

HUA PARAKORE

An indigenous food sovereignty initiative and hallmark of excellence for food and product production

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Abstract

Hua Parakore is an indigenous verification and validation system for mahinga kai (food and product production) that is initiated and driven by Te Waka Kai Ora (National Māori Organics Authority of Aotearoa). It is the realisation of a community driven kaupapa Māori research project located at the flaxroots with Te Waka Kai Ora regional communities.

This paper presents Hua Parakore, a kaupapa Māori programme for defining a pure product, such as food, meat, wool and traditional medicines. Hua Parakore production and cultural practices are free from genetic modification (GM), nanotechnology, chemicals and pesticides and ensure product purity and integrity that is congruent with Māori cultural practices. Hua Parakore aligns with closed systems of production with zero or minimal inputs, works in

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harmony with nature and promotes self-reliance and self-sustaining practices, thereby contributing to indigenous food security and food sovereignty in Aotearoa. As an innovation Hua Parakore contributes to well-being and supports the potential of Māori communities to transform and re-invigorate; rangatiratanga (self-determination); te oranga o te whānau (family well-being); community development; kaitiakitanga (cultural and environmental sustainability); and creates a pathway for Māori growers and producers to tell their kaupapa Māori production story.

Keywords

food sovereignty, indigenous organics, Hua Parakore, kaupapa Māori

Introduction

This paper presents the novel findings and indigenous development outcomes of a kaupapa Māori community research project to develop an indigenous hallmark of excellence for mahinga kai (food and product production), called Hua Parakore. Hua Parakore is initiated and driven by Te Waka Kai Ora (National Māori Organics Authority of Aotearoa) and was launched at the Māori New Year in 2011. The programme is gaining momentum amongst Māori producers with 22 farms in the Hua Parakore system as at August 2012.

This community research project is underpinned by a kaupapa Māori methodology that validates Māori knowledge and is grounded in Māori cultural values. A key strength of this project has been the commitment from Māori communities to participate in building the Hua Parakore system from the ground up as well as the subsequent uptake of the system.

The development of Hua Parakore contributes to building long-term sustainability knowledges in Māori communities, critical for building resiliency and well-being in the 21st century, particularly in response to the triple global crisis of conventional peak oil, climate change, and food insecurity (Shiva, 2008). As a local indigenous community initiative Hua Parakore provides post-peak oil pathways for Māori development. As a food

sovereignty initiative, Hua Parakore reflects Via Campesina's seven principles of food sovereignty (Knuth, 2009):

1. Food: A basic human right
2. Agrarian reform
3. Protecting natural resources
4. Reorganising food trade
5. Ending the globalisation of hunger
6. Social peace
7. Democratic control

Strengthening the Hua Parakore initiative are the connections with the organics sector in Aotearoa New Zealand and globally with the international Slow Food movement. These connections enhance the end user uptake of Hua Parakore which is critical to the measure of success of this community-driven kaupapa Māori research project.

Overview of paper

A core purpose of this article is to present a new knowledge contribution in the form of the Hua Parakore system into the international indigenous literature. This new knowledge contribution speaks directly to: indigenous food production (Roy, 2006), food sovereignty (Knuth, 2009; Menezes, 2001) and organics (Hutchings, 2009; Hutchings & Carney, 2008;

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2001). The novel contributions that this paper makes are: the Hua Parakore framework, the key Hua Parakore kaupapa (principles) and the validation and verification process (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d).

The discussion section of this paper provides the context and rationale for the development of Hua Parakore, connecting to both the wider discourses of the triple global crisis of climate change, conventional peak oil and food insecurity (Shiva, 2008) and the practical needs of Māori organic producers as identified throughout the research process (Skelton & Carney, 2010). The participation by Māori in the organics sector is noted, given that the Hua Parakore system maps to the New Zealand Standard for Organic Production NZSA 8410.2003 (Standards New Zealand, 2003). Furthermore, some Māori producers who are already organically certified are also now considering adopting the Hua Parakore hallmark of excellence. This discussion raises some of the limitations of the four other organic standards in Aotearoa New Zealand to meet the tino rangatiratanga (autonomous) aspirations of Māori organic producers.

