

Titiro Whakamuri, Hoki Whakamua

We are the future, the present and the past:
Caring for self, others & the environment in ECCE

Jenny Ritchie

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Background

- History of colonisation of Indigenous Māori since early 1840s
- 1840 Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi allowed British settlement in exchange for protections for Māori of lands, resources, etc
- Māori language impacted (along with losses of lands, cultural identity, self-determination)
- Māori have continually sought recognition of their rights to language, lands, resources, including the right to exercise kaitiakitanga
- Government has increasingly/partially begun to recognise these rights in legislation since 1975
- The current era of treaty settlements followed, with the Commercial Fisheries Settlement in 1992, and Tainui being the first major tribal settlement in 1995

Degradation of Papatūānuku

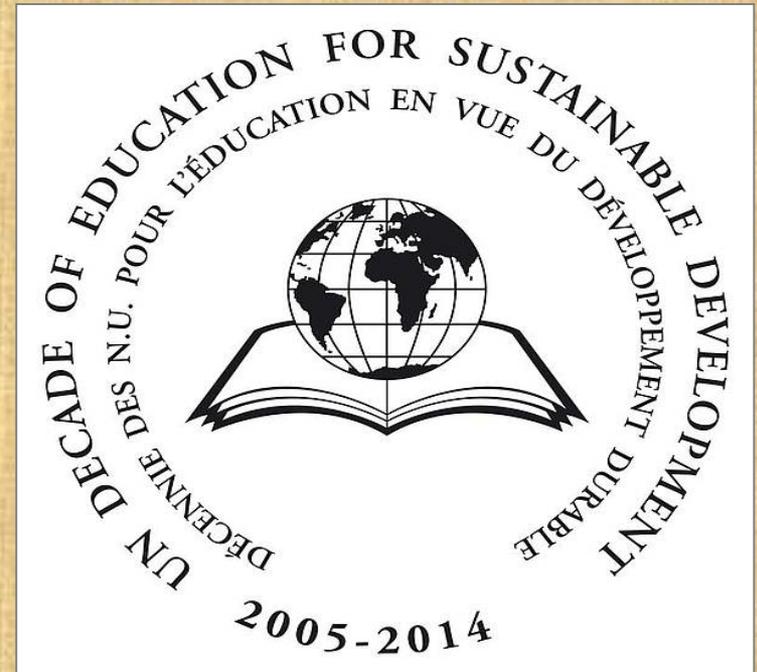
The impact of New Zealand's historic and current environmental policies and practices includes:

- pollution from industrial waste; nitrate, phosphate, and organic contamination of lakes, rivers and groundwater;
- degradation of soils through some pastoral and arable farming practices;
- erosion of steep pastoral land and consequent more extreme flooding of lowlands;
- loss of species and biodiversity;
- proliferation of solid waste in landfills;
- toxic dumps;
- contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions;
- and reduction in the vitality of human communities and consequent pathologies. (Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand Inc (SANZ), 2009)

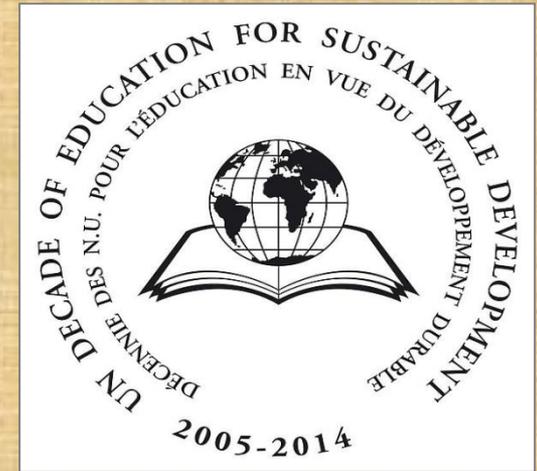
United Nations Decade for Sustainable Development 2005-2014

Since the start of human existence people have lived with each other (society), used and shared goods and services (economy), have been supported by natural resources and life support systems (environment) and have shared ways of life, beliefs, values and symbols (culture).

With industrial and technological development in the last three centuries, lifestyles, communications, production systems and consumption patterns have changed rapidly, [severely impacting on our planet's wellbeing]



UNDESD & Multiple Facets of Sustainability



The challenge for humanity today is to transform its 'development' path. This involves addressing interrelated issues such as **poverty (economic), social inequality, peace and health risks (social), natural resource depletion, biodiversity loss and global climate change (environmental) and loss of Indigenous cultures & languages (cultural)** (Wade & Parker, 2008, p. 1)

Waiora and Environmental Sustainability

In 2003 Prof Mason Durie signalled to delegates at the Early Childhood Convention, the need to recognise that environmental protection is key to *waiora* (wellbeing):



Education must take into account the nature and quality of the interaction between people and the surrounding environment if it is going to be a significant player in preparing children for responsible citizenship. It is not simply a call for a return to nature, but an attempt to strike balance between development and environmental protection and recognition that the human condition is intimately connected to the wider domains of Rangi and Papa, the sky father and the earth mother....

