



Human Rights
Commission
Te Kahui Tika Tangata

Taku Manawa

Building Human Rights Communities



Building human rights communities

Te manu ka kai i te miro, nōna te ngahere

Te manu ka kai i te mātauranga, nōna te ao

The bird that eats of the fruit of the forest knows only the forest.

The bird that eats of the tree of knowledge knows the world.

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Taku Manawa (My Human Rights) is an initiative through which the Human Rights Commission works with communities to promote human rights. It uses a human rights community development approach to engage with a particular community over a period of at least three years.

The Commission works with individuals, organisations and agencies in the community to identify the human rights issues they consider to be of greatest importance to them. These groups then nominate people who they think are best able to address these human rights issues by participating in the programme.

Participants begin their involvement with Taku Manawa by taking part in a seven-day course that builds their understanding of human rights and their facilitation skills. An NZQA Unit Standard is included in the course and the Commission partners with a local tertiary institution to assess it.

For the first year, Taku Manawa workers roll out activities in their regions that highlight and explore human rights issues they have identified as pertinent. These activities can include running public events, advocating on behalf of individuals and groups, and working with organisations to incorporate human rights principles into their planning. The aim is to build confidence and capacity so that communities can act on their human rights responsibilities. The Commission provides hands-on mentoring and support, and a budget to cover costs.

At the end of the first year, Taku Manawa workers and organisations may choose to undertake more in-depth human rights projects. The Commission continues to provide support, guidance, budget and resources for at least another two years.

The relationship among Taku Manawa participants grows through mutual support and resource sharing. The relationship between the Commission and the community is strengthened through the initiative, while building community capacity so that human rights work can be carried out more independently.

Outcomes of Taku Manawa

The Commission has been undertaking human rights community development work since 2003. Taku Manawa now operates in four regions: Tairāwhiti and Bay of Plenty; Tai Tokerau Northland; Murihiku Southland; and with a focus on ethnic and religious minorities, in Kirikiriroa Hamilton. Taku Manawa will begin in South Auckland in 2012, with a focus on children and young people.

Since the initiative began:

- ◆ 74 community participants from diverse backgrounds have become Taku Manawa human rights workers
- ◆ participants have represented 82 organisations
- ◆ four regional human rights networks have been formed
- ◆ over 400 community-based activities have been reported to the Commission, ranging from relatively straightforward events to those that are more complex, such as whole community events.

What is the Human Rights Community Development Approach?

The human rights community development approach enhances people's capacity to identify and address their own human rights issues. It is made up of three interacting concepts — human rights, community development and action learning.

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms to which all human beings are entitled. They are concerned with equality and fairness. They recognise that we should have the freedom to make choices about our lives and develop our potential as human beings. They are about living a life free from fear, harassment or discrimination.

Community development is about supporting people to develop the power, skills, knowledge and experience that enable them to undertake initiatives of their own to address issues that affect them.

Action learning involves cycles of planning, action and reflection. Groups take time to develop an understanding of the problems they have identified, who is being affected by them and how, and to develop strategies to address them.

Human rights community development is about working with communities to develop ways of addressing human rights issues in their lives. It is a powerful and sustainable way of working with any group, agency or community.





The people behind Taku Manawa

The success of Taku Manawa is founded on the people who do human rights work with communities. Meet some of the people who are using skills, knowledge and education to help build human rights communities.

It's for the hapū

Tracy Hillier manages an Ōpōtiki preschool based on human rights principles, where the children are given access to their own history, stories, knowledge and tikanga. The nearby Opape Marae — described as the first rights-based marae in Aotearoa — also sets an example that others are being encouraged to follow.

Tracy, who is responsible for a roll of about 32 children, is keen to emphasise that the involvement of herself and others in a Taku Manawa programme is on behalf of their community. "It's not about us, it's about the hapū," she says. "We were just lucky enough to be offered the opportunity."

At Opape, the people of Ngāi Tamahaua have incorporated human rights principles and practices into the constitution of the marae. Although Ngāi Tamahaua has a long history of involvement with human rights, Taku Manawa was the catalyst for developing the long-standing relationship between Opape and the Human Rights Commission.

Since its inception as a human rights-based marae in 2008, Opape Marae: Marae Tikanga Tangata has continued to work towards a lived understanding of human rights. This has been an evolutionary process involving

shared learning by both the Human Rights Commission and Ngāi Tamahaua.

Through Taku Manawa, Tracy works with the community to help people understand how a human rights framework would benefit them. By sharing stories, they found that people could form a connection to human rights. They were able to identify human rights themes in the histories, pūrākau (legends) and whakatauākī (proverbs) that are essential to their identity. This has connected human rights to the whakapapa (ancestry) of Ngāi Tamahaua.