An overview of kaupapa Māori methodology that set the epistemological frame for the research is presented and the method, cohort and analysis processes are described. The body of the paper presents the Hua Parakore framework, principles and the indigenous discourse of Māori participants from across different Te Waka Kai Ora regions who participated in this research project. The presentation of the participants' voices evidences the connection of the Hua Parakore framework as being grounded, embedded and grown from Te Waka Kai Ora communities. The Hua Parakore validation and verification process also located with Te Waka Kai Ora communities is described. Finally, the discussion section comments on the interface between Hua Parakore and Western-based organic systems in Aotearoa New Zealand, and the international Slow Food movement

to evidence where Te Waka Kai Ora and Hua Parakore are contributing to wider international and domestic food sovereignty networks.

Background

Climate change and conventional peak oil are combining with a third crisis of food insecurity. The last 200 years of fossil fuel use have resulted in unprecedented CO₂ emissions contributing to global warming and the current global climate crisis. Some academics and scientists (Bardi, 2009; Hopkins, 2008; Shiva, 2008) also argue that we have reached conventional peak oil—the point in time when the maximum rate of petroleum extraction is reached, after which the rate of production is expected to enter terminal decline. Whether or not we have reached the point of conventional peak oil is contested, given that the consequences of conventional peak oil would require the highly industrialised oil-based economies to transition to other forms of energy that are yet to be fully developed (Hopkins, 2008). Regardless, if we have reached conventional peak oil the current demand for conventional oil is high and supply is becoming scarce and expensive. Hence the convergence of these two crises with growing food insecurity puts the most vulnerable groups—non-industrialised farmers, women, children, peasant and indigenous peoples—as most affected (Shiva, 2008; Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011a).

Hua Parakore is a development opportunity in the form of an indigenous food sovereignty initiative that seeks to address and respond to this triple crisis from a kaupapa Māori framework and assert rangatiratanga with regard to food production (Shiva, 2008; Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011a). Critical within this Hua Parakore framed response to the triple crisis is the re-assertion within Māori tribal collectives to save and protect traditional seed from commodification and to return to the land to grow food to feed families (Tipene, Greensill, et al., 2010).

In this regard Hua Parakore is an expression of indigenous food sovereignty.

Hua Parakore makes a key contribution to bringing indigenous knowledges and practices to organics in Aotearoa, acting as a korowai (cloak) to the other non-indigenous organic certification schemes. Bringing indigeneity to organics in Aotearoa New Zealand, Hua Parakore further develops the bi-cultural partnership between Māori organic interests and non-Māori organic interests. Relationships have strengthened between the Māori and non-Māori organic sectors, thereby broadening the development paradigm and transformative potential for organics. Although the sector philosophies are rooted in different epistemologies, there are commonalities that the Hua Parakore system has brought to the fore. These commonalities include:

- an inter-connected and holistic approach to the production of food that connects to the cosmos;
- a focus on ecosystems, biodiversity, soil and people health;
- promotion of animal welfare;
- a commitment to be free from genetic modification (GM) and nanotechnology; and
- maintaining zero tolerance to pesticides, herbicides and chemical inputs.

The other contextual issue of relevance in the development of Hua Parakore has been the strong resistance to GM (the direct human manipulation of an organism's genome) by some Māori communities, particularly Māori involved and connected to organics (Baker, 2012; Hutchings, 2004, 2007, 2009; Durie, 2004). Throughout the research process the resistance to GM in the environment and food was a recurring theme. This includes: the possible adverse effects to human health; biodiversity; intellectual and cultural property right issues; traditional farming practices; and the implications for ownership and sharing of benefits from

genetic resources. The development of Hua Parakore is not only about supporting Māori well-being though the commercial, community and home-growing of Hua Parakore food and products, but it is also a means by which to demonstrate resistance to biopiracy, GM and neo-liberal free trade policies which continue to act as a vehicle to displace and colonise indigenous peoples globally (Bargh, 2007; Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011a).

Methodology

Kaupapa Māori methodology underpinned the research and development of Hua Parakore. A kaupapa Māori research methodology privileges Māori interests and perspectives, based on the key principles of: self-determination, or relative autonomy; validating and legitimating cultural aspirations and identity, including Māori language, knowledge, and traditions; and incorporating culturally preferred pedagogy (Smith, 1999). This methodology is appropriate given the growing importance being placed on culturally located sustainable agro-biodiversity by the international community (Roy, 2006) and the self-determining drive of Te Waka Kai Ora to develop the Hua Parakore system in response to the needs of Māori growers (Tipene, Hutchings, et al., 2010).

