rua”, whare wānanga, and “sites of transformation”. By reclaiming, restoring, and reimagining mana motuhake on Māori terms, they are living expressions of tino rangatiratanga.