

A fair chance for all: Breaking the disadvantage cycle

This submission is in response to the Government's request to the Productivity Commission to prepare the Terms of Reference for a new inquiry into the drivers of persistent disadvantage within people's lifetimes and across generations.

Ko Kanewa Stokes tōku ingoa, no Ngāti Pōrou me Te Whānau-A-Apanui ahau, I write this submission on behalf myself and whānau. I also utilise the experiences I have had over my lifetime and through the experiences, I have experienced in my role as the Whakapiki Ake Development Manager. Whakapiki Ake is a Māori Recruitment Project, funded by the Ministry of Health, Maori Health Workforce and positioned Te Kupenga Hauroa Māori, Faculty of Medical Health Sciences, University of Auckland. It is a component of the faculties Vision 2020 to increase the Māori and Pacific health workforce in Aotearoa.

I have an invested interest in reducing persistent disadvantage for Māori and this submission will highlight the historical and ongoing disadvantages that Māori have experienced and continue to experience today and in the future, due to the educational and all other policies and legislation introduced by successive governments. The Crown has failed to uphold its partnership role as the other Treaty of Waitangi partner, in its role to govern (Article I), to support Māori to achieve equal citizenship rights (Article III) and to support Māori to retain their taonga tukuiho/cultural identity/tino rangatiratanga (Article II) through intentional and successive legislation/policies that have disadvantaged Māori in the past, present and future. The lack of Māori participation and representation in policy making and administration subjected Māori to policies that were alien to their cultural values and aspirations. This played a major role in the decline and colonisation of Māori social organisations and structures.

What are the main aspects of disadvantage that should be investigated in this inquiry?

This inquiry needs to focus on undertaking a historical mapping and impact of government legislation/policies that have impacted on Māori cultural identity and educational outcomes. The impacts need to also focus on the negative discourse created as a result and political abuse by politicians by using Māori issues as a political football in the bid to gain votes. We have had a magnitude of research undertaken however we have not looked at the impact of cultural disconnection on sense of self, self-efficacy, self-confidence, to take up the predominantly western models of education that have been imposed on Māori since the inception of legislation.

The following points have been taken from my Masters Thesis; The Tensions Facing a Board of Trustees Model Within the Cultural Framework of Kura Kaupapa Māori. Kanewa Stokes (2003). I hope these points can start to highlight the major influence policy/legislation has had on the poor educational outcomes Māori experience to date and the high probability that these negative statistics will continue.

1. The Education Ordinance initiated by Sir George Grey in 1847, introduced compliance requirements for Missionary schools as a part of receiving remuneration. The central requirement was that instruction be in the English language.
2. The introduction of English Law into Aotearoa and the Westminster Parliamentary system under the 1852 Constitution Act, excluded Māori from participating in the development and administration of the State.
3. The 1862 Native Lands Act removed the Crown's right to pre-emption of buying

Maaori land and the 1865 Native Land Act established a land court system which introduced individual titles of Maaori land, to be owned by at least 10 people. The 1863 New Zealand Settlement Act provided the Government with the ability to confiscate Maaori land as did the Public Works Act 1876 (Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand 1999). The loss of Maaori land has been identified as a root cause of the fragmentation and extensive changes in the cultural, economic, political, and social life of the Maaori people.

4. Under the 1867 Act the English language became the medium of instruction under a Native Schools Code established by Government. The Code was explicit in the quest to eliminate and deter the use of the Maaori language within the education system stating:

