



Matiu Island

Jan 2009



“there are many tough challenges ahead for community working with gangs but we need to start somewhere and this is a good starting point.”

Source; TeRoera Puna, the Iwi Liaison Officer for NZ Police.

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Background

In January 2009, twelve people from two very different communities met for one week in Wellington. Three days were spent at Wesley Church Hall and three days at Matiu/Sommes Island in Wellington Harbour.

The aim was to bring two quite separate communities together. Both communities; Mongrel Mob and Black Power, have traditionally considered the other as the enemy.

Four leaders, two from Black Power and two from Notorious Chapter, plus eight young people ranging in age from 16-24 years old attended.

It was anticipated that with Wesley Community Action working as 'a neutral broker,' these two groups, particu-

larly the younger members who have leadership potential, would be able to meet and explore what they had in common (rather than their differences,) and agree on a common hope for their future communities.

The young attendees would also complete a professional dive qualification and during this process it was important that they work together as a group.

Added to this was the opportunity for participants to learn an understanding of conservation and regulatory aspects relating to fishing as well maori tikanga relating to kai moana.

The Aims

To build on a previous horse trek between the two groups, and on the strong commitment from both Black Power (Wellington) and Mongrel Mob (Notorious Chapter) leadership to offer alternative choices to the younger members. The aims of this project were:

- To create another "point of reference" in terms of communicating with another community
- For all participants to qualify with a scuba diving certificate
- For participants to have a basic understanding around gathering kai in terms of tikanga, legal requirements and conservation aspects
- To develop relationships within the two groups as seen through the role modeling of the four leaders
- Learn and do a haka together
- Learn karakia and know when and why to do this



Acknowledgements

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The Results

- For 50% of participants, this project was their first attempt at formal study. 100% passed the course, providing their first formal qualification.
- 60% rated themselves as 'slightly confident' in the sea, with 20% as 'not confident.' At the completion of the project 80% rated themselves as 'confident' to 'very confident.'
- After the course 72% rated themselves as 'very familiar' and 18% as 'familiar' with conservation practices.
- Prior to the course there was an even spread amongst those who rated themselves, 'not familiar', to 'very familiar' with the legal aspects or regulatory aspects of kai moana. Post course, 72% rated themselves as 'very familiar', with 27% rating themselves as familiar.'
- Comments regarding their hopes for the week pre project included:
 - Gain water skills
 - Enjoy company of other divers
 - To be more confident in the water

Comments regarding what participants learnt post project included:

- How to scuba dive and to be safe
- I learnt the red and blue can put our

differences aside and work together

- We are able to get on in our respective environments- conflict resolution
- How much kai to take from the water
- Communication skills and respect for the sea
- To be more confident

Thus in all the measurable outcomes there was significant improvement and learning.

For many of the participants, the course work required for the Dive qualification was extremely challenging, and a 100% pass rate was an excellent outcome.

Their level of understanding of conservation increased, as did their confidence in this area.

All participants now have a 'very good' to 'excellent' understanding of the legal and cultural processes regarding collection of seafood compared to starting the project with a sense of embarrassment at their limited understanding of tikanga.

"Sometimes the biggest risk is not taking a risk..."

Working with Wesley is like bringing two cultures together...."

Source: Edge Te Whaiti from the Notorious Chapter of the Mongrel Mob.

Other results

Haka

The haka 'Tika Tonu' was chosen to teach the rangatahi. For some there had been a perception that this haka was a 'mob' haka. Participants learned that it is actually a haka composed for/by Ngati Kahungunu and to learn to perform it together was another challenge for all the rangatahi.

It was a struggle for some rangatahi to get around the idea that they would be performing it together and it helped that all the supervisors knew the haka and modeled it to the others.

The participants spent around 4hrs in total practicing and on the day of the graduation performed it together.

Leadership role modeling.

All supervisors actively modeled the behaviours expected of the rangatahi.

The rangatahi observed the interactions of the supervisors and saw that relationships have been formed between the two communities.

