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Te Riponga: Puni Reo Poitarawhiti

A scoping research project funded by Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga

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Lee-iviorgan and iviartin, iviay 2021

He mihi

Kei ngā mana, kei ngā reo, kei ngā karangatanga maha, tēnā rā koutou katoa.

E pari atu nei ngā mihi ki ngā rau ringa i oti ai tēnei kaupapa. Ki ngā kaimahi o Ngā Wai a te Tui e awhina ana i te rangahau nei, ko Jo Gallagher koutou ko Ngahuia Eruera, ko Jo Mane, e rere tonu ana ngā mihi. Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, nā koutou i whai huruhuru ai te kaupapa nei, ka mihi rā. Netball Waitākere, kei te hoa haere, e mihi ana i tā koutou ngākaunui mai, otirā i tā koutou whakawātea mai i te papa o Te Pai e whai kāinga ai te Puni Reo Poitarawhiti i roto i ngā tau. Kei ngā pūkōrero, kaiako mai, mātua mai, kaitākaro mai, e rere nei ngā mihi mō koutou i tuku i ā koutou kōrero, i ō koutou whakaaro anō hoki mō te Puni Reo me kore noa e kitea he huarahi e whanake tonu ai te kaupapa nei. Heoi anō pea e tika ana kia tau ngā mihi whakamutunga ki runga ki a koe e te ringa whao, e te hinengaro auaha nāu i hua ai te whakaaro ki te Puni Reo. Nō reira, Eruera Lee-Morgan, koutou ko tō rahi o Te Puni Kōkiri – nōu, otirā nō koutou te whakaaro, nā koutou anō tēnei kaupapa i kōkiri nō mai anō i tōna orokohanga mai, mō ā tātou tamariki, otirā mō te reo Māori te painga, me te aha, e kore te puna o mihi e mimiti.

Hei konā mai i roto i ngā mihi.



Rārangi Kaupapa

Contents

Introduction	5
About the research	5
Puni Reo	6
Normalising te reo Māori	9
Poitarawhiti: Māori-rich community organisations	10
Puni Reo Poitarawhiti ki Waitākere	10
Puni Reo Poitarawhiti	12
Setting up	13
The app - Puni Reo Poitarawhiti	14
PRP Game Day	14
Findings: Themes	16
Ko te reo te kaupapa matua: Te Reo Māori is the main event	17
Ko te reo kia ngahau: Having fun in te reo	18
Kia reo rūmaki: The expectation is everyone speaks Māori	18
He wāhi reo Māori: A safe Maori language only speaking zone	19
Mā tātou: These events are for everyone	22
Strengthening Puni Reo Poitarawhiti	24
Preparing participants	24
Supporting te reo on game-day	24
Sustaining and growing Puni Reo	24
Conclusion	27
References	28

The first Māori-language-only netball tournament of it's kind... the impact of such an initiative is multiple.





Introduction

In May 2018, the inaugural Puni Reo Poitarawhiti was held at Netball Waitākere, West Auckland. The first Māorilanguage-only netball tournament of its kind, Puni Reo Poitarawhiti (PRP) was open to all schools (Kura Kaupapa Māori and English-medium schools) in the Auckland region. Schools travelled from as far away as Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Manurewa to the south, and Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Raki Pae Whenua in the north. The first PRP attracted 550 girls and boys (60 teams), ranging in age from 11 to 17 years old. In total, 20 schools participated – the majority (95.5%) of these schools were either kura kaupapa Māori or schools with Māori immersion units or classes. The following year, the number of schools slightly increased to 21, then due to COVID-19 the PRP was cancelled in 2020. The third PRP, held this year (2021), has seen the number of players increase again, with 72 teams and 25 schools participating.

While the Puni Reo Poitarawhiti centres on the one-day Māori-language netball tournament, the impact of such an initiative is multiple. Hence the name of this report, Te Riponga, which refers to the reo ripple-effect that is created by PRP.

About the research

This one-year (2019-2020) scoping research project was led by Professor Jenny Lee-Morgan and Dr Jennifer Martin of Ngā Wai a Te Tūī, Māori and Indigenous Research Centre, Unitec. Funded by Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, the research included interviews with 28 people: organisers, teachers, umpires, coaches, parents and students (players).

The overarching research question that guided this project is:

What is the innovation of Puni Reo and how does it operate as a community-based initiative to retain and normalise te reo Māori in non-traditional Māori language domains, to reach rangatahi and wider society?

The research sought to establish the theoretical underpinnings of Puni Reo as well as understand its impact and potential as an innovative development in the field of language revitalisation and normalisation. The ongoing success and sustainability of Puni Reo in Aotearoa is also a key area of interest, as is its potential to support efforts to revitalise and normalise other indigenous languages.

Puni Reo

Puni Reo is an important part of today's Māori language movement that creates a Māori language space for a particular event or purpose. As an innovative Māori language initiative, Puni Reo has focused on promoting te reo in everyday activities such as sports, domains that are not usually considered 'traditional' Māori language arenas. As a te reo Māori initiative, these events seek to widen the use of te reo Māori in social, community and public contexts in an effort to normalise te reo Māori outside of formal learning and cultural settings. While Puni Reo is a 'new' initiative, it is inspired by the 'old' concept of a puni.