"In all cases English is to be used by the teacher when he is instructing the senior classes. In the junior classes the Maaori language may be used for the purpose of making the children acquainted with the meanings of the English words and sentences. The aim of the teacher, however, should be to dispense with the use of Maaori as soon as possible" (Department of Education 1897:15).
5. The Maaori Representation Act 1867 provided the first opportunity for Maaori representation in Parliament with four temporary Maaori seats, becoming permanent in 1876. All adult Maaori males became eligible to vote at this time, extended from those males over 21 with individual property ownership. This had excluded Maaori because their land was owned by the collective whaanau/hapuu and Iwi and not individually. **Up until 1967 Maaori were unable to contest the European electorates.**
6. Although Native Schools were aimed at eliminating the Maaori language, compulsory schooling for Maaori did not come into effect until 1894.
7. Although education was directed at the assimilation of Maaori to European cultural values, Maaori were resilient in their quest to hold fast to their reo me oona tikanga. However, the impact of the previous (1847,1867,1877,1969) education policies was becoming increasingly apparent by the mid-seventies.
8. In 1977 the Department of Maaori Affairs adopted the 'Tuu Tangaata' philosophy which aimed at establishing Maaori cultural values, a cornerstone being te reo me oona tikanga (Walker 1996).
9. In response to the decline of the Maaori language, Maaori preschool were established with the first Kohanga Reo opening in April 1982. Beyond Kohanga Reo the public education system was unable to provide suitable primary level education. In 1985 the first Kura, Te Kura O Hooani Waititi opened and Ruamataa followed in the same year. Kura were initially located on Marae and functioned outside the parameters and structures of State schools. In many cases KKM teachers were volunteers with limited access to teaching resources and funding.
10. From 1987 KKM proponents sought to have Te Aho Matua enshrined in the 1989 Education Act, something not achieved until 1999 when the Te Aho Matua Amendment Act was enacted.
11. In 1990 a Government trial allowed State funding for six KKM, provided a minimum of 21 students enrolled. By 1997, 57 KKM had been established.

The Puao-Te-Ata-Tu report(1988) was a report of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Maaori perspective for the Department of Social Welfare. Key highlights of this report follow:

1. The history of New Zealand since colonisation has been the history of institutional decision being made for, rather than by, Maaori people. Key decisions on education, justice, and social welfare have been made with little consultation with Maaori.
2. Maaori people must be involved in making the decisions that affect their future.
3. We believe that society in New Zealand is not aware of the extent to which the law has defeated the maintenance of the Maaori way of life.
4. Educational and economic under achievement by Maaori people has been reflected in increased crime rates, poor infant and life expectancy rates, high unemployment rates and low incomes.
5. From a legal perspective we have no doubt that many of the changes made to our statutes since before the turn of the century have not always been in the best interests of Maaoridom. Indeed, some of the changes went directly against Maaori customary preference.
6. In our view policies and social objectives rooted in the concept of multiculturalism are commonly used as a means of avoiding the historical and social imperatives of the Maaori situation. These should be addressed in a context of bicultural policy.
7. The evidence seems overwhelming that the Maaori underperformance in social and economic status and law observance is symptomatic of alienation and mono culturalism leading to the disintegration of traditional sanctions.
8. 135: The Committee believes that Maaori youth today is in a vulnerable position leading to crises. This report is committed to the notion that we should spread resources out among the Maaori community to help them to:
 - a. Address themselves to supporting initiatives and projects which will have the dual purpose of educating the youth in their culture and restoring their self-worth; and to
 - b. Provide the Maaori community with valid and credible support for establishing such initiatives and projects.

The 2019, Annual Report NCEA, University Entrance and NZ Scholarship Data and Statistics, May 2020, highlights low participation, achievement, and retention rates for Maaori in NCEA and worse in University Entrance. Participation by subject in NCEA also highlights poor outcomes.

In 2021, Maaori statistics across education(secondary and tertiary), incarceration rates, unemployment, incomes, housing, health have continued to remain relatively constantly in a negative state. Findings from, explaining ethnic disparities in bachelor's qualifications: participation, retention, and completion in NZ, working paper 2017/01 February 2017, Authors: Lisa Meehan, Gail Pacheco and Zoe Pushon, highlighted the need for policy intervention earlier in the education system to help lift the NCEA performance of Māori and Pasifika, and in doing so improve the likelihood of their participation in higher education qualifications, such as bachelor's degrees.

Where should government focus its effort on finding solutions?

This inquiry needs to focus on undertaking a historical mapping and impact of government legislation/policies that have impacted on Maori cultural identity and educational outcomes. Mapping as previously stated, also needs to identify the recommendations that have not been implemented or have been and what the outcomes are. Solutions have been proposed however the government continues to ignore recommendations that have a greater potential to make a positive change for Maaori. Research is required to highlight the need to take a different approach to policy

to support the uplifting of our rangatahi so that they have a greater opportunity to participating equally across employment opportunities. This will also support the future development of whaanau,hapu and iwi.