

UN Youth Wellington 2019 Tikanga Policy Document

The purpose of this policy document is to provide Wellington volunteers with the knowledge and guidance to recognise and implement Tikanga Māori principles and practices. This is to better reflect the cultural diversity and history of New Zealand, and show respect for tangata whenua. As an organisation that represents the values of the United Nations, this is a key way volunteers can ensure UN Youth is more inclusive and respectful towards Te Ao Māori.

This document provides extensive definitions, examples of implementation, and guidelines for best practice. This research has been done in conjunction with Dr Mike Ross of Te Kawa a Māui, the Māori studies department at Victoria University.

WHAT IS TIKANGA MĀORI?

Tikanga Māori are a series of concepts that influence the daily life of tangata whenua. These concepts play a crucial role in New Zealand society, and therefore we must be careful in how we aim to incorporate it.

Tikanga has a root word of “tika” which is the Māori word for “correct” or “right”. These principles embody the right way of conducting oneself. For instance, manaakitanga can be expressed through showing aroha, and respecting one another or Mōhiotanga is expressed through sharing knowledge and through teaching others. Although the principles of Tikanga Māori are universal to tangata whenua, the specific ways that different individuals fulfill these principles are unique to the individual and their whānau, hapū or iwi.

The dictionary definition of Tikanga Māori is “the customary system of values and practices that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in the social context.” We can understand it as our social normalities and how one treats taonga.

WHY DO WE INCORPORATE TIKANGA MĀORI?

Both UN Youth New Zealand and UN Youth Wellington recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi as our nation’s founding document. This means that it is our duty to uphold the crucial principle of partnership set forth in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Incorporating Tikanga Māori into our operations is our way of expressing this.

Proactively promoting diversity also fulfills an important value of Tikanga Māori, kotahitanga (unity). Not only do we become more inclusive of tangata whenua and other cultures in an overarching sense, we also incorporate Tikanga Māori on an operational level.

Furthermore, incorporation of Tikanga Māori shows respect for tangata whenua and their unique whakapapa.

TIKANGA MĀORI CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES

Tikanga Māori can be split into two sections: concepts and practices.

Concepts

Whanaungatanga

Whanaungatanga is the expression of whanau. This means following appropriate behavioural guidelines, seeking to strengthen the feeling of kinship held by a group, and being inclusive. This can be expressed by learning others' names, expressing your pepeha or mihi, and acting in a way appropriate to the situation and company.

This is important because expressing whanaungatanga develops deeper, more meaningful relationships with others. This allows for a friendlier atmosphere, and allows for a better spirit of cooperation.

Manaakitanga

Manaakitanga is above all else the expression of hospitality; respecting others' mana, showing kindness and aroha, and encouraging inclusiveness by hosting people and making them feel welcomed by following kawa (protocols). Food is also really important to manaakitanga, in making people feel welcomed. This means having food as a group, conducting business over food or a cup of tea, and involving food in your interactions with other people.

Kotahitanga

Kotahitanga literally means "oneness," it is the expression of unity of Te Ao Māori, or of any group of people. This can be shown through encouraging cooperation, through group activities or otherwise,

This is important because it allows for more positive outcomes, through combining resources and friendly interactions with one's peers.

Mohiotanga

Mohiotanga is the sharing of mōhio, or knowledge. This can be expressed through transparency of our organisation, helping newer members by explaining the rules, and sharing information between regions.

This is important because sharing knowledge allows all people to participate in group activities, and it allows all people to engage. This relates back to kotahitanga, wherein the sharing of mōhio allows for greater kotahitanga.

Kaitiakitanga

To understand kaitiakitanga one must understand the role kaitiaki play in Māori history. Kaitiaki are the guardian spirits that guided the ancestors over sea, sky, and land, to Aotearoa. Kaitiakitanga is applying this guardianship and applying to us as tangata acting as the kaitiaki of the environment, the whenua, and the wāhi (spaces) that we occupy. As guardians and stewards of the land and these spaces we must respect the multifaceted interests they hold. This means, in practice, adhering to local customs in terms of how you treat the environment/wāhi, and upholding the mana of the environment/wāhi.

Atuatanga

Atuatanga is the respect of religion. This is expressed through not discriminating against others based on religion, and respecting all cultural practices that come with that. This can be expressed through offering prayer rooms, or having non-discriminating policies.

Mauri ora

Mauri ora is the life principle, life force, vital essence, special nature, or a material symbol of a life principle, source of emotions. The essential quality and vitality of a being or entity. It is also used for a physical object, individual, ecosystem or social group in which this essence is located. To express mauri ora is to express a respect for the wellbeing of all living things.

Practices

Karakia

Karakia are prayers that can be religious or secular. A Karakia is an aspirational statement, letting us affirm what is important to us. They are used to increase the spiritual goodwill for a meeting, increasing the chances of a favourable outcome. Karakia can invoke the Abrahamic God, invoke the traditional Atua, invoke the spirit of the land, or even simply be a piece of poetry affirming principles that are important to those saying the karakia.

