



MARAEFIT

CASE STUDY

—
INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH A
MARAE-CENTRIC INITIATIVE.

MARAEFIT



First and foremost, MaraeFit is about the people and for the people.”

– ARAMA WARE, MĀORI SPORTS EDUCATOR, HAWKE'S BAY.

MaraeFit is a marae-centric initiative that provides opportunities for sport and recreation organisations, whānau, hapū and marae to increase their physical activities and capability in an ‘as Māori’ context.

Now in its fourth year, the project was created by Sport Hawke's Bay He Oranga Poutama Kaiwhakahaere based on the Sport New Zealand kaupapa Māori sport and recreation framework, “Te Whetū Rēhua”. This framework is the foundation of Sport New Zealand's He Oranga Poutama kaupapa.

The MaraeFit initiative has a strong focus on working alongside marae to build their capability in delivering quality active recreation and sporting activities for whānau. It also supports non-Māori organisations in increasing their cultural capability to provide events, workshops or activities that value cultural connections.

MaraeFit uses an age-determined points system to incentivise engagement of the whole whānau. Everyone who participates in the activity is able to koha their points to a chosen Ngāti Kahungunu marae. The marae with the most points at the end of the annual series is recognised and acknowledged at the Hawke's Bay Sports Awards as ‘The Most Active Marae in Kahungunu’.

Key success factors for the programme have been:

- Giving effect to Treaty Principles – Partnership, Protection and Participation
- Supporting and empowering marae
- Inter-generational activities that engage the entire whānau
- Aroha mai, aroha atu – generosity received, generosity returned.

GETTING STARTED

Sport Hawke's Bay wanted to strengthen its relationships with whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori, as well as supporting marae initiatives that aimed to increase physical activity for whānau.

Through demographics and other information sources, Sport Hawke's Bay identified local communities with low levels of participation in physical activity. The insights also highlighted that whānau living in these communities enjoyed being active as a whānau and in environments that supported them to participate as Māori.

Marae are pātaka (repositories) of whakapapa, waiata, tikanga and te reo, which is bought to life by whānau, hapū, iwi. The hononga (connection) between whānau and marae is strong. MaraeFit supports the hononga authentically and organically through the koha tikanga (process), an unconditional way of giving with no expectations of receiving.

A 2013 study found that 84% of Māori lived in urban areas. While most reside in metropolitan centres, many continue to associate with their iwi, tribes 'back home'. However, one in six Māori did not know their tribal affiliation, which leads to the assumption that they are also unaware of their marae affiliation.

Taking these factors into account Sport Hawke's Bay created the MaraeFit kaupapa where, through active recreation and sport, whānau and marae are enabled to organically re-connect.



THE INITIATIVE

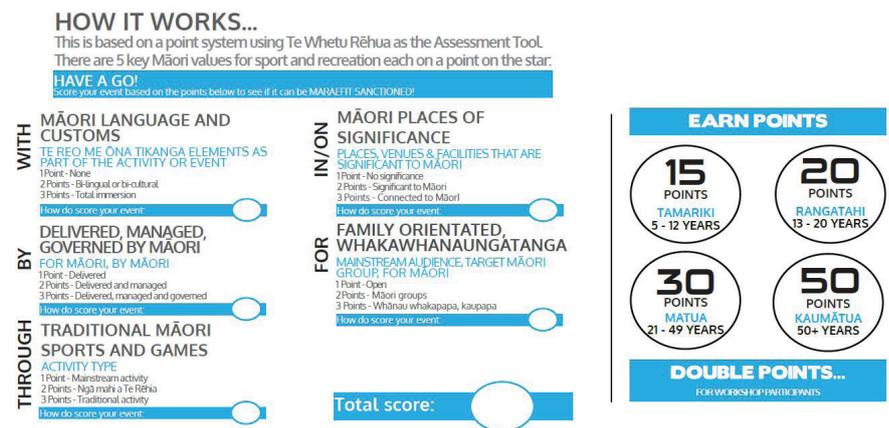
Programme development

Sport New Zealand's Te Whetū Rēhua is the kaupapa Māori framework that is active recreation and sport specific. Based on five key tangible wellbeing dimensions that are important to Māori, it demonstrates ways to increase and respect cultural value in your activity. You can learn more about Te Whetū Rēhua here: <https://sportnz.org.nz/managing-sport/search-for-a-resource/guides/te-whetu-rehua-the-guiding-star>

Sport Hawke's Bay based the MaraeFit kaupapa upon this framework with a view to:

- increase organisation cultural awareness
- increase whānau and hapū participation in a more meaningful way
- connect whānau with marae
- support whānau and hapū to participate as Māori, contributing to healthier lifestyles.