The Puni Reo initiative can be credited to Eruera Lee-Morgan (Senior Advisor, Te Puni Kōkiri, Tāmaki Makaurau). While he is acutely aware of the challenges of learning te reo Māori today and appreciates the legacy of language-learning initiatives to date, the need for this initiative was reinforced by his involvement as a Tāmaki Makaurau community researcher in Te Ahu o Te Reo project. Led by Dr Jessica Hutchings and Professor Rawinia Higgins, Te Ahu o te Reo was conducted in 2015-2016 to investigate the health of te reo Māori in homes and communities (Hutchings et al., 2017). One of the findings provided the motivation to pursue the idea of a puni reo. According to Eruera, who was interviewed as one of the organisers of PRP in this study:

Ko tētahi o ngā tino tōmina o ngā whānau i uia e mātou, ko te whai wāhi o aua whānau ki ētahi wāhi e māmā ai te rere o te reo i tua atu i ngā wāhi e mōhio whānuitia ana – ōtira ko ō tāua kura, ko ō tāua marae – ki waho i ngā kēti o aua horopaki. Nā reira, i tipu ake te whakaaro i roto i te noho puni, pērā ki te wharepuni, he wāhi e huihui ai te tangata. Koia pea te orokohanga o te whakaaro o te Puni Reo. (Eruera Lee-Morgan)

Te Ahu o te Reo evidenced the desire of whānau, both children and adults, to find places and spaces to speak Māori in everyday and meaningful ways. The research identified the need to re-establish te reo Māori as a secure, living language and a normal means of communication in our daily lives in all the places we inhabit in our communities.

For Eruera Lee-Morgan, the traditional notion of puni was central in the development of the contemporary Puni Reo initiative. The word 'puni' has multiple meanings, and can be used as a noun, a verb and an adjective, all of which are closely related. In brief, puni as a noun denotes a place of encampment, a company/group of people or a temporary shelter/hut (Moorfield, n.d.). Traditionally, puni as camps were regularly utilised as part of the semi-nomadic Māori lifestyle of whānau, hapū and iwi that shifted seasonally for food gathering and hunting purposes. Puni were necessary for the survival of the whānau, and sustenance of food sources.

The contemporary use of the word 'puni' in the following examples illustrates the notion of puni, including puni kahu (wardrobe department), puni kaiao (ecological niche), puni eke hōiho (pony club), puni hōia (contingent), and puni tama matakīrea (boy scouts). Perhaps, most well-known is Te Puni Kōkiri (Ministry for Māori Development), which signals a coming together for collective action. In sum, and in simple terms, the concept of puni speaks fundamentally about oneness, togetherness and singularity of purpose. Here, Puni Reo represents a temporary space that has been established for the purpose of te reo Māori. In this case, Puni Reo Poitarawhiti is a Māori-language netball space.

The earlier reference to wharepuni by Eruera Lee-Morgan to describe Puni Reo also emphasises the importance of creating a safe space. For him, the wharepuni represents a space for Māori to stay together, to discuss, debate and develop ideas, and as a central part of the marae, a space to be Māori. This aspect of Puni Reo is important in a context whereby speaking Māori in public domains can still be risky. A recent incident in Tauranga, in which Te Kura o Matapihi and Te Wharekura o Mauao students were explicitly told not to speak te reo Māori on the netball courts (McLaughlin, 2019), illustrates the stubborn resistance to te reo Māori. This occurrence of language racism is not an isolated experience and reinforces the need to demarcate not only speaking space, but a 'safe space' to speak and be Māori. In this context, the deliberate development of Puni Reo symbolises a conscientious, purposeful coming together of people to recreate new authentic safe spaces from which to enact the normalisation of te reo.



Eruera Lee-Morgar





Puni Reo is a Māori language initiative located in the legacy of activities led by Māori language activists, whānau, hapū, iwi and communities to value and utilise the language...

Normalising Te Reo

Despite te reo Māori being legislated as an official language since 1987, Māori language initiatives continue to be challenged with accusations of separatism, racism and tribal elitism (Smith, 1997; Mane, 2000; Pihama & Lee, 2004). While speaking Māori in public places can be entirely natural for many Māori, it is critical to reassert te reo Māori spaces as a resistance to the position of monolingual eurocentricism. Māori rights to language and culture have been hard fought for in Aotearoa, and primarily it is through the efforts of Māori that incremental change has occurred. As well as other initiatives, the Te Reo Māori Claim (Waitangi Tribunal, 1986) and the 1994 Broadcasting Assets case are but two examples of Māori taking the Crown to task (Mane, 2000). In the latter example, it was only with court action that the Crown was forced to provide for the promotion and protection of te reo Māori (Mane, 2000). Since 2008, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has also highlighted the rights of Indigenous people to their language, culture and traditions as a basic human right. It is of note that the New Zealand Government, alongside Canada and Australia, initially refused to sign the declaration, until finally endorsing it in 2011.

Puni Reo is a Māori language initiative located in the legacy of activities led by Māori language activists, whānau, hapū, iwi and communities to value and utilise the language. Puni Reo can also be considered an Indigenous innovation in the field of language revitalisation, and can be specifically located in the shift towards the 'normalisation' of te reo Māori. According to Higgins et al. (2014), the focus on the normalisation shifts "away from the ideology that the Māori language is only for Māori to speak, and within confined domains of our society. We need to expand the responsibility to wider society and promote bilingualism and the equity to achieve bilingualism" (p. 14). Therefore, the aim of normalising te reo Māori is to extend te reo to all spheres of society, including the netball courts. It is apparent that such a goal requires more than the efforts and commitment of the Māori communities, but as Rawinia Higgins, Poia Rewi and Vincent Olsen-Reeder argue, "It needs to be adopted by the nation" (2014, p. 14).

The normalisation drive directly aligns with and activates the Crown's Maihi Karauna Strategy for Māori Language Revitalisation 2019-2023 (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2019). Given te reo Māori remains at a critical juncture, the Maihi Karauna Strategy acknowledges it is important to create "the right conditions across government and Aotearoa New Zealand society for the revitalisation of te reo Māori" (p. 7). Alongside the Maihi Māori Strategy 2017-2040 (Te Mātāwai, 2017), one of the key goals is: "By 2040, one million New Zealanders (or more) will have the ability and confidence to talk about at least basic things in te reo Māori" (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2019, p. 2). In this regard, Puni Reo has the potential to make a significant contribution to the normalisation of te reo Māori in our communities and wider New Zealand society.