Ngāi Tamahaua made a list of what they considered to be their rights then linked the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to that list. From this perspective, the possible benefits of the international human rights framework became more visible. It was clear that the human rights kaupapa aligned well with Kaupapa Māori and that there were tools within it that could benefit whānau.

"Human rights is a pathway built on positive relationships and learning and sharing, and respect for the mana of all peoples," says Tracy. "Ngāi Tamahaua has been committed for a long time to the recognition of human rights based on tikanga."



Tracy, first row fourth from left.

"Human rights is a pathway built on positive relationships and learning and sharing, and respect for the mana of all peoples."

Taking a broad view of human rights

Murray Henare, from Te Tairāwhiti Taku Manawa Human Rights Network, has been facilitating hui across Te Tairāwhiti region for eight years. He first joined the pilot project in 2003 to develop skills to support his work at the East Coast Community Law Centre.

Murray has found that hui and workshops are effective forums to increase awareness about human rights within the community. They also provide space for people to discuss issues faced at the community level.

Over the years he has organised several hui. One involved representatives from Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) and housing, education and disability agencies. In another he brought in youth-focused Taku Manawa facilitators to hold workshops for secondary school students and school leavers. A workshop in Ruatoria brought together kaumātua and young people to discuss human rights and issues of discrimination. "People shared their life stories, and some of the people are really whakamā; you would never get them to get up and speak in any of our normal forums."

The most recent hui, at Awatere Marae, gave people an opportunity to hear stories about human rights issues that are faced by

indigenous communities globally, broadening people's view of issues present within their own community, and enabling them to think about issues from different perspectives.

Much of the discussion at this hui centred around the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and how the intent of the Declaration could be realised. Over 80 people attended, including local school pupils, pakeke (elders), representatives from Youth Transition, disability groups, iwi groups, whānau and hapū.

"[I've] found it valuable to look at human rights and the broad spectrum of issues I suppose, it's not just about racism... it's about the breaches of someone's rights to access employment, social services and accommodation," says Murray.

Murray and the Tairāwhiti Human Rights Network continue to hold hui throughout the region to communicate and discuss human rights and their role within the community.

"I've found it valuable to look at human rights through a broad spectrum of issues ... rights to access employment, social services, accommodation."



Family violence, a human rights issue

Before getting the chance to take part in a Taku Manawa programme, **Carla Rowe** knew more about human rights issues in Tibet than she did about the way human rights affected people in New Zealand.

Studying Buddhism in her hometown of Whangārei over a decade ago brought her into contact with Tibetans living in the city, including one who had been a political prisoner. As a result, she joined and became active in Amnesty International.

A trained social worker, Carla later became involved in Women's Refuge in Whangārei. "I've always been passionate about ending family violence," she says.

When she took part in a Taku Manawa programme in Kaitaia four years ago, her eyes were opened to local human rights issues.

"The big thing I got from it was that there are human rights violations happening here in New Zealand ... Family violence is a human rights issue — I never connected the two."

The mother-of-four and grandmother-of-one went on to develop a self-empowerment programme for women who have been victims of family violence. Eight women

attended eight sessions that focused on learning how to be empowered through increased knowledge of human rights combined with greater self-worth.

The programme aimed to promote an understanding that human rights are not a privilege available only to a few. Most of the participants had no awareness of their human rights previously. Building their self-confidence was an essential part of Carla's plan to change the way women thought about their situation. "I want women to go from being victims to being survivors. It's changing that mindset."

One of the women who completed the programme said that as a result she felt compelled to spread the human rights message, "to go out and share it with people and say: 'Hey! You have rights!'"

Carla says that these days she often makes use of the Human Rights Commission connection in her family violence work, referring clients who haven't been treated well "by officialdom". She is about to organise another Taku Manawa programme in collaboration with Whānau Ora.

Mike Cunningham



"Family violence is a human rights issue – I never connected the two."

Promoting human rights through photography

Briar Bentley estimates that about 11,000 people have seen her Conversation on Human Rights ("COHR") exhibition since it first opened in Whangārei in March 2011. The show presents 30 of her photographs, each a visual representation of an article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights accompanied by her commentary.

People visiting the exhibition, which has since toured Northland and been shown as far afield as Invercargill, are invited to make their own comments on post-it notes, which Briar is collecting: "I'm building up a record of every comment that has been made."

Born and raised in the United Kingdom, Briar came to New Zealand to be a farmer, initially share milking in the Bay of Plenty and then owning dairy farms in Northland. Once a family man, she has been transgender for about 10 years, running the transgender support network in Whangārei.

This community involvement led to the parent-of-four being invited to participate in the Taku Manawa programme which, in turn, inspired her exhibition project. "I started this whole thing as a way of just trying to interpret the articles of the Universal Declaration for myself and for others."