Key Māori principles that determined the development of Hua Parakore included:

- Māori cultural practices (tikanga)—The process of colonisation challenges our ability as indigenous First Nations peoples to maintain customary knowledge frameworks and practices as passed to us from our ancestors. The Hua Parakore system upholds the principles and practices of Te Waka Kai Ora communities on their customary lands.
- Autonomy (rangatiratanga)—Māori knowledge systems are locally owned

and managed. Hua Parakore is constructed outside of the prescriptive and standardising regulatory framework of conventional organic certification systems.

- Upholding Māori tribal collectives (whānau and hāpu)—Māori lands are generally held in collective ownership. Hua Parakore is relevant to tribal, community and family level production and reflects self-sufficiency as a primary driver of Māori food production as opposed to purely market-driven economic outcomes.
- Relationships (whanaungatanga)—Determines the collective, community focus of our work as kaupapa Māori researchers. Researchers have a clear relationship to the community they are working with and the outcomes.
- Cultural and environmental sustainability (kaitiakitanga)—Research participants shared with us the knowledge of their ancestors, of which they are the guardians. Respecting and protecting the integrity of this knowledge is of utmost importance for the research team at all times.
- Empowerment of Māori women (mana wahine)—Empowerment of women as an effective means of growing sustainable food production in Māori communities.

Method for developing the Hua Parakore

A robust and rigorous process of community collaboration and consultation for developing Hua Parakore as appropriate to kaupapa Māori methodology and as informed by the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance (ISEAL) (2006) was undertaken. This included:

- regional consultation meetings held in

2007 to determine the development pathway for Hua Parakore;

- the formation of an academic and community research team, with strong kaupapa Māori research experience and agricultural backgrounds;
- scoping of literature pertaining to traditional Māori agriculture and indigenous organic certification and verification;
- ongoing schedule of meetings with Te Waka Kai Ora executive and regional representatives;
- annual end user advisory meeting open to all existing and potential stakeholders;
- eight case study farms established to pilot the Hua Parakore system from August 2009 to June 2011;
- focus group with organic sector stakeholders November 2009;
- focus group with government sector stakeholders September 2010;
- 11 regional consultation meetings September 2010 where the draft papers were presented for feedback (Tipene, Hutchings, et al., 2010); and
- public launch of the Hua Parakore at Matariki 2011.

Furthermore, the development of Hua Parakore has been supported by the Ministry of Māori Affairs, the New Zealand organic sector organisation Organics Aotearoa New Zealand (OANZ), and Te Waka Kai Ora regional network.

The analysis of the data from the various stakeholder meetings, hui (meeting), wānanga (Māori learning space), interviews and literature review was undertaken by Te Waka Kai Ora academic and community researchers over several wānanga held in different Te Waka Kai Ora regions. Recurring patterns in the data were identified from which key themes were developed. The final stage of the analysis was undertaken by a committee of Te Waka Kai Ora who were the final arbitrators of the

Hua Parakore framework prior to its launch at Matariki 2011. The next section of the paper presents the key kaupapa of Hua Parakore and profiles the voices of the research participants.

Introducing the framework and principles of Hua Parakore

Hua Parakore is based on the infinite diversity and richness of kaupapa Māori that is located with diverse Māori tribal groups. Throughout the duration of the research project to identify and define Hua Parakore, Te Waka Kai Ora academic and community researchers were privy to rich and deep conversations with Māori elders, growers and producers. The data gathered through the research project from Māori participants provided a full knowledge basket of Māori cultural practices and principles that contributed to defining a product as produced in accordance with Hua Parakore production (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011d). Six principles (kaupapa) were identified as central to Hua Parakore production. These are not intended as the only principles that exclusively inform Hua Parakore, but have simply been identified as starting points to guide producers in planning the practices they will implement in their food production processes. These six principles—Whakapapa (genealogical connections), Wairua (spirituality), Mana (authority), Māramatanga (enlightenment), Te Ao Tūroa (the natural world) and Mauri (life-force)—when expressed together in production give rise to Hua Parakore. These principles are inter-related in the way they are understood and expressed (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011d).