While Māori-language-only initiatives or sports tournaments are not new, especially for whānau involved in kura kaupapa Māori and total immersion educational pathways, there are few opportunities for those outside these specific kaupapa Māori organisations to participate. In an effort to support Māori language normalisation in our communities, Puni Reo is promoted as a way to create Māori language spaces in 'new' everyday domains that are accessible to wider groups of people. Therefore, one of the features of the Puni Reo approach is that the initiative should be directed and driven by the community of interest itself. To date, the call for Puni Reo has come from what Lee-Morgan et al. (2019) would describe as 'Māori-rich communities and organisations' – groups that are Māori-led and/or have high levels of Māori participation. Puni Reo Poitarawhiti is one such Māori-rich organisation, and was the first sports code that Eruera Lee-Morgan began to work with to develop this initiative. Since the inaugural Puni Reo Poitarawhiti event in 2018, Eruera Lee-Morgan has also developed Puni Reo Poipātu and Puni Reo Ki-ōrahi with interested communities of sport.

¹ See https://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/te-ahu-o-te-reo-overview-report

² See https://Māoridictionary.co.nz/

Poitarawhiti: Māori-rich community organisations

Netball is one of New Zealand's most popular sports. First introduced as 'womens' basketball' in 1906 (Netball New Zealand, n.d.), netball is one of the most popular female sporting codes in Aotearoa today and an integral part of our sporting culture. According to Poitarawhiti Aotearoa Netball New Zealand's Rautaki Māori – Māori Strategy (n.d.), Māori have consistently made up approximately 25% of the affiliated playing membership of netball, with even more (44%) making up national playing squads, and a third of the coaches and managers.

Indicative of the Māori-rich participation in this code, at its highest level is Dame Noeline Taurua (Ngāpuhi), currently the coach of the Silver Ferns, who led the national netball team to World Cup victory in 2019. The Central Pulse netball team has also exemplified the way Māori language and culture has been inculcated into their netball norms. The incorporation of Māori language and culture into their game was seen as having played a key part in winning the national ANZ premiership. The unique approach began when the club started their partnership with Te Wānanga o Raukawa; the institute supports the club culturally as well as with their financial sponsorship. According to one of the youngest players in the Pulse, Tiana Metuarau, reactions to their approach have been positive. In an interview for Te Karere she says:

Te reo Māori or Kaupapa Māori in general hasn't been associated with netball that often. I think this year the public have really enjoyed seeing how we've pushed te reo Māori to be incorporated in our team. I think it's kind of spread throughout the country. (Smith, 2019)

Māori have had a long and close association with netball, and are represented nationally by Aotearoa Māori Netball Oranga Healthy Lifestyles (AMNOHL). AMNOHL began in 1987, following the publication of Rapuora: Health and Māori Women by Dr Erihapeti Murchie-Rehu and Te Rōpū Wāhine Māori Toko i te Ora (1984), and was led by Dame June Mariu as a way to use netball as a vehicle for positive change. Dame June Mariu was also a former netball player and Auckland Netball coach, who "masterminded the effective playing strategy of full court zone defence that led her team to National Championship titles and can still be seen today to full effect in international netball play" (Aotearoa Māori Netball Oranga Healthy Lifestyles, n.d., para. 3). A long-time resident of West Auckland, Dame June Mariu also held the first Healthy Lifestyles Field Day, promoting participation in netball. This event, supported by Dame Whina Cooper, who presented a pingao brooch she had made to a deserving player, was held in Waitākere in West Auckland.

Puni Reo Poitarawhiti ki Waitākere

Netball Waitākere in West Auckland was the venue for, and a key partner in, Puni Reo Poitarawhiti. West Auckland is primarily the tribal lands of Te Kawerau ā Maki, Ngāti Whātua lies to the north and east, and Tainui to the east and south. West Auckland is also home to the second-largest Māori mātāwaka urban population in Auckland (after South Auckland). According to the 2013 census, Māori make up 14% of the total West Auckland population of 156,000 (Stats NZ, 2020). In comparison, 63% of the West Auckland population are Pākehā, 17% are Pacific peoples and 18% are Asian. While only 3% of the total population in West Auckland speak te reo Māori, 20% of Māori speak te reo Māori in the Henderson–Massey area (where Netball Waitākere is located), and 14% of Māori speak te reo Māori in the Waitākere Ranges area (Stats NZ, 2020).

Population in West Auckland

Māori	Pākehā / Pacific /Asian
14%	63% / 17% / 18%

Percentage of people who speak te reo Māori in West Auckland



Percentage of people who speak te reo Māori per area

Henderson – Massey	Waitākere Ranges	Other areas
20%	14%	

Netball Waitākere is a strong and vibrant centre. More than 50 years old, it originally began in 1968, with six primary schools in the local area. Today, Netball Waitākere boasts over 500 winter league teams and 1000 summer league teams in West Auckland. Given the demographic of West Auckland, Netball Waitākere has a relatively high number of Māori players, umpires, coaches and managers. While individual players and whānau, and kura teams may be heard speaking Māori sporadically during a netball game, Netball Waitākere had never incorporated te reo and tikanga Māori in any meaningful way in their context. It was an ideal community context in which to launch the idea of Puni Reo.

³ Since the inaugural Puni Reo Poitarawhiti event in 2018, Eruera Lee-Morgan has also developed Puni Reo Poipātu and Puni Reo Ki-ōrahi with interested communities of sport.

⁴ ref https://www.netballnz.co.nz/our-game/history/1900-1930

 $^{^{5}\} https://www.mynetball.co.nz/images/stories/documents/netball-nz/NNZ_M\bar{a}ori_Strategy_2010.pdf$

Puni Reo Poitarawhiti

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Setting up

- The App Puni Reo Poitarawhiti
- PRP Game Day

Setting up

In many ways, the planning and design of the inaugural Puni Reo Poitarawhiti was organic, mainly because it is an initiative that largely rests in and is determined by the community themselves. However, without any funding or dedicated personnel, the initiative was driven by the commitment and aspiration to activate te reo Māori on the netball courts. The set-up phase can be most easily described as three key components that cohere around the idea of being 'fit'. Fit refers to being ready, but also being 'fit for purpose'. Each component indicates associated drivers and activities.