Karakia are used for many reasons: to open or close meetings, to bless food, to welcome or farewell the day, to ensure a safe journey, et cetera.

Karakia are invocations of spiritual guidance or protection. They are not to be taken lightly - they are integral parts of Māori culture today and ought to be highly respected.

Mihi/pepeha

A mihi is a speech, spoken to introduce yourself. Mihi, and reciting your pepeha, are a common way of becoming more familiar with those attending a meeting or conference. Showing people who you are through your pepeha is a good way to build trust.

Mihi are an important part of opening any hui, as it allows participants to get to know you before you dive into the conference. A detailed guide on making your mihi can be found [here](#).

Tapu and noa

The concepts of Tapu and Noa relate to boundaries of social conduct.

To be tapu is to be restricted or prohibited on the basis of sanctity. This guides behaviour to be appropriate, whether that be the respect given to one who has recently passed, or the respect afforded to others, etc. Places of death, where before they are consecrated, people who are severely ill, people's heads, et cetera. These things or places are unviolable, and to do so would be deeply frowned upon, as it insults the restriction. Karakia can be used to lift the restriction or prohibition on places or things.

To be noa is to have a lack of tapu. It is simply the state of having no restrictions.

Relationships

Manaakitanga

The principle that underpins relationship building is Manaakitanga. The hospitality that we show as an organisation, to the delegates for whom we have a duty of care and for our volunteer who uphold the manaakitanga of our organisation, reflect on us as an organisation.

Kanohi ki te kanohi

Kanohi ki te kanohi means face to face, and encapsulates an important Tikanga. Face to face contact when discussing business. This is Tikanga because personal relationships flourish with face to face contact, allowing for more positive relationships.

Kai

Having food over kai is one of the most important (if not the most important) Tikanga practice. When conducting business, at a conference or just for personal meetings, sharing a cup of tea (or coffee but tea is better) and having some food is integral. This builds relationships, and allows for more positive and deeper connections to be made.

Where to from here?

This document is a comprehensive overview of Tikanga principles and practices. It is intended to be the first point of call for any volunteer wishing to better incorporate Tikanga into UN Youth processes. For many, incorporating Tikanga can be daunting as it is unfamiliar to many volunteers. We therefore outline below, a few ways where Tikanga Maori can be displayed and manifested into our events and even conduct outside of the organisation.

Everyday Te Reo

Part of embracing Tikanga Māori, and refocusing our region to be more inclusive of Māori, and respecting Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is using more Te Reo Māori in our everyday interactions. You have probably noticed that a lot of emails and Slack messages that circulate within UN Youth incorporate a lot of Te Reo already. This is good progress, and continuing this trajectory is ideal.

How much you incorporate Tikanga Māori into your UN Youth experience will vary between each volunteer. It could mean as much as taking a Māori language course, or as little as learning some more key phrases to use, but more is always better. The [UN Youth Te Reo Māori Resource](#) is a helpful resource that is tailored to UN Youth volunteers to be used at events. Using Te Reo at events is a great way to use Te Reo in our everyday lives, show our commitment to the Māori language, and make events more fun and interesting.

A lot of people struggle with pronunciation, but practice makes perfect!! Speaking Te Reo is practising Te Reo, and speaking it on a daily basis is the best way to learn more. If you need help with pronunciation, Victoria University has developed a good [guide](#). If you want to hear it being said, the online [MāoriDictionary](#) has recordings for individual words.

Karakia

Akoranga o te Ao,	Learning of the world,
ki ngā tangata o te Ao.	to the people of the world.
Kia hāngia te mōhio o te Ao,	Let them be inspired,
kia are ngā hinengaro,	let their minds be opened,
ki ngā rangatahi o te Ao,	the youth of the world,
ki te Ao, ki te Ao, ki te Ao.	of the world, of the world, of the world.

This is the karakia that has specifically been developed for use at UN Youth events. It incorporates the values that are inherent to our organisation, such as akoranga, kotahitanga, rangatahitanga, and mātauranga.

Karakia do not work if only one person knows it and says it, for it to have the most powerful affect every councilmember must learn it. If we say a karakia before a conference or event, while

the delegates or other volunteers may not know what it means, the show of council unity in saying the karakia together sets the tone.

Mihi/pepeha

It is important to learn your own pepeha. Spending some time thinking about where you are tied to the most spiritually helps you understand where you come from, and helps others understand where you come from.

If you go into any District Court, High Court, or Supreme Court proceedings, the Justices and Councils will introduce themselves by way of mihi. It is not paraded, it is just common practice now, and it would be good if that were the case at UN Youth events or meetings.

In Summary

If we want to show how serious we are about incorporating Tikanga into UN Youth culture and respecting Te Tiriti o Waitangi, then taking the steps outlined in this document is integral.

This is the first step in a long journey that must be carried on past our time. This may feel tokenistic at first, or as if we are doing something or being people who we are not. This will change over time. As time goes on, these values will become ingrained into the culture of our organisation.