The following discussion provides further explanation of these six Hua Parakore principles through the discourse of the research participants and thereby evidences why these principles have been selected as key to Hua Parakore production.

Whakapapa

Ko te Hua Parakore te taawharautanga ki te pūtai ao tūturu.

Hua Parakore is a connection to the natural environment.

Whakapapa are the natural connections between deities, the land, the product that is produced from the land and the producers. Knowing this genealogy and how everything in the mahinga kai interacts and relates to each other is fundamental to knowing the cultural and ecological landscape of the mahinga kai. It is also important to know the history of the mahinga kai, the inputs that go into the mahinga kai and the people who work there. This will ensure the integrity of the pure product that is produced, and where this integrity can be traced back to. This is particularly relevant when sourcing stock and seed for your mahinga kai (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b).

Many research participants privileged whakapapa and knowing where seeds and raw material comes from as being key to Hua Parakore production, as is evident in the comment from Geneva Hildreth (Ngā Puhī), Pukerau Gardens, Kaikohe.

I think (whakapapa) is all a part of Hua Parakore. Knowing about where the seed comes from so that it has some integrity in ensuring that they are safe seeds and that they're easily dependable and you know that the seeds are going to grow again ... it's about integrity and dependability in terms of sustainability. (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 13).

In some situations seeds belong to specific Māori tribal groups and should only be grown in their tribal boundaries. Many participants referred to the vibration and life force of seed, stating that it is their preference to save their own seed from their gardens in order to caretake

the diversity and vibrations contained within traditional and indigenous seed lines.

Awanuiārangi Black (Ngāti Pūkenga, Ngāti Te Rangi, Ngāti Raukawa), Ōtaki, also talked about the importance of passing down traditional names connected to the land as another way of maintaining the whakapapa of your mahinga kai. Awanuiārangi states:

Most of the things that our people did ... had names ... that represented something else and its way of perpetuating stories, perpetuating the memory or perpetuating an event. People identify with a name ... they identified with the land ... and those names ... and the kōrero [narrative] behind the names have always perpetuated the stories. So the same thing with the maara [gardens] ... that's what's great about names, is when you have them ... you get with the people ... they say "Why it is named that?" Then the story comes, that's why we do it ... they are all cultural and chronological markers ... The other reason for doing this is reclamation of the whenua [ancestral land]. Because when the whenua loses its name then it's lost to us. When you restore the names and of course it's attending stories the land lives again. (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 13)

With whakapapa being identified as a key Hua Parakore kaupapa, Te Waka Kai Ora research team then identified key cultural practices that producers would need to carry out to uphold the principle of whakapapa in their mahinga kai (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011c). In this regard it was identified as important for Hua Parakore producers, as part of their Hua Parakore documentation, to record information on the cultural landscape; identify who works on the mahinga kai and who is responsible for daily management; describe the cultural practices used to maintain the integrity of seeds; define processing and packaging procedures; and identify all Kai Atua (pure products) that are produced. In addition, the Hua Parakore framework provides space for producers to list and work with other

cultural practices that uphold the principle of whakapapa. A key feature of the Hua Parakore system is to provide a robust verification system that also allows for diverse tribal cultural practices to be used in upholding the key Hua Parakore objective. This enables the system to be flexible and fluid enough to be inclusive of the diverse cultural practices (tikanga) amongst tribal Māori, collectives.

Wairua

Ko te Hua Parakore te Kaitakitanga o te hūmāriretanga me te ora.

Hua Parakore maintains peace and safety.

Wairua is the spiritual health and peace of the land, the food and the people. Protecting and having respect for the wairua of those who do mahinga kai is important for the safety of workers, but also for the safety of the kai they produce; the purity and health of the wairua of the workers directly influences the purity and the health of the food. Central to the protection and respect of wairua in mahinga kai is the cultural practice of incantation which provides workers with focus to the tasks at hand, awareness of the working environment and safety (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b).

Many participants spoke of bringing incantation into their practices in the garden. The statement from Dez Heke Kaiawha, Ohauiti, Tauranga, was similar to the experiences described by other participants: "I learnt to karakia [recite incantation] before you start all your mahi [work], especially with your kai. What must go in must come out they call it ngā hua o ngā mahi [the fruits of the work]." (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 15). Hua Parakore producers are asked what cultural practices they bring to their production to uphold the principle of wairua and to describe the practices they intend to introduce in the coming year to ensure the peace and safety of the wairua of the people and the resource.