Match Fit

Set up a steering and development group (Kōmiti Whakahaere)

Te Puni Kōkiri Māori netball leaders Netball Waitākere

Te Reo Fit

Ensuring the space is Te ao Maori ready and relevant resources are created PRP APP created

Develop clear comms and expectations

Set up total reo and tikanga netball environment

Community Fit

Community engagement, activation and preparation

Connect with stakeholders
Facilitate and support clinics
and wānanga
Identify PRP Champion

The Match Fit component is critical to the development of the PRP, as the key partners come together to ensure everyone understand the nature of the 'match', and the context is appropriately prepared. The key people who led this part of the development were Māori netball leaders and teachers, with Te Puni Kōkiri advisors with Netball Waitākere. The three Māori netball leaders who were involved in this development are long-serving netball coaches, umpires and teachers. Highly respected and well known for their dedication and ability to grow skilled netball players and teams, Pauline Harrison, Maria Marama and Chris Selwyn formed the steering and development group (kōmiti whakahaere) alongside Eruera Lee-Morgan. Drawing on the deep Māori school and netball networks, they were able to identify their capacity and capabilities and, in turn, their needs and requirements. Furthermore, in each of the PRP events, they pulled together their own whanau and friends to ensure the successful operation of the day.

The main needs centred on Māori language support. A key resource was the innovative development of an interactive app to support the language required by participants of Puni Reo – players, spectators, coaches, umpires and officials alike – called Puni Reo Poitarawhiti. Developed by Kawana Wallace of myReo Studios, the app was commissioned by Te Puni Kōkiri under the leadership of Eruera Lee-Morgan and Ngawai Walden. Alongside this app, all correspondence and administrative documentation, including umpires' score cards, the draw and signage, were in te reo Māori. A kaupapa Māori approach meant that the PRP was not

just holding a netball tournament in te reo Māori but ensuring a te ao Māori space was created that also normalised our tikanga and cultural practices such as pōwhiri and manaakitanga.

The third component centred on connecting, communicating and socialising the concept and initiative of PRP with the school, netball and sporting communities. This part required a large investment of time to meet various stakeholders to discuss and invite participation. Eruera Lee-Morgan visited most kura kaupapa Māori and schools in West Auckland to invite (kanohi ki te kanohi) teachers, students and whānau to attend. In addition, wānanga, meetings and clinics were provided to induct coaches, teachers and umpires into PRP, and to assist with language learning and confidence to play their role in the preparation with their students and at the tournament itself. For instance, teachers formed teams based not only on members' netball skills but also on their ability in te reo Māori, and practised playing in te reo Māori and learning the relevant language they needed.

Finally, it was important to the success of the event to identify PRP champions; these included Miss Kihi as MC, and Maia Wilson to present at the prizegiving that occurred at the end of the day. Following our cultural traditions, the PRP was closed with karakia.

The App - Puni Reo Poitarawhiti

As part of this kaupapa, TPK and myReo Studios launched the first Māori-language interactive sports app - Puni Reo Poitarawhiti – at Polyfest in March 2018. The app is intended to not only assist netball players themselves, but is also designed to support officials, umpires and coaches, as well as the whānau on the sidelines. As such, the app has become an important resource for all of those participating in Puni Reo Poitarawhiti.

In speaking about the rationale for the app, Ngawai Walden of Te Puni Kōkiri, who was interviewed as part of the this project, explains:

The whole point of the app was that it was accessible to people, it didn't matter who you were. We all live by these gadgets these days, without them we wouldn't be doing this. It was more of realising we need to change to the digital world.

Both Eruera and Ngawai acknowledge the importance of these sorts of resources being easily and widely accessible, and the realities, and often the expectations, of learners in the digital age. Ngawai continues:

The practicality of that for some people who are, I guess, now tauira today, are so used to apps and things that it made more sense to go to a digital platform that was easily accessible ... the original app was a starting platform of a way to amplify te reo again, if you were non-Māori and didn't have much reo, you could follow the words, you could follow the kupu, you could learn them, you could hear them and it was about utilising all senses. (Ngawai Walden)

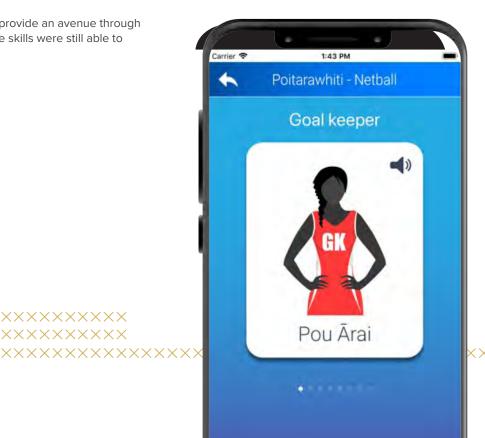
The app was also an ideal way to provide an avenue through which those with minimal language skills were still able to learn, practice and participate.

PRP Game Day

The day of the Puni Reo Poitarawhiti tournament began with our cultural traditions of powhiri and karakia. The various whaikorero emphasised the importance of the kaupapa of te reo Māori, acknowledged the tribal territories and people, and celebrated tribal whanaungatanga, and the whanaungatanga created by the kaupapa of te reo Māori. In 2018, it was the first time a powhiri of this type had ever occurred at Netball Waitākere, and for many Māori who have been long-time members of this institution, valuing te reo and tikanga Māori in this way was a significant and emotional event.