Another aspect of modeling was during the practical part of the dive course. There was no expectation that the rangatahi would be asked to do anything the supervisors weren't prepared to do. When the leaders entered



the water with the rangatahi, this encouraged the rangatahi by way of support to get through their practical dive training.

The supervisors were also able to provide the rangatahi with 'real-life' examples of how our two communities can work together, given the right circumstances and proper leadership.

Another viewpoint

The following is a summary of a report by TeRoera Puna, Iwi Liaison Officer for NZ Police and MAF Liaison worker.

Background;

"The Black Power and Mongrel Mob are two rival gangs regularly in confrontation with each other and/or the authorities. Seldom can these two groups be put into the same room without its challenges."

"Not many intervention initiatives are able to penetrate deeply into gangs

to offer positive intervention opportunities. Gangs are highly unwelcoming of government organizations."

"In the past, gang leaders have attempted .. to run their own intervention initiatives for members. These self organized initiatives often lack integrity, expertise, structure, community participation, positive role models, commitment, transparency and funding."

"Identifying an agency willing to work with gangs and provide the critical programme necessities have always been a challenge. Agencies in liaison with gangs are confronted with internal and external political barriers. Often this results in the withdrawal of programme support."

"A leadership programme was organised in January 2008 by gang members, for gang members (assisted by Wesley Community Action) and a six day horseback trek was conducted through the Central North Island National park."

"Superintendent Wallace Hau-maha attended (and) part of his role included breaking down the negative barriers that programme participants have about Police and vice versa."

"This year another six day leadership programme was organised on Matiu Island for 10 gang members under the umbrella of Wesley Community Action (and) Mr Eugene Ryder, (Wellington Black Power.)"

"Participants consisted of 5 Wellington Black Power gang members and 5 Mongrel Mob, Notorious chapter gang members from Turangi, Auckland, Hastings and Wairoa. Members were aged between 15yrs to 51yrs (and one) 15yr old showed delight in not having a criminal record."

"Mr Tony Howell, manager of Mana Dive Spot and 2 of his staff delivered a 5 day PADI course to the leadership programme. Understandably there were challenges for programme participants as well as Mr Howell."

The Programme;

"The first challenge for Mr Howell and his staff was the (low) literacy skills of some participants.... extra tutorial lessons were given for those in need and this helped pass the theory diving test."

"Participants found it challenging getting along with their peers as well as their rivals."

"The final and biggest challenge for a couple of programme participants was gaining confidence to dive in open water. One or two members would be considered tough participants ...but all confidence were lost when it came to learning to dive under water with breathing apparatus. Dive staff had to regularly coach and provide reassurance to unwilling participants."

"Nevertheless, all programme participants passed their open water PADI's course. For some this was a first time achievement to ever pass something in their life."

"Guest speakers invited to attend the Leadership programme in-

cluded motivational speaker Mr Robert Hewitt who talked about his 72 hour survival ordeal treading water between Mana and Kapiti Islands. Mana Diving Education delivered training on correct diving procedures, the Matiu Island Ranger gave talks about environmental preservation and I presented a 3 hour talk about Maori relationship with the sea, rules and regulations for the collection of seafood."

Summary:

"Overall, the leadership programme was successful."

"Although a reduction in offending from programme participants is not noticeable, when one looks deeper it is noted their offending has become a lot less serious."

"The programme reinforces what is right from wrong."

"Senior leaders spearheading the programme have reduced their offending considerably. Leaders are trying to turn their own lives around as well as maintain gang membership. Their view is that total disengagement from a gang is like an ex-gang member without mana."

"Working with any gang is risky and considered dangerous unless you are experienced in this field. Hence the relationship with the right leaders is important because only then can trust truly be built."

"Engagement with leaders to reduce offending is an ongoing commitment for Police and the community."

"I agree that there are many tough challenges ahead for community working with gangs but we need to start somewhere and this is a good starting point."