Mana

Ko te Hua Parakore te waka mo te pono me te tika.

Hua Parakore is a vehicle for justice.

Mana is the autonomy, security and self-determination of Māori tribal collectives as expressed through mahinga kai. Mahinga kai plays a critical role in providing sustenance, strength, cohesiveness and mana to our communities. It is important that the benefits and successes derived from mahinga ki are shared with your wider community and local economy, and that equally, the mahinga kai is supported and nurtured by your community and local economy. Cultural practices that strengthen communities and local Māori economies have not traditionally been focused on profit, or even money, but on relationships and reciprocity (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b).

Numerous participants talked about expressions of mana in the form of manaakitanga (reciprocity); in particular, the maintenance of whakapapa relationships of reciprocity. Many talked about the sharing of food as standard practice and as contributing to social cohesion as evidenced by the statement from Tūroa Aratea (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Tāwharetoa), Halcombe, Fielding: “At those particular times all that was produced was shared amongst all. So you didn’t grow just for your family, you grew for everyone in the hapū [sub-tribe]” (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 17). This practice of manaakitanga is also evidenced by the statement of Hōhaia Collier (Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau Apanui), Paraparaumu, who states:

We took a lot of food onto the marae [traditional meeting ground], there were always activities at the marae and other families would do the same ... and to other homes ... The old man was a great fisherman and diver and he would go down to the beach and he went past about maybe four or five houses. He

had a packhorse with all of his kai on it and he would drop kai off on the way down, pick up a side of beef or something on the way back along with his bag of kaimoana [seafood]. So there was that kind of thing, it was like a social activity I suppose, you just called in with whatever he had and dropped off and swapped for something else.” (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 17)

Rāwiri Richmond (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Tai, Ngāti Tūwharetoa), Palmerston North, also brings in the cultural practice of utu (exchange) when talking about reciprocity:

I don’t think it was exchange like if you give me two corn I will give you this ... you know someone sees you and says here is some fish. So I don’t think it was trade a sack of spuds for something in return it was like here is some kai and later on it came back in another way, and that’s like utu it will come back in some manner or form. And if you give me something then I am beholden at some stage to return the whakaaro [gesture]. (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 17)

There were many examples given by participants, particularly of the memories of the parents and grandparents engaging in acts of reciprocity and exchange with regard to food. Within the Hua Parakore framework these expressions of reciprocity and exchange have been identified as giving expression to the Hua Parakore principle of mana. Key questions that are asked of Hua Parakore producers within the principle of mana enquire about how the Hua Parakore producer has implemented cultural practices in their mahinga kai that enhances the Mana of their family and community (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011d). Other questions that relate to the principle of mana pertain to the food sovereignty and food security of the producers and the wider community and the conservation of energy and resources on the property. Further questions enquire how the

Hua Parakore producer enhances the unity of their family and wider tribal collectives through their mahinga kai; for example, by sharing workloads, holding working bees, networking, employment schemes or mentoring other growers. Furthermore, and speaking directly to the principle of Hua Parakore upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi, a question is also asked of producers about how they uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi in their mahinga kai; for example, through education, wānanga and maintaining tino rangatiratanga.

Māramatanga

Ko te Hua Parakore te huarahi o te māramatanga mai tawhiti.

Hua Parakore is a source of enlightenment.

Māramatanga is the insight and enlightenment we gain through mahinga kai. Māramatanga of the environment is important in guiding all practices in mahinga kai and to enable you to refine and enhance the quality and integrity of the pure food you produce. Hua Parakore production relies on gaining this māramatanga through observance and understanding of nature; in particular, the traditional Māori planting calendar known as the maramataka, and the seasons (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b).

Participants spoke of the well-being and clarity gained from producing food. Hua Parakore producers play an important role as kaitiaki with regard to sharing knowledge of mahinga kai and treating this knowledge as a treasure that is handed down from ancestors.