Before the games commenced, all the players participated in a warm-up led by ACC NetballSmart in te reo Māori and were hyped up by the encouraging words from Māori TV language celebrity Miss Kihi. The expectation was that te reo Māori was not only spoken on the netball courts, but in the control room, over the loudspeaker, in the shop, in the changing rooms – every place within the precinct of the Netball Waitākere court, including on the café sign, where the menu and prices for kai were rewritten in Māori.

At lunchtime, each school was provided with a paper-bag lunch - which many of the students mentioned as a memorable part of the day. The manaakitanga of the participants through the inclusion of kai was important to teachers and parents too. It emphasised that this was a te ao Māori space, rather than a conventional tournament focused on competition. The day ended with awards to the winning teams in each age category, presented by Māori Silver Fern representatives and champions of Puni Reo Poitarawhiti, including Maia Wilson.







01.

Ko te reo te kaupapa matua: Te Reo Māori is the main event

From the outset, the revitalisation and normalisation of te reo Māori was always the goal. Eruera Lee-Morgan, the initiator of Puni Reo, explains:

Kia whai kāinga te reo Māori i ngā wāhi huhua, i tua atu i ngā kura, i ngā marae, i ngā wāhi e kaha kē ana te rere o te reo. He mea nui kia mohio ā tātou tamariki e taea ana e rātou ngā mea katoa i roto i te reo Māori ahakoa te aha.

In his view, netball presented the vehicle to activate the use of te reo Māori in a sporting environment.

Me he waka te hākinakina ki te kawe i ō tātou whānau, me te reo. I rere ai te reo mā taua waka, nā reira ko ngā whāinga kia turaki i ngā taiepa o taumaha, kia wetekina ngā here o uaua, kia tangohia, kia unuhia katoatia te reo ōkawa ki runga i a tātou, kia puta i ngā kēti, kia puta i ngā taiepa, kia puta i ngā pakitara o ngā akomanga, engari kia rere ai te reo i runga i te wairua hāneanea, i runga anō i te wairua hari me te koa.

The aspiration to provide a language-centred event for rangatahi and whānau in a sporting context was the impetus for PRP.

Long-time netball umpire and president of Praedeus Netball Sports, and one of the key organisers of the PRP, Pauline Harrison simply says about the kaupapa of Puni Reo:

We care about the reo, we are not here about the sport, we are just using the sports as a vehicle to normalize te reo. (Pauline Harris)

The emphasis on creating new domains for te reo Māori as the primary aim was shared by the officials at Netball Waitākere. While they had limited capacity as an organisation to facilitate such an event, they shared the aspiration to include the netball arena in the movement to normalise te reo Māori. Kathy Henry, formerly of Netball Waitākere and now the Development Officer for Netball New Zealand, says:

My understanding was using netball as a vehicle to normalise te reo in every day, so just normalising te reo outside of the classroom, and the marae basically, which I believe was a really good message and what was needed for our Māori communities, and myself personally.

Kathy highlighted the importance of te reo Māori to Māori personnel in organisations such as this, where there is clearly an aspiration for te reo but few opportunities to learn, develop and include te reo Māori in meaningful ways in

their context. Puni Reo afforded her and the team at Netball Waitākere the opportunity to participate in pōwhiri and te reo Māori for the first time on their premises. She continues:

The most successful thing about it was the reo, getting that heard. Listening to it, the kids were normally korero to each other like they were just in their own environment...in a real public space. (Kathy Henry, Netball New Zealand)

There was overwhelming agreement by the students that the kaupapa of the PRP was Māori language. The students expressed that the strongest need was for ensuring that focus in these events was on te reo Māori, rather than the sport itself. While the students highly enjoyed netball and the competitive nature of sport, it was important that it did not detract from the purpose of Puni Reo. Therefore, one group of students spoke simply about the need to induct all players around the kaupapa of Puni Reo, in which the use of te reo Māori was understood as first and foremost.

We should make sure that they know it is about Māori not about just netball, not the sport. (Student, primary intermediate group)

Though Puni Reo participants who were interviewed expressed their enjoyment of playing the sport, they were clear in the necessity of holding a commitment to using te reo Māori during the event. Comments made by students also indicated that they felt that participants who were more focused on the competition and winning were also prone to speak English as tensions mounted during play. Despite the varied levels of confidence in te reo Māori at PRP, one parent summed up the kaupapa by saying:

Te whakanui i te reo Māori ... he rerekē ngā taumata o te reo mai i ngā pakeke ki ngā tamariki, engari i tupu, i whanake te haere mai i te tīmatanga o te rā, ki te mutunga o te rā. Ko te whakatipu i te reo i roto i tērā momo hākinakina. (Allana Goldsmith)

02.

Ko te reo kia ngahau: Having fun in te reo

A key finding, shared by all interviewees, centred on the fun element of PRP. This was always the vision of the organisers, as Eruera Lee-Morgan comments:

He ngāwari [te reo] i runga i te wairua hākoakoa, i runga i te wairua whakakorikori i te reo, kia ngāwari, kia māmā, kia hīanga anō te reo. Kia tākaro. Ko taua wairua tākaro, te reo ōpaki te reo, te reo o ia rā, te reo o kīwaha, te reo whakahihiri i te tangata.

One of the people in the PRP development and steering group (kōmiti whakahaere), long-time netball coach and Māori secondary school teacher Chris Selwyn, concurred about creating another enjoyable te reo Māori environment, saying:

Although there is the competitive aspect, it is [about] the fun aspect of it, to encourage the speaking of reo within a harikoa competitor, energetic environment that it wasn't just tētahi reo māroke, it was exciting, passionate language, and beyond kapa haka, outside of the kapa haka space, outside of the marae space, outside of the classroom space.