Once the concept was developed, Sport Hawke's Bay Kaiwhakahaere presented the kaupapa to Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated Board (membership representatives from the six Taiwhenua in the Ngāti Kahungunu region) and Taura Here (urban-living but affiliated to Ngāti Kahungunu). The Board approved and sanctioned the programme and MaraeFit was launched on Waitangi Day, 2014.



THE INITIATIVE



My tamariki and I were a bit nervous, but as soon as we got to Pandora and saw other tamariki and their whānau participating, it got them jumping in line and in a hurry to row that waka. The more Waka Ama gatherings we went to, the more our confidence built up... That was us. We were committed!"

– WAKA AMA PARTICIPANT

Something for everyone

MaraeFit is inclusive, aiming to meet the needs of all whānau, Māori and non-Māori to maximise engagement and increase whanaungatanga (sense of connection).

To have an activity Maraefit sanctioned, it must meet Maraefit criteria that is guided by Te Whētū Rēhua. Sport Hawke's Bay Kaiwhakahaere work with Marae and other organisations to support this process.

A variety of sanctioned activities are offered each year, ranging from inter-marae sports tournaments to traditional games workshops. An example of a Maraefit activity is the Hikoi Series which included whānau walking up ancestral maunga (hills/mountains). To be respectful and give an authentic experience, Sport Hawke's Bay collaborated with the Department of Conservation (DOC) and Mana Whenua (local iwi). DOC's contribution was to educate whānau about the importance of and plans for conservation, while Mana Whenua was to pass on knowledge about the cultural significance of the whenua and maunga, and Sport Hawke's Bay facilitated the Hikoi.

The programme's participation incentive sees everyone taking part in a sanctioned activity gaining points. The inter-generational points system is structured so that pakeke and kaumātua (older adults) earn more points than tamariki and rangatahi (children and young people) e.g. 12-19 years = 25pts, 50+ = 50pts. Some activities also require teams to represent all age groups.

Maraefit's koha system allows participants to gift points to any marae within Ngāti Kahungunu rohe by identifying their chosen marae on the registration form. Results are posted on a leader board on the Maraefit Facebook page.

Collaboration and capability

A strong focus for Maraefit is to walk alongside marae and other organisations to support them in developing their capability to deliver activities, and in some cases, cultural understanding.

To achieve this, Sport Hawke's Bay staff support marae and organisations at their events and activities. Additionally, a range of sanctioned workshops, such as how to play Māori games and Waka Ama coaching, are offered to help empower marae and offer further connections with local communities. As a bonus incentive to increase capability, participants double their koha points by attending sanctioned workshops, further demonstrating Sport Hawke's Bay commitment to sustainability.

Additionally, through Maraefit, Sport Hawke's Bay also saw opportunities to increase mainstream active recreation and sporting organisations' cultural capability to support genuine engagement with Māori.

To have their activity Maraefit sanctioned, organisations must meet Maraefit's criteria based around Te Whētū Rēhua. This isn't a one size fits all approach, each activity has varying levels of support that the Sport Hawke's Bay Kaiwhakahaere navigate on a case by case basis.

An example is a mainstream recreational organisation came to Sport Hawke's Bay wanting Maraefit to sanction their annual event. One of the tracks being used was Ngāti Kahungunu's ancestral maunga (mountain), Kahurānaki. The organisers did not realise the sacredness and depth of connection that local iwi have with the maunga and the importance of tikanga when accessing it. Sport Hawke's Bay Whānau Active Team connected the organisation with Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi who provided cultural guidance, appropriate karakia, tikanga, with an intention to educate participants of the cultural significance of the maunga to Iwi and how to value this connection.

Other sanctioned activities have included Sport Hawke's Bay Kaiwhakahaere supporting event management of the Ngāti Kahungunu Secondary School Waka Ama Champs, to teaching Eastern Institute of Technology students how to play Ki o Rahi with a view to hold an inter-faculty competition.

IMPORTANT SUCCESS FACTORS

Giving effect to Treaty of Waitangi principles

Sport Hawke's Bay Māori Strategy is founded on the Treaty of Waitangi principles of Partnership, Participation and Protection.