She has also facilitated workshops and human rights information sessions with various groups throughout the Northland region. "It has given me an introduction into a whole range of different organisations within Northland."

The overall vision for her exhibition is to present human rights in a creative way that encourages interaction and discussion. Briar hopes that the images will make people think about the concepts involved. "I'm not trying to make a statement, I'm trying to get people to question their values." Including stalls and workshops within the exhibition ensures that this can happen in an environment where there is an opportunity to learn more about human rights.

People have a chance to learn about the services available to them in their community and the show also creates valuable bonds between organisations that previously had little to do with each other.

The project has grown in a way that Briar never expected, and has prompted her to plan "COHR II", which will look at similar issues but from the perspective of young people. "It has been a journey that I never anticipated," she says.

"I'm trying to get people to question their values."



Growing grassroots builds stronger communities

Growing up in the remote Catlins at the bottom of the South Island, **Sandie Knapp** learned about the importance of communities early on.

"I'm a big believer in grassroots organisations," says the mother-of-four who these days lives in Western Southland and is closely involved in the Taku Manawa Murihiku Human Rights Network.

After studying law and arts at Otago University, Sandie returned to the deep south to have a family of her own. This led to seven years of involvement in Playcentre at both local and national levels. That organisation's bottom-up ethos reinforced her own inclinations: "Playcentre had a huge impact. People at the ground level were the real movers and drivers."

While working as a manager of the Southland Harm Reduction Programme, promoting issues such as needle safety, she was approached to take part in a Taku Manawa course being held at the Southland Institute of Technology in 2009. It opened her eyes to the importance of human rights at the community level where they are often unwittingly breached. "Because we don't recognise it, it gets passed on."

Taku Manawa "really has made a huge

impact on my life," she says. "I've got better tools to put things across."

She agrees that having rights also brings responsibilities and while some people might be put off by youngsters noisily proclaiming their rights, Sandie says the "leaders of tomorrow" need to have passion and purpose. "If you arm them with the correct knowledge, they can do a world of good."

The human rights network, formed out of that initial Invercargill course, held a Human Rights Expo in 2010 which was attended by more than 30 grassroots organisations.

"The networking between organisations was amazing," says Sandie. It led to media coverage and support for groups that usually operate out of the limelight. "People at grassroots level can feel they are forgotten in the greater scheme of things."

The network has gone on to help organise human rights workshops, produce a regular newsletter that is sent throughout Southland and most importantly, is regularly involved in advocacy and support. It also wants to engage further with young people, to collaborate with schools and encourage students to engage with human rights. "We're very busy," says Sandie. "There is a big place for what we are doing in the community."

Shirley Whyte



"People at the ground level were the real movers and drivers."

Spreading the word about empowerment

Stephanie Amtman had no idea what she was in for when she agreed to fill in for her boss and attend a Taku Manawa course in Invercargill in 2009.

"I didn't really have time to think about it," recalls the mental health worker. "The first day, I was just a mess but the light bulb finally turned on. It was full-on for seven days but it was really good."

The mother of two adult children first began working in the mental health sector at Sunnyside Hospital in Christchurch. She continued in the field after moving to Southland in 2004, first caring for patients with dementia and these days working at Te Kōtuku, a residential rehabilitation and respite clinic in Invercargill.

Doing the Taku Manawa course was an uplifting experience after a tough year in which both Stephanie's father and a close friend had died, and she had her own brush with cancer. "It gave me something to set goals for — a bit more positive stuff." It also gave her the confidence to go on and give a human rights workshop at her workplace for staff and Tangata Whaiora (clients), using newly gained skills and resources to plan and implement a range of activities and discussions.

The workshop used a variety of interactive games that highlighted issues of inclusion and exclusion and essential human rights elements such as participation, empowerment and accountability. Stephanie found this approach eased possible tension or discomfort between staff members and Tangata Whaiora.

"While the group was laughing and having fun, the point was definitely taken and they were starting to open their minds and soak up new information." While many Tangata Whaiora already had some knowledge of human rights, they were noticeably more active in ensuring their rights after the workshop.

Their increased knowledge has had an impact beyond those who attended the workshop: they have shared what they learned with others and helped them to assert their rights when necessary. "They'll go out now and if something's not right they'll ask questions ... It just gives them a wee bit of empowerment really."

Robyn Edie



"It was full-on for seven days but it was really good."

A migrant's journey to work in her community

Human rights issues can stir emotional responses, as **Jovi Abellanosa** learned during a rewarding Taku Manawa session at Waikato Institute of Technology in Hamilton in 2011.

The trust manager helped facilitate a short session on family violence with the other participants, dividing into groups to discuss the topic. She thought she had anticipated the questions and reactions but "it was too emotional for a few," she says. "I didn't quite expect it. It actually ended up with me having to manage what I thought was a very emotional session."