For the students, in particular, the fun factor was critical to the success of the event. The following comments illustrate this:

Most of the kids I know all love netball and it is another way of being able to contribute reo into something that kids love. (Student, mixed group primary and intermediate)

The thing I most enjoyed is that we could be playing sport that we all love and still be in a Māori environment and still be able to speak Māori, but have fun at the same time. (Intermediate student)

Reference is also made here to the speed of the game, consequently the use of the language also follows suit and reo can become highly animated, providing a more dynamic use of te reo in which the language is 'in play'. Being exposed to te reo in this kind of setting can be exhilarating and inspire motivation for players and supporters alike to korero Māori.

Te tere o te mahi poitarawhiti nā te mea e mōhio ana tātou ka rere te kēmu, so me tere hoki tō rere. (High-school student)

03.

Kia reo rūmaki: The expectation is everyone speaks Māori

There was a clear understanding that the PRP is a reo rūmaki event, with the incentive for most participants to ensure they had a sufficient grasp of te reo in order to participate. The organisers and officials also ensured that there was a language-speaking capability in all areas of Netball Waitākere, from the control room through to the café. Everyone, everywhere on the premises, was expected to speak te reo Māori, even the menu board at the netball shop appeared in te reo Māori. Wānanga for umpires and coaches were held to ensure they were supported with the relevant language to operate, and coaches could provide specific netball language to the players. To this end, the Puni Reo app was created to prepare players and participants for the reo rūmaki environment. The reo rūmaki aspect of the PRP was a defining element, a key success factor, but also presented the main challenge for participants.

The students, in particular, held high expectations around the prioritising of te reo Māori during the Puni Reo event. Comments across all student focus groups affirm the importance and challenges of ensuring a Māori-speaking environment:

It kind of wrecked the mood a bit when people just started to speak English. (Student, primary–intermediate group)

I didn't hear one school that was kia ū ki te reo Māori as us. I think because we played a lot of teams and the teachers were speaking English and the kids were speaking English ... I thought that was the reason that we went to Puni Reo Poitarawhiti is to speak te reo Māori, not to speak Pākehā. (Student, primary—intermediate group)

Students' expectations meant that many felt that penalties for speaking English should be enforced:

I think also there should be more rules about the reo, like there should be a point taken off if you speak reo Pākehā, something like that. (High-school student)

[*I*] te wā i kōrero koe i te reo Pākehā, ka tango piro. (Student, primary–intermediate group)

In this respect, students felt that their teachers played a critical role in monitoring and supporting student participation in the Puni Reo tournament. Teachers who were seen as strict in enforcing students' commitment to speaking Māori were seen by the students as positive. Students also recognised that being well inducted in terms of the rules of participation prior to the event was part of the preparation.

We had to know the rules before we went, in te reo Māori and English. (High-school student)

Knowing the ground rules of participation in the event was important to these particular students' adherence to te reo Māori.

Teachers, too, acknowledged the important role they played in creating, contributing to and reinforcing the culture and kaupapa of the day. One teacher acknowledged the challenges for the students in relation to the specific language related to netball, and the need to adequately teach these words and language required:

[I] reira ētahi uauatanga mō te taha ki ngā ture me ngā tūnga o te kēmu kāore i tino mārama ki ngā tamariki pēnei i te stepping, obstruction, ngā whakamāoritanga o ērā i āhua hou ki ngā taringa o ngā tamariki, kotahi wiki noa pea i whai wā ki te āta whakarite i a rātou. (Kaiako)

However, it was pointed out that te reo and the vocabulary learnt by the students must also be supported and used by others, in particular the umpires and officials.

Ko te wā noa pea i tae mai. Kāore i āta whai wā ngā kaiako ki te ako i ērā kupu, ētahi o ngā kupu he hou ki a au. Ko te āhua hoki o ngā kupu e hāngai ana engari kāore anō i rongo i mua. Ko ngā kupu i whakamahia e mātou, pēnei mātou koia te kupu, engari kāo. He kupu ā Te Puni Kōkiri nō reira kāore i whakamahia ērā kupu, ā, nā rātou hoki ngā kaiwhakawā i whakarite. (Kaiako)

This teacher felt that ultimately the adults were central to ensuring the reo rūmaki nature of PRP.

Kia mana hoki te taha ki te reo ki waenganui i ngā kaiako o ngā kura katoa ... kia kitea he tū tahi mō te reo, mō taua takiwā, kia mārō rānei ngā kaiako. He kaupapa reo me te poitarawhiti tēnei, ākina te reo tuatahi, kātahi ko ngā ture me te whakataetae, me ērā āhuatanga. Koirā ētahi taha pea i ngoikore, tēnā pea e waia noa ana mātou ngā kaiako, ngā kura kaupapa Māori ki te kī ki ngā tamariki, ko te reo, ko te reo, ko te reo, kia reo Māori. (Kaiako)

An overwhelmingly common key success indicator for the PRP is the ability to remain for the duration of the kaupapa, a reo rūmaki initiative.

04.

He wāhi reo Māori: A safe Māori language only speaking zone

PRP development and steering group member Chris Selwyn said that from the outset:

[PRP] would provide a context ... to develop confidence in te reo and whether that was either as player, coach, umpire, or spectator, because we [steering group] talked about the importance of the spectator as well. It was a familiar environment that therefore made it a safe environment and there were those four different levels where people could be involved (Chris Selwyn).

PRP was always envisaged as creating a safe space for te reo, no matter what your role in the activity.

Everyone involved in the research project acknowledged the importance of the space that was created to not only speak Māori, but be Māori in a way that is safe, comfortable and 'normal'

I think it is beautiful listening to the Māori kids, or any kids really, just being able to converse normally without fear, because it is so normal to them. To do it, on a court, playing their sport they play every day, that is what I mean, we hear it all the time on the marae, or in a classroom if we go to a Kura Kaupapa Māori school, but not going on a Saturday and watching a game, and that is beautiful. (Kathy Henry, Netball Waitākere)

Parent and National Coach Education Manager at New Zealand Rugby League, Daniel Keepa, also agreed:

For me the kaupapa of Puni Reo ... is creating an environment where our tamariki and rangatahi are able to freely speak te reo, and without worrying about who is going to look at them sideways, or anything like that, and obviously to promote pro-Māori too at the same time, and welcome I guess other cultures and ethnicities into an environment where it is freely spoken and how easily it can be spoken.