Key questions that Hua Parakore producers are asked in the verification process to become Hua Parakore validated pertain to other types of knowledges and ways of knowing that also support their mahinga kai practices. Producers are asked to identify the natural cycles and indicators that guide their cultural practices in the mahinga kai; for example, this could include the use of the traditional planting calendar,

incantations to invoke deities, environmental indicators and knowledge of the seasons. Producers are also asked to describe the cultural practices they have introduced in the past year or intend to introduce in the coming year to achieve māramatanga in mahinga kai for both themselves, their family and wider tribal groups they belong to. This open-ended and reflective questioning in the Hua Parakore process is in line with supporting the ongoing and reflective learning of Hua Parakore producers as they become more familiar over the years with principles and cultural practices that uphold Hua Parakore in their mahinga kai.

Te Ao Tūroa

Ma te Hua Parakore e Kaitiaki i ngā Tikanga tuku iho o te maara kai.

Hua Parakore maintains natural order.

Te Ao Tūroa is the natural order of our world. It is an expression of the divinity of the deities. Our role as indigenous peoples of Aotearoa is to act as guardians to Te Ao Tūroa. Hua Parakore producers recognise the natural world as the home of pure food. The role of Hua Parakore is to respect and protect the integrity and sanctity of Te Ao Tūroa in order to ensure the quality of pure food that you produce. Understanding, protecting and restoring native species of Aotearoa is also an important aspect of Hua Parakore production (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 20).

All participants talked deeply about their connection with the natural world through whakapapa, well-being and connecting with deities. The comments of Pā Rōpata McGowan from Tauranga summarise what many participants also shared:

I just love native trees. With the bush, the thing about it, it's the appropriate cover for here, so I'll cover it. The second thing is that we want the people to learn about the trees ...

You can't safely use your rongoā [traditional remedies] unless you actually know what you are actually collecting. The best way is to go in there and learn all the names of the trees, the names of the trees that you need to use. That's our weakness today we haven't got the time to actually get to know the bush the way kids used to go around and as we grew up. Most of the medicines I use are here. If I need something I've got it here. (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 21)

A fundamental aspect of Hua Parakore production is the prohibition and restriction of the use of synthetic inputs, chemicals, GM and nanotechnology-based inputs in the mahinga kai due to the impact on Te Ao Tūroa, to pure food and people. Christine McLeod (Ngāi Te Rangi), Te Maunga Maunganui, also shared this concern:

I am really worried about the chemicals they use in fruit and veggie industries at the moment. So the fruit looks pretty. It's got nothing to do with health using all those chemicals it's all about selling them, and how much money they can get for it. We need to use a lot less sprays and chemicals and have chemical-free fruit, for our health, 'cause all those chemicals are getting into your body through the fruit and veggies you are eating. So if we can cut all those out we will be heaps healthier. (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 21).

As part of the Hua Parakore verification processes, producers are asked if their mahinga kai is completely free of unsafe inputs such as chemical fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides, pharmaceutical medications, GM and nanotechnology-based products. To verify the inputs producers use in their mahinga kai they are asked to provide a list of inputs and in some instances may also be asked to produce a soil test. In addition, producers are also asked how they manage waste and other potential sources of contamination such as spray drift

from neighbouring properties as well as water borne contamination. Emphasis is placed on understanding what cultural practices producers have in place to mitigate potential contamination of their mahinga kai from these sources. Documentation is also required that lists all of the machinery used in the mahinga kai and enquires if the machinery is dedicated to 100% Hua Parakore use; again, this is to record issues of potential contamination. Given that the Hua Parakore system maps to the New Zealand Organic Standard NZSA 8410.2003 and provides producers with the ability to call themselves and their products both organic (within the domestic market) and Hua Parakore, it is important that as a minimum standard the Hua Parakore systems upholds all of the standards in the New Zealand Organic Standard. At a minimum, this has informed the questions pertaining to prohibited inputs, contamination, and animal welfare with specific questions pertaining to aquaculture, pig farming, bee keeping and farming of poultry. These questions speak to the Hua Parakore producer's role as a guardian of Te Ao Tūroa.

Mauri

Ma te Hua Parakore e kaitiaki te ora ate pae o Papa-tū-ā-nuku, te ora ngā hua me ngā rākau katoa o Tāne, otirā, me te ora o te tinana o ngā tāngata katoa.

