

# Chapter 16

## He Kakano Ahau Framework: I Am a Seed Born of Greatness Descended From a Line of Chiefs

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### ABSTRACT

*The He Kākano Ahau Framework is a concept whose whakapapa (genealogy) stems from a traditional whakatauki (proverb). The whakatauki was later composed as a waiata Māori (Māori song). An underlying feature behind He Kākano Ahau expresses that I am a seed born of greatness descended from a line of chiefs. The He Kākano Ahau Framework as a strategy addresses historical trauma through a Māori lens. A major feature of the He Kākano Ahau framework investigates whānau (family) history alongside the intergenerational ripple effects of colonization, which confiscated land resources and assets and also stripped away traditional ways of knowing and practicing, causing the loss of the Māori language, Māori cultural identity, and Māori cultural heritage.*

### INTRODUCTION

This paper will commence with identifying and discussing the transition of He Kakano from a whakatauki or proverb, to being composed into a waiata, and then transitioning into a framework for engaging with Māori. A major function of the framework will address Māori experiences of historical intergenerational trauma. The second part of the paper will examine underlying themes, from the Te Whiuwhiu O Te Hau Māori counselling program at Wintec and the Pōwhiri Poutama framework that contributed to the development of the he Kakano Ahau framework. The third part of the paper will discuss historical intergenerational trauma, and Māori experiences of this phenomenon. The fourth part of the paper will examine key components in the framework including Māori ethical considerations, and micro skills. The other key components in the He Kakano Ahau framework will highlight the progression of a facilitated session through a series of engagements. The fifth part of the paper will discuss how the He Kakano Ahau framework is applied. The final part of the paper will conclude with discussing the strengths and limitations of the He Kakano Ahau framework.

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## HE KAKANO AHAU

The He Kakano Ahau concept has gone through a transition commencing with the whakatauki or proverb He Kakano Ahau to a waiata or song, and then used to transition into a facilitated program for engaging with Maori in prison and in the community. The Maori whakatauki or proverb E Kore au, I ngaro, he kakano ahau I ruia mai I Rangaatea translates to mean; I will never be lost, for I am a seed sown in Rangiaatea. While the whakatauki has its origins from Aotea waka, it is not referenced to anyone person. However, the wisdom this whakatauki instills continues to be passed from one generation to the next, reminding its descendants of the importance of their whakapapa lineage.

The composer of the song He Kakano Ahau is Dr Hohepa Tamehana. He is currently employed at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa Mangakotukutuku campus in Kirikiriroa Hamilton. Dr Hohepa Tamehana originally composed the song in 2001 to reflect his personal journey, and to also remind Māori of their rich ancestry. The inspiration for his song came from doing rangahau -research in the Cook Islands. What he found in the Cook Islands was that marae had virtually died out. When enquiring as to why this phenomenon was occurring, the people of the Islands responded by telling him that when the many waka left from the Islands to travel to Aotearoa NZ they sent their very best people with them. Those people held all the traditional knowledge and customs. They were the best breeders, expert hunters, craftsmen, astronomers, fishermen, and navigators. “They sent them all”. However, the impact of sending such vast knowledge meant that those left behind in the Islands were limited in their knowledge of traditions like karakia and those sorts of things.

Tamehana (2018) stated that

*our tupuna or ancestors sent to the shores of Aotearoa NZ. The very best of the very best. This is how the line in the song I am a seed born of greatness, descended from a line of chiefs came about.*

An underlying theme behind this song highlights the strength and resilience of Maori who have been subjugated and discriminated against due to colonisation, Tamehana (2018) affirms; “we are still here, and we are still speaking our Native language”

When Dr Hohepa Tamehana initially wrote the song, it was at Manutūriori for a television show that launched the careers of Maori pop group Aaria. There were twelve finalists in the show whittled down to five singer/performers. Hohepa was then asked to come on board as a vocal trainer. Tamehana (2018) conveyed that; “I was asked to teach them a waiata in both Maori and English because the producers wanted to see how well they sang in both languages” Tamehana (2018) asserts that; “the song He Kakano Ahau, was only supposed to be as a vocal warm up, it was only created to be used for that purpose. It wasn’t supposed to go anywhere else” He Kakano Ahau was composed in both Maori and English to see how well the contestants would cope moving from one language to the other. This is why He Kakano Ahau is sung half in Maori and half in English.

After a week of working with the group finalists, Hohepa was asked if He Kakano Ahau as a fully fledged song could be put onto Aaria’s single. He agreed on the proviso that they utilized all 12 finalists and not just the five who make it to the end. The recording took place in a mattress room at Te Kuiti marae. Tamehana (2018), While the song was being recorded I noticed the majority of the people including the singers and technicians were very emotional, and shedding tears. They noticed that I wasn’t, and I was trying to figure out what the problem was.

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