As managing director of the Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust, Jovi had been keen to learn more about human rights and, in particular, how human rights issues affect migrants and refugees. The trust runs programmes and projects supporting successful settlement of newcomers, offering an interpreting service and managing the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre among other projects.

She says Taku Manawa increased her understanding of human rights issues, gave her new facilitation skills and a valuable chance to network with other participants who were from a wide group of organisations and cultures. "It was a very good mix. We

really learned a lot from their different experiences."

The Taku Manawa approach has proved helpful in her work, she says. "It has provided better tools for approaching human rights issues. The diverse mix of participants was a good initial training ground for engaging and working in the sector."

Jovi migrated to New Zealand from the Philippines in 2007, and plans to use her new knowledge to run human rights sessions for immigrant and ethnic youth. She says many newcomers to New Zealand have a poor understanding of their rights in this country. "When I tell them it's their right, it's foreign to them."

From her own perspective, she says New Zealand has the benefit of an active Human Rights Commission but that there is more work to be done. Issues currently faced by immigrants include access to interpreting services, health care and employment discrimination.

"Based on the issues that get picked up by the media, there is still a lot to learn in terms of human rights issues especially around those relating to cultural and religious diversity."

"We really learned a lot from their different experiences."



New workshop a model for community growth

Ihsana Ageel says she “just had to be involved” when she heard that a Taku Manawa course was being held in Hamilton earlier this year. The community resources advisor for the Hamilton City Council recognised the importance of human rights issues and was keen to learn more on the subject. “If I can arm myself with knowledge and skills, then I can do something about it.”

Ihsana is originally from the Maldives and first came to New Zealand as a student 11 years ago. She returned for further study in 2004 and became naturalised three years ago. After working in drug rehabilitation in her homeland, she trained here in psychology, specialising in community psychology.

She says the Taku Manawa course brought her together with “fantastic people to work with, who were on the same page as me and who lived in the same community”.

Ihsana has been inspired to incorporate a human rights framework into her work and pass on knowledge of the subject to her wider community.

Specifically, it gave her an opportunity to share information about immigrant communities. “There is a gap in

understanding how ethnic communities operate and function within the broader community,” she says. In collaboration with others, she has helped design and deliver a workshop (“Working with Ethnic Groups”) to community development advisors and other Waikato community organisations, including youth workers. It is hoped that the workshop will be offered more widely.

Ihsana says most immigrants she meets have a good understanding of human rights violations in their home countries and are also highly aware of issues that are prevalent in New Zealand. “Understanding human rights issues will depend on the experiences of that individual and their country of origin, their experience of issues and their involvement and awareness of those issues in their home country.”

She says the approach to human rights taken by Taku Manawa is a good fit with her job which involves administering community grants for the city council, working with various community groups and delivering training and workshops. “It ties in really well with my current values, and the work I do in council.”

Mark Hamilton



“There is a gap in understanding how ethnic communities operate and function within the broader community.”

The Way Forward

This booklet profiles eight of the 74 Taku Manawa human rights workers in Aotearoa New Zealand.

With the Human Rights Commission, and with each other, they are working to build sustainable human rights capacity in communities, particularly amongst those most vulnerable to human rights violations.

The human rights community development approach is being constantly adapted and expanded. In 2012, Taku Manawa will begin in South Auckland with a specific focus on the human rights of children and young people.

Taku Manawa was extended into a bilateral project developed by the New Zealand and Philippine human rights commissions and funded by New Zealand Aid Programme. This project focused on the human rights violations faced by indigenous peoples of the Philippines and ran from 2008 to 2011.

The Commission has recently piloted a new programme which explores human rights through a kaupapa Māori framework. Tūhonohono Māori links the human rights values and principles that are an integral part of traditional Māori society and customs alongside the human rights dimension of the Treaty of Waitangi and the international human rights framework.

The fundamental components of human rights community development is an approach that can be taken with any group, agency, and community. Its strength lies in being an approach that encourages full participation among members of the community, encourages the community to take ownership of work around human rights, and builds capacity and confidence among individuals and groups so that they can apply human rights in their work and daily lives.

Six elements of the human rights community development approach

- 1 Linking of decision-making** at every level to human rights standards set out in the relevant human rights covenants and conventions.
- 2 Identification** of all the relevant human rights involved, the balancing of rights to maximise respect for all rights and rights holders, prioritising those of the most vulnerable people.
- 3** Emphasising the **participation** of individuals and groups in decision-making that affects them.
- 4 Non-discrimination** among individuals and groups through equal enjoyment of rights and obligations by all.
- 5 Empowering** individuals and groups by allowing them to use rights as leverage for action and to legitimise their voice in decision-making.
- 6 Accountability** for actions and decisions, which enables individuals and groups to complain about decisions that affect them adversely.



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or want more information:**

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