Hua Parakore maintains healthy soils, healthy plants and healthy people. (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 22)

Mauri is the energy and vibrations for the growth of pure food. It is the principal essence of life. It is important to protect the mauri and thus the health of the various elements of your mahinga kai to ensure the quality and integrity of the food it produces is high and that the people who consume it are healthy. However, it is not just enough to protect the mauri, Hua Parakore production should enhance it so that

the vibration and qualities of mauri strongly resonate within all pure food that is produced. It is particularly important to enhance the mauri of the soil by enhancing its fertility, structure and biological activity (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 22).

All participants, when asked to think about the qualities of pure food, raised the principle of mauri. Mangu Awarau (Ngāti Kahu), Waimanoni, Kaitiāia, summaries the sentiment from the participant cohort with regard to mauri: “Ngā mauri ... ka tuku mai i a Io-matua-kore, ērā tikanga katoa (Mauri and the cultural practices are handed down from the creator)” (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 23).

Participants talked about mauri across all aspects of the mahinga kai. Penetaka Dixon, Matapihi, Tauranga, states:

We are concerned with run-off from farms into rivers and streams which eventually gets into the other water ways that move out to the harbour, they even do damage within the awa, the rivers and streams. It is a major problem. If there is anything that can be done to reduce the chemical run off, even fertilizers ... and to prevent that run off into the streams which is going to affect our kaimoana, our paua and even our tuna ... I will be all for it. (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 23)

Some participants talked about enhancing mauri in mahinga kai by increasing biodiversity. Many participants discussed a range of ways to increase biodiversity such as companion planting and biological control of pests as outlined by Nick Roskrige (Ngāti Rāhiri, Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Tama-ariki), Palmerston North: “They use to mix their planting to try and cut back on some of the problems, you know like onion and garlic and those sorts of things in the home garden ...” (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011b, p. 23). He goes on to say:

We use to get paid to catch white butterflies. With a jar, then, us kids ... We had chooks

and chooks would always scratch around and munch away on some of the bugs that you would get in the gardens ... that’s what we had to do after school, if the weather was right, we would just spend some time doing that sort of job ... (p. 23)

The questions that have been designed as part of the verification process for producers pertaining to the Hua Parakore principle of mauri include: the detailing of any cultural practices implemented to monitor mauri in the mahinga kai (for example, the use of kaitiaki); environmental indicators; and soil or water testing. Producers are also asked how they maintain and enhance the diversity of their mahinga kai; for example, through companion planting, diverse seed stock, supporting native re-vegetation and predator strips. Specific questions are also asked about healthy soils and composting practices and the use of livestock to enhance soil fertility. Healthy water also relates to the principle of mauri and producers are asked how they maintain and enhance the mauri of water passing through their mahinga kai, potential effluent management nutrient budgeting, cultivation and stock access to streams.

Hua Parakore validation and verification process

A key distinguishing feature of Hua Parakore from non-indigenous organic verification systems is that it is informed by locally owned and managed indigenous knowledge systems, where Māori producers apply their cultural practices of what constitutes Hua Parakore practice and production as appropriate to the body of knowledge specific to their people and place. The Hua Parakore self-evaluation process facilitates the implementation of a production system that upholds the principle of mana whenua (local indigenous communities) and is a practice of mana motuhake (independence). There are three key components to the

Hua Parakore self-evaluation process (Te Waka Kai Ora, 2011d):

1. **Ngā Kaupapa:** Producers draw upon their body of knowledge to clarify their understanding of Hua Parakore.
2. **Ngā Tikanga:** Producers draw upon their body of knowledge to identify appropriate practices to manifest Hua Parakore on their land.
3. **Ngā Hua Parakore:** The potential outcomes of following ngā tikanga, including health, environmental, social, cultural and economic outcomes.

Hua Parakore: A locally owned and managed verification system

Figure 1 outlines the three stages to become a Hua Parakore producer.



Kakano/seed

Open to all members of Te Waka Kai Ora including individual, family, community, school and organisation.

Kakano members publically support and promote the aspirations of Hua Parakore. Kakano members receive Hua Parakore information resources.

Tipu Ranga/the growing seedling

Members commit to making the transition to a Hua Parakore production system. Producing a healthy product is a process of neutralising all toxins. Both land and people are given the time and support to go through the process of transformation.

Tipu Ranga landowners work through the self-evaluation process to develop and implement their Hua Parakore management plan. This process is supported by community elders and Hua Parakore planning resources, farmers and regional officers.