Through Te Whetū Rēhua, MaraeFit gives effect to these by:

- connecting people and recreational and sporting organisations with Māori that lead to positive, enduring partnerships
- supporting participation “as Māori”, which allows all to participate
- creating an awareness of shared responsibility to protect and thereby valuing Māori taonga, such as sacred mountains, rivers and marae, and the importance of te reo me ōnā tikanga.

To maintain the integrity of the initiative, it consistently applies the foundation framework of Sport New Zealand Te Whetū Rēhua.

Offering activities in a way that enables participation “as Māori” is vital to maintain the mana of the MaraeFit kaupapa and relationships with whānau, hapū, iwi and marae, as well as give culturally-sound advice to mainstream organisations in how to genuinely engage with Māori.

Supporting and empowering marae

MaraeFit empowers whānau, hapū, marae, iwi to manage, lead and govern active recreation and sporting activities an important wellbeing dimension of mana motuhake (being responsible for their own destiny) and sustainability. As such an important aspect of the MaraeFit kaupapa has been supporting Marae and participants to grow their skills in facilitating physical activity programmes through working alongside them in a mentor capacity.

MaraeFit is the catalyst to incorporate physical activities into current marae kaupapa and/or increase physical activity on the marae. As a result, each year, more marae are offering and delivering their own activities and tournaments for their whānau.



IMPORTANT SUCCESS FACTORS



For us, it's about getting the whole whānau involved. Many of our whānau get together were traditionally centred around food. We wanted to change that and now we spend time with whānau while participating in physical activities. MaraeFit has given us the opportunity to be active together."

– JULIANA BENNETT, KOHUPĀTIKI MARAE.

A koha is a gift that is given unconditionally; it is given with aroha (respect and love). With this concept in mind, whānau are able to koha their points regardless of their connection to the chosen marae – therefore in this context, sport and recreation is a vehicle to connect whānau with their marae and help build a sense of community for whānau that do not affiliate to the local marae in their area."

– MOANA-LEE RAIHANIA, SPORT NZ TOIHAUTŪ
PRINCIPAL ADVISOR MĀORI

Intergenerational activities to engage the entire whānau

MaraeFit encourages and supports the notion of more Māori, more active, more often. However, initially it was found that many of the whānau engaging in the programme were also those who were already active. One of the challenges for MaraeFit was motivating new participants to take part.

The Sport Hawke's Bay Whānau Active Team received feedback that whānau wanted to participate in different ways to those that were already being offered. Creativity, adaptability and flexibility in terms of approach and activities was necessary to attract, engage and sustain participation. This included offering opportunities to engage both as a group and as individuals, and varying levels of activities from Q-Quest Hīkoi and Super 10s Kapa Haka to Fast 5 netball and Inter-Marae Waka Ama races.

Kaumātua (elders) are very precious and are held in high esteem because of their mana and wisdom and experiences. MaraeFit's points system is structured in a way to incentivise participation at all ages thereby encouraging Kāumatua (elders) along with their wider whānau to take part.

Aroha mai, aroha atu – generosity received generosity returned

The koha points system used acts as a way to build and strengthen connections between individuals, whānau, hapū and their marae.

Throughout the annual period, Sport Hawke's Bay receives copies of registrations. Whānau sign a waiver giving Sport Hawke's Bay permission to release their details to their chosen marae. At the end of the series a copy of the database is handed to each marae enabling them to see where whānau are living, update their records and see who gifted points. This process is treated in the same way as Māori would treat the handing over of whakapapa or genealogy, with great respect.

OUTCOMES

The Te Whetū Rēhua framework upholds the integrity of MaraeFit and maintains the focus on marae in a way that is inclusive and builds whanaungatanga (connections) within a whānau, hapū, marae and community.

By using the framework from Te Whetū Rēhua, MaraeFit has supported an increase in culturally relevant sport and active recreation opportunities available to individuals and whānau within the Hawke's Bay region. MaraeFit engaged with more than 1500 people aged between three years to 60-plus years old – a reflection of the strong whānau focus of the initiative.

The MaraeFit kaupapa has also established a greater sense of community and connections between individuals, whānau and their marae. In 2017, participants identified with 40 of the 57 marae in the Hawke's Bay region (Central Hawke's Bay, Napier, Hastings and Wairoa), with the winning marae accumulating 15,000 points.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sport NZ would like to express special thanks to the organisations that developed these initiatives, for their willingness to share their stories, and for supporting more communities to benefit from sport and active recreation in Aotearoa.

