



A CASE FOR
RETURNING
TO **INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT**



**healthy
families**
South Auckland
He oranga whānau



Acknowledgement

This case study was commissioned by the Ministry of Health New Zealand (MoH) as part of the Healthy Families South Auckland Initiative. We wish to acknowledge MoH for their work in supporting Pacific communities to improve their health where they live, learn, work and play by taking a systems approach to reducing risk factors of chronic disease and increasing health equity.

We wish to acknowledge and thank the 250+ community participants from six different Pacific community groups showcasing traditional games and sports played in the Pacific and Aotearoa. This work would not be possible without their willingness to share their lived experiences and cultural knowledge to amplify the authentic voices of Pacific peoples and South Auckland communities in Aotearoa and the barriers they face to being active.

HEALTHY FAMILIES SOUTH AUCKLAND

A CASE FOR RETURNING TO INDIGENOUS MOVEMENT

‘All Whanau to be active and well where they live, learn, work, play and pray.’

Village Games Movement

In South Auckland obesity rates are high among Pacific and Māori peoples, this impacts approximately 22% of the population¹. Looking at the underlying causes of poor health and wellbeing is important to understand how to get Pacific families and South Auckland communities physically active and moving to positively influence their behaviour towards being healthy and well. We found the problem is there are no compelling reasons for our people to be physically active even though movement plays an important role in the lives of Pacific peoples and South Auckland communities.

After holding workshops and interviews with organisations that run physical activities for Pacific and Māori communities in South Auckland such as schools, churches, local and national Pacific organisations we found that cultural games were not well known in Aotearoa and that there were many Pacific people who had not experienced these games from their homelands. With limited opportunities to play traditional games from the homeland and to transfer this knowledge to the next generation in Aotearoa.

The Village Games movement, traditional games from Pacific Islands and Aotearoa, provided a compelling reason for Pacific peoples and South Auckland communities to be active and well in the area where they live, learn, work, pray and in this instance- play. Because being physically active through an indigenous lens with the Village Games has its health benefits but with the added appeal of teaching Pasifika histories and languages while forging or strengthening connections between individuals and their culture.



Looking at the underlying causes of poor health and wellbeing is important to understand how to get Pacific families and South Auckland communities physically active and moving



Being physically active through an indigenous lens with the Village Games has its health benefits

No Reason to Move

Despite South Auckland being home to 130,233 residents who identify with a Pacific ethnicity² (15.5 percent of Auckland’s population), we were unable to identify locally-led programmes or movement initiatives that were funded by Sport New Zealand which solely focused on getting Pacific peoples healthy and active.

In 2020, we conducted a review of the sport sector’s investment and hosted a fono with key Pacific leaders in community activation and sport. The findings showed that both the Sport and Recreation sectors investment in physical activity targeting Pacific peoples did not meet the real needs of communities in South Auckland.

The ineffectiveness of the sport, recreation and health sector to authentically engage Pacific communities is a key barrier to discovering compelling reasons for communities to be active, which impacts on public funding or resource flow being injected into ‘fit for purpose’ programmes that truly support Pacific people and South Auckland communities to move. Transformation requires the sports and recreation sectors to change its thinking and actions to advance equity.

¹The Healthy Auckland Together Scorecard 2019

²Statistics NZ, Census results 2018

Conditions holding the problem in place

The HFSA review found that the current national sports policy in New Zealand as well as the Auckland plan shows gaps of information around indigenous world-views of health and wellbeing; Pacific peoples in the sector, their worldviews of health and wellbeing as well as their practices of sport and recreation.

There was no body to be held responsible for the movement of Pacific communities, with existing programmes not resonating with Pacific realities. It meant that health reasons were not enough to kickstart physical activity, and because traditional or cultural reasons were not encouraged- they did not factor as compelling reasons to move until they became a potential option.

Local providers and those working in the sport and recreation system at the community level say the system is difficult for them to navigate to secure public funding for their programmes and/or services. Many told HFSA that the application process was off-putting and difficult to navigate, and that their programmes were likely to not receive funding for not fitting into a certain category.

A One-Size-Fits-All System

The Sport and Recreation New Zealand Act 2002³ was enacted to promote, encourage, and support physical recreation and sport in New Zealand. Its functions include:

- ✧ Promoting and supporting the development and implementation of physical recreation and sport in a way that is culturally appropriate to Māori⁴
- ✧ Encouraging participation in physical recreation and sport by Pacific Peoples⁵
- ✧ Allocating funds to organisations and regional bodies in line with its policies and strategies⁶

Despite its intent, the reality is Pacific people are typically squeezed into the publicly funded mainstream, one-size-fits-all programmes, which attempt to entice Pacific people to participate in physical activity programmes that are aimed at the general population.



At a regional level, the current funding model for Active – Auckland Sport & Recreation (Aktive), whose work involves investing in organisations and projects that will get more Aucklanders active, fails to capture the people they claim are trying to reach such as people in high deprivation areas, women and girls and people with disabilities⁷. For example, the population, culture/ethnic groups of high deprivation and where these areas are, not only are these concentrated in South Auckland but the percentage of Pacific people in those areas are higher. Higher levels of socioeconomic deprivation is also intrinsically linked to poor health, in which Pacific people are featured in high numbers⁸. Furthermore they also do not appropriately and effectively engage with Pacific communities to understand how they would like to move and be active, their way and on their terms.