Hua Parakore

Formal recognition is bestowed upon landowners when they achieve Hua Parakore. The use of the Hua Parakore mark is collectively awarded at a formal gathering of community and Te Waka Kai Ora representatives where all present are satisfied that Hua Parakore status has been achieved. The Hua Parakore mark denotes certified organic status in Aotearoa New Zealand with access to international markets through Native Trade and certified organic pathways.

Discussion

Hua Parakore is an indigenous food sovereignty initiative and driven by Te Waka Kai Ora in Aotearoa. The development of this system was as much a food sovereignty initiative as it was an indigenous organic system for Māori growers in Aotearoa. Relationship building with other organisations and communities also working for food sovereignty and earth justice is a direct outcome of the development of Hua Parakore. This discussion presents some of the connections that Te Waka Kai Ora has made both nationally and internationally with other like-sectors that are contributing to the implementation and end-user uptake of the Hua Parakore system.

The Hua Parakore system makes a significant contribution to organics in Aotearoa New Zealand and addresses the limitations of the current four organic certification systems

FIGURE 1 Hua Parakore validation and verification process.

not being able to verify and validate indigenous knowledge or ways of knowing as key to organic practices for Māori growers. The Hua Parakore system addresses this limitation through the specific development of a kaupapa Māori, indigenous framework to validate and verify Māori organics, as presented in the body of this paper. Furthermore, Te Waka Kai Ora have worked closely with the organics sector in Aotearoa New Zealand to build support and understanding for the Hua Parakore system as part of the future organic landscape.

This relationship formally developed into a Tiriti-based partnership between Te Waka Kai Ora and Organic Aotearoa New Zealand in 2010 and represents a significant strengthening of the partnership between the Māori and non-Māori organic sectors. This is in contrast to the decades of distance between non-Māori organic farmers and growers and Māori organic growers. The Hua Parakore system has a clear partnership goal of upholding the authority of the other Aotearoa New Zealand organic verification systems. As mentioned earlier, Te Waka Kai Ora has taken guidance from the NZSA 8410.2003 New Zealand Standard for Organic Production to inform the development of Hua Parakore practices. The Hua Parakore system provides a connection and gateway to the other four organic standards: Organic Farm New Zealand, Biogro, Assure Quality, and Demeter. The Hua Parakore is developed to act as an overlay to the other organic verification systems and some Hua Parakore producers also hold both organic certification and verification systems. Early indicators from Hua Parakore producers show that stronger links have been made by Hua Parakore producers to the wider organic sector, which has resulted in knowledge exchange between the spaces of indigenous knowledge and Western organics. The Hua Parakore system supports this nexus and the transformational potential.

At the international level the Hua Parakore system has been presented by Te Waka Kai Ora at the inaugural meeting of indigenous

communities of the Slow Food international movement, which advocates and leads in local food sovereignty practices and has a strong connection to indigenous communities globally. Hua Parakore directly aligns to the Slow Food principles of:

- Good—a fresh and flavoursome seasonal diet that satisfies the senses and is part of our local culture;
- Clean—food production and consumption that does not harm the environment, animal welfare or our health; and
- Fair—accessible prices for consumers and fair conditions and pay for small-scale producers.

There was strong interest amongst the international forum to see how the Hua Parakore framework and system could be applied and adapted to other indigenous communities and food sovereignty initiatives (Takoko, 2010).

Conclusion

The drive for self-determination amongst Te Waka Kai Ora communities has led Māori producers to develop the Hua Parakore system and has multiple benefits for the validation of indigenous knowledge, well-being and food security. Hua Parakore promotes the re-establishment of diverse, vibrant and food secure indigenous economies and provides post-peak oil development pathways for Māori communities.

Initial market responses to Hua Parakore are promising. One pilot farm reports: “Since obtaining the Hua Parakore certification we have used the mark on our Biofarm yoghurt products whilst in Australia recently, in fact we have obtained distribution in the Australian market on the strength of our Māori Organic Certification” (Skelton and Carney, 2010).

Expressions of interest in the uptake of

Hua Parakore have been registered by Māori landowners for horticulture, apiary, aquaculture, forest and pastoral systems. Te Waka Kai Ora launched Hua Parakore in June 2011 to coincide with the beginning of the traditional planting calendar. There are 10 fully verified Hua Parakore farms in Aotearoa and 12 other farms entered into the scheme.

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