Pauline Harrison, who has spent hundreds of hours on the courts of Netball Waitākere (and other centres) over the decades, was clear:

It allows you to be Māori. You can't be Māori on a Saturday.

Similarly Maria Marama, coach and long-serving netball umpire and club leader was another person in the kōmiti whakahaere, and expressed her view about the creation of the PRP space:

For me, being Māori is inherently entwined with who we are, but for those that don't have reo, they could be in a space and feel safe in that environment, even if they didn't speak te reo. I think part of Chris and I spoke, and Eru also talked about our club being full of reo Māori speakers was another driver. I think that was the other thing is that they speak Māori all day at kura, and then they come to netball and it is straight back into English.

Maria noted that, even for beginners of te reo Māori, PRP was always intended to be a safe space precisely because it was Māori. Furthermore, she points out the way in which our children who school in te reo Māori don't have the opportunity to continue in our language on the courts.

Students, too, describe PRP as a setting in which they were able to speak te reo Māori freely without judgement or criticism, where they didn't feel awkward for publicly speaking Māori. While we might expect that society in Aotearoa has moved from an emphasis on English monolingualism, students expressed their reservations in speaking Māori at times, though Puni Reo was considered a space where speaking Māori is an accepted norm:

You are not worried about being judged or anyone looking at you funny like, oh, that person is talking Māori, why are they talking Māori? (High-school student)

As language revitalisation movements depend on a common, shared purpose, being surrounded by like-minded people is crucial to success. The above statement alludes to students themselves needing to be conscious and deliberate in knowing that they are in a Māori-speaking environment where concerted efforts are made to speak Māori.

For me, I think that we don't really usually speak Māori when we are playing just in general, because I feel like if we don't hear other people around us speaking it, some of us don't want to be like the odd one out, they just want to be like 'normal'. We will just speak English, and I feel like, also as they said, if someone else in my team is talking to me in Māori then I will just be encouraged to talk back. I will just talk back to them by speaking back in Māori, and it is also an advantage for us so that means not many other people can understand. (Intermediate student)

The need to be 'normal' indicates that, for students that can speak Māori, this has yet to be an accepted norm, and they do not want to be seen as different from the majority of their peers or whānau who do not necessarily know how to speak Māori. This sense of normalcy can be a deterrent to speaking Māori.

Several students relayed that hearing Māori spoken in a social setting was uplifting, and being exposed to other students who had high levels of fluency was also encouraging.

He tino pai te rongo i te reo i a rātou hoki (KKM). Ahakoa te pakeke, e rere tonu ana te reo, he tino pai tērā ki au. (High-school student)

The transformation of the netball courts into a te reo Māori space was a powerful experience for many of the participants who have frequented the courts for many years. Where generations of whānau have enjoyed netball, PRP adds a uniquely cultural dimension that acknowledges te reo Māori me ōna tikanga as significant to both local and national identity.



05.

Mā tātou: These events are for everyone

While the Puni Reo Poitarawhiti event largely attracted kura kaupapa Māori and Māori immersion schools to participate, students themselves considered a much wider group for participation in these events. On sharing their thoughts on the purpose of Puni Reo, one student said the following:

Kia whakawhanake i te reo Māori, kia whakawhanaunga ai, ēngari ki a au nei kāore mō te Māori anake, mō ngā tangata kātoa. (High-school student)

Puni Reo was reiterated by this student as both strengthening te reo and the relationships between reo Māori communities. Notably, this student viewed Puni Reo events as not only for Māori, but for all people. Thinking in this way also fits with the Maihi Karauna and Maihi Māori language strategies (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2019), a partnership model that advocates for the dedicated inclusion of non-Māori as an important part of language revitalisation. This stance also aligns with Higgins et al. (2014), who purport that it will only be through a national effort that te reo Māori will thrive in current and future generations.

Other students interviewed reflected on the potential benefits of Puni Reo, in saying:

It would be fun-as for people who can't even speak to still see things that we do in a wider range, not only just one school, say the whole community going together. Doing that, everyone is going to get attracted to it, then it will blow up and that is also spreading our reo around by having fun. (High-school student)

When it comes to the Puni Reo, everyone is just, even if they are not ethnically Māori, their manawa is Māori. They are in it for the kaupapa, and just to have a good time and that is how you can feel the energy is more amplified. (High-school student)

The insights offered by students reaffirm the current Maihi Karauna strategy, and show that students exposed to and involved in reo Māori settings have a consciousness and logic in which they consider language strategy in relation to their own experiences. The strategy is not only inclusive of non-Māori, but also sees the potential benefits of the language for wider society.

Chris Selwyn reflects on the inclusivity of the PRP initiative. Beyond bringing together the wider netball and te reo Māori communities, PRP also creates space for tāne and wāhine to participate together in sporting contexts, bringing with it a certain type of energy and a powerful dynamic, and further adding to the uniqueness of this kaupapa. He says:

That is the dynamism that it brings and because both genders can play within the same code, and you can have that mana tāne and mana wāhine operating. Tēnā pea kei ngā tāne te tāroaroatanga me te teiteitanga, engari kei ngā māreikura te mōhio, te mātau ki ngā pūkenga, ki ngā ture o te kēmu. Boys are all peke and oma, but it is like watching the Silver Ferns play the men's, that whole dimension that it brings to it.



The deliberate development of Puni Reo symbolises a conscientious, purposeful coming together of people to recreate new authentic safe spaces from which to enact the normalisation of te reo.



Strengthening Puni Reo Poitarawhiti

Participants were overwhelmingly positive about the PRP initiative and excited about the opportunity to be part of, and contribute to, normalisation of te reo Māori in new spaces.