³Sport and Recreation New Zealand Act 2002

⁴Sport and Recreation New Zealand Act 2002, s8(f)

⁵Sport and Recreation New Zealand Act 2002, s8(g)

⁶Sport and Recreation New Zealand Act 2002, s8(b)

⁷The Auckland Strategic Framework

⁸New Zealand Health Survey (2018/2019)

Disrupting the System

To address the real needs of communities' and to design solutions with them, HFSA utilised a design-thinking approach to discover and explore Pacific and Aotearoa traditional games with Pacific and Māori cultural advisors, local schools and churches as well as regional and national Pacific organisations. During these sessions we discovered that local champions carry significant cultural knowledge and capital and therefore play a key role in the preservation of culture and language of their traditional Pacific homelands which we utilised to design the prototypes for the village games.

Culture, identity and social cohesion were identified as protective factors to the health and wellbeing of Pacific peoples. This gave us the foundation to design the prototype of The Village Games. The Village Games is not a programme but a movement to amplify the authentic voices of Pacific peoples and South Auckland communities and to remove the barriers Pacific peoples face to being active.

Together with the guidance and direction of community leaders we created online video resources of different Village Games and hosted Talanoa sessions that were released in the different Pacific Language Weeks in 2020 - 2021. HFSA shared The Village Games with Pacific and Māori community leaders (activators), aiming to connect and talanoa with Pacific and Māori Community organisations to understand the following:

- ✂ What their traditional games are;
- ✂ How to play the game(s)
- ✂ Origin and history of the traditional games
- ✂ Lived experience of playing traditional games
- ✂ Present, lived experience of being active (barriers, enablers)
- ✂ Perception of traditional games relevance for the future and aspirations

FUNDED BY AKTIVE AUCKLAND REGIONAL SPORTS TRUST NO. OF PACIFIC COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES IN REGIONS

4

HARBOUR SPORT

PACIFIC PEOPLE: 12,897

LOCATION: NORTH HARBOUR

0

SPORT AUCKLAND

PACIFIC PEOPLE: 50,100

LOCATION: AUCKLAND CENTRAL

1

SPORT WAITAKERE

PACIFIC PEOPLE: 46,743

LOCATION: WEST AUCKLAND

0

CLM COMMUNITY SPORT

PACIFIC PEOPLE: 130,233

LOCATION: SOUTH AUCKLAND

Source: NZ Stats Census, 2018

What happened and the Impact

The Village Games movement involved 250+ community participants from six different Pacific community groups showcasing traditional games and sports played in the Pacific and Aotearoa while encouraging participation in physical recreation and sport.

Successful Prototype:

Cook Islands 'Tuki, Tuki, Teni, Teni'

Our Cook Islands Prototype 'Tuki Tuki Teni Teni' was a fun and inclusive game which highlights Cook Island language, culture and gets people moving. Kedgley Intermediate School pupils played the traditional game to celebrate Cook Island Language week.

The game was shared with Kedgley Intermediate by Mama Taiiau Nicholas (Aitutaki) as part of our Village Games initiative.

Mama Taiiau Nicholas grew up playing 'TukiTuki Teni Teni' in Aitutaki, Cook Islands and in our Cook Islands Language Week Video she teaches some of our staff to play before we cut to our rangatahi enjoying the game. Following the success of our prototypes, which reached into the depths of our communities to yield brilliant stories of Pacific not only learning more about their culture but engaging in physical activity in the process, we continue to talanoa with Pacific Community activators and organisations after the Pacific Island Language week celebrations.

Information about the lived experiences of movement for Pacific communities in South Auckland have been gathered from face-to-face talanoa and online platforms such as social media to capture participants' views and experiences before, during and after involvement in The Village Games.

With over 200,000 Pacific people in Auckland, there's huge potential for traditional Pacific island games and sports to be incorporated into the lives of South Auckland communities to enhance community wellbeing and good health.

Village Games analytics showed vast reach and engagement with our online communities



65K ORGANIC REACH



32K VIDEOS VIEWED



3K ENGAGEMENT

The learning and contribution to our social change movement

We recognised that the Village Games was not a programme but a movement to amplify the authentic voices of Pacific peoples and South Auckland communities about their lived experiences in Aotearoa and the barriers they face to being active.

In order to encourage Pacific peoples to be physically active and moving, we need to understand how they move. This is not possible without Pacific input from the community at all levels of engagement. This is where there is a disconnect between the governance, policies and funding in the sport and recreation sector and the people that they are in place to serve.

By gathering further insights to understand the Indigenous Systems of play (including sport & active recreation) for our Pacific peoples, like the way He Oranga Poutama is mandated to activate Māori communities and teach indigenous Māori movement, we are in a better position to address our communities' real needs and to design solutions with and for Pacific- much like we have done with The Village Games.



Village Games Opportunities

The Village Games can be incorporated into National Sports Organisations such as New Zealand Rugby who invited us with our Pacific Community activators to run a Village Games exhibition as part of the Pasifika Aotearoa Cup, Women's Rugby 7's tournament in November 2020 which has been followed up with discussions for a Village Games exhibition as part of the Women's Rugby World Cup in 2022.

The Village Games acts as a call to action for best practice to engage and understand Pacific and Māori communities' indigenous worldviews of health and wellbeing and their culture of movement and physical activity. This will identify and address the inequities in the sports sector and better inform best practice.



'Wow, I just saw this video and had to congratulate you and your team for a job well done. Being a Kuki, I am not familiar with it at all, but with this video – I'll be able to learn and play with my family.'

Elisabeth Faakiti of the Cook Islands Development Agency NZ (CIDANZ)



www.healthyfamiliesouthauckland.nz

info@healthyfamiliesouthauckland.nz