However, in any new initiative there is always room for improvement. The participants provided a range of suggestions that can be grouped under three key themes:

Preparing Participants

- More opportunities to build necessary reo capacity and capability of all involved in PRP prior to event day to ensure maximum engagement in te reo Māori. For example, further resources, workshops and clinics dedicated to learning relevant vocabulary, phrases and sentences.
- Creating a network of support and/or community of learners as players, spectators, umpires, coaches, teachers, and officials.

Supporting te reo on game-day

- Clearly demarcate the PRP space
- Linguistic landscaping Māori language signage
- Māori language netball bibs
- Māori language PRP posters with te reo Māori netball words and phrases located around the courts
- Lanyards for participants with names and school on the front, and te reo Māori netball words and phrases on the back
- Regular encouraging messaging across the loud speaker about the kaupapa of PRP
- Points deducted from score cards for speaking English
- A greater number of prizes recognising commitment to te reo not just the winners

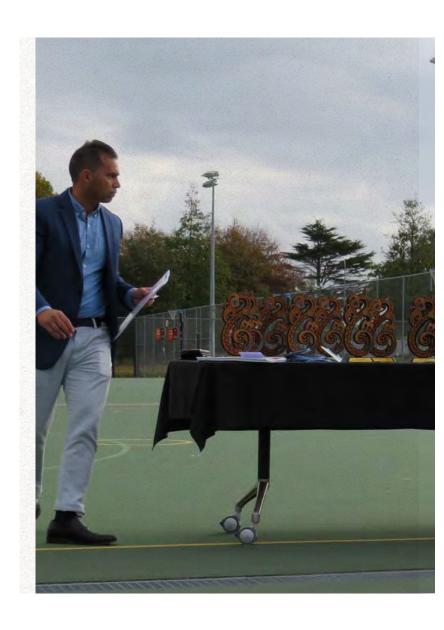
Sustaining and growing Puni Reo

- Keeping up the momentum once the game-day tournament is over
- Active engagement and support from relevant sports and Māori organisations
- Funding
- Puni Reo Plan for the rohe that will grow other sporting codes and activities
- Identifying a stable of te reo sporting stars to act as champions of Puni Reo
- A Puni Reo Rua for participants just beginning to learn te reo Māori

The following quote provides an apt summary of the approach to the improvements suggested by the participants:

Ki ahau nei, kia whanake te kaupapa, me rahi ngā kaiako i te whānuitanga o te kaupapa. Hāunga anō ko te netipōro anake i te mea i kite ai, i tonoa noa iho ngā mātanga netipōro. Pai tērā taha engari me tono hoki i ētahi mātangā āki i te reo i te mea koia tētahi o ngā tino kaupapa i tū ai te Puni Reo. (R. Hanara)

The suggestions noted here indicate that further development, support and research of the potential of Puni Reo concept is required; in particular, the extent of PRP to normalise te reo in netball.



Participants were overwhelmingly positive about the PRP initiative and excited about the opportunity to be part of, and contribute to normalisation of te reo Māori in new spaces.





Conclusion

Puni – he kupu kāore e tino kaha rongohia ana i ēnei rā, engari he kupu i kaha whakahuatia e ō tātou tūpuna i te wa i a ratou. He mea whakapuni i a rātou, i roto i te noho hōpuni, te noho hoki i roto i o rātou wharepuni ano hoki. Ina ra, ka puni haere ratou i te mata o te whenua, ehara i te mea ka tau ki te wāhi kotahi, ka nukunuku, ka nekeneke haere ratou mā ngā puni. I te wā o ngā tūpuna ka puni haere ngā toa tauā i roto i ngā pakanga, nō reira he whītiki tauā tēnei i ngā toa o te reo Māori hei kōkiri i te reo Māori i roto i te horopaki o te Puni Reo Poitarawhiti. (Eruera Lee-Morgan)

Drawing on our traditional concepts of puni to create novel and innovative initiatives to revitalise te reo Māori, PRP is hugely popular with players, coaches, parents, umpires and officials. More than a one-day event, PRP has a ripo effect on language learning. PRP incentivises learning and speaking te reo Māori in a culturally safe environment, while pushing the Māori-language normalising boundaries to new domains. The need for Puni Reo to be established outside of formal learning environments as a way in which to create te reo Māori spaces as 'living language domains' in community settings is a critical outcome of PRP. It is hoped that PRP will become a regular event of the Māori-language school calendar, alongside significant events such as Polyfest and Manu Kōrero. Importantly, emphasis is on facilitating a Māori language event through fun activities. This highlights the significance of language being spoken in informal social settings in an effort to normalise its use.

With PRP being positioned as a community-led event, the matter of who will drive this initiative in the future is somewhat uncertain. Participants involved in the organisation of the event acknowledge the importance of both financial and human resources to sustain such activity, and comment on their own organisational roles as either supporting or partnering rather than leading. While efforts to date have been collective, the question of who will lead PRP in the future is an important one.

Puni Reo Poitarawhiti exemplifies the groundswell in Aotearoa to finally acknowledge te reo Māori. Māori led, the PRP initiative partners with communities to reclaim everyday spaces and places as temporary Māori language zones. Puni Reo provides a way to reimagine an Aotearoa where speaking te reo Māori is normal in all the activities of our daily lives. As Lee-Morgan et al. state:

The renormalisation of te reo Māori has the power to radically enhance the status and value of Māori language and culture. The capacity for social change through the progression of te reo in and with organisations in every sector will contribute to the creation of a Māori language ecosystem that establishes and connects domains that value, teach, learn, and use te reo. (2019, p. 160)

Puni Reo calls for a mind shift, especially for organisations that have limited te reo capacity and capability. The challenge will be to commit to the kaupapa to normalise te reo, and in doing so, actively contribute to creating fun, safe and special activities that celebrate our rangatahi and whānau speaking te reo, so that it ripples through the community and our nation.

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