Mason Durie...

...Huge gains have been made with interactive technologies and children can now be brought face to face with the natural world in dramatic ways. But they are poor substitutes for climbing a tree or finding a spider, or swimming in a stream” (Durie, 2003, p. 5)

Unsustainable Technologies

- Scientist Tim Flannery has described the technological onslaught (of pollution, wilderness depletion, species extinction, climate change, etc) as nothing less than a “war on nature” (Flannery, 2010, p. 173)
- Moreover, the release of excesses of carbon into the atmosphere is resulting in unprecedented global warming causing the current climate crisis
- Sadly, the impacts of the climate crisis and the current global recession are affecting people who are living in poverty the most severely (LaFleur, Purvis, & Jones, 2009).



David Suzuki, Canadian scientist

As an elder, I am impelled by a sense of urgency that comes from a recognition that my generation has induced change and created problems that we bequeath to my children and grandchildren and all generations to come. That is not right, but I believe that it is not too late to take another path.
(Suzuki, 2011, p. 3)

1. Placing great importance on non-material sources of happiness.
2. Removing the perceived linkage between economic growth, material possessions, and success.
3. Affirming the deep interdependence of all people. The associated community values include a robust sense of mutual respect, fairness, cooperation, gratitude, compassion, forgiveness, humility, courage, mutual aid, charity, confidence, trust, courtesy, integrity, loyalty, and respectful use of resources.
4. Affirming the value of local community, with associated benefits of reduced environmental footprints and increased cooperation between people.
5. Valuing nature intrinsically through knowing that human society and its political economy are integral and interdependent components of nature and the biosphere. Humans have reverence for nature and know that they are responsible for their impact on the integrity of all ecosystems in the biosphere. These ethics and values are the core of the needed societal understanding about how to live within the Earth's limits and in harmony with people and all other species. (Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand Inc, 2009, p. 12)

(Discuss these)

Human Responsibility to Nurture and Care for the Natural World

Indigenous peoples learnt, living over extended periods of time in their home territories, and through reflection on initial errors of misjudgement, how to sustain their survival through a close relationality with their lands and its resources (Flannery, 2010).

Their traditions and lores reflected their awareness of human interconnectedness with the planet. Their survival was dependent on close observance of the signs and languages of nature (Abram, 1996; Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992).

Sustainability Integral to te Ao Maori

For Māori, their *whakapapa* (genealogy) positions them in close *whanaungatanga* (kinship, relatedness) with other living beings such as plants and animals as well as with what Westerners might conceptualise as ‘non-living’ beings such as mountains and rivers.

In traditional times, every aspect of daily life was imbued with respect for the *mauri* (life force) of these (animate and non-animate) entities.

Wairuatanga

To Māori, the natural world is protected by *Atua* (compartmental Gods) such as Tane Māhuta, *Atua* of the forests, birds and insects and by *taniwhā*, local *kaitiaki* (guardians) of rivers and mountains.

This view from *te ao* Māori (the Māori worldview) operates from an intrinsic assumption of *wairuatanga* (spiritual interconnectedness).

Kaitiakitanga

Kaitiakitanga is the obligation, arising from the kin relationship, to nurture or care for a person or thing. It has a spiritual aspect, encompassing not only an obligation to care for and nurture not only physical well-being but also mauri [life-force] (Waitangi Tribunal, 2011, p. 17).

Techno-Toddlers

The growing reliance on technologies, and the capitalist drive for profit has resulted in the commodification and exploitation of nature, and a reduction in technologised societies' connectedness with the natural world (Kidner, 2012), which is increasingly experienced predominantly through the virtual world of digital screens, thus displacing perceptions of the real with distorted visions of the hyper-real (Wells, 2002)

“Kids are a very powerful consumer voice & vote.... Consumers vote with their wallets even if they don’t have one!”



“Kids are interacting with technology at much earlier ages. Babies even less than one year old are mesmerized by the intuitive nature of tablets. David Morris has written a great post in [Bloomberg](#) on how “iPad Crazy Toddlers Spur Holiday Sales”

Retrieved from
<http://www.imsresultscout.com/resultscout/2011/12/pcs-are-dead-just-ask-the-toddler-with-an-ipad.html#more>)

Nature as Therapy

“When children discover the harmony and wholeness of nature, they sense the larger context of life through which we are all connected, and this can foster an inner balance that will help counteract the pressures of an overstimulating, commercialized culture” (Carlsson-Paige, 2008, p. 137)

Fostering Values of Kaitiakitanga

Research has demonstrated that “positive and frequent experiences in nature during childhood influence environmental career choices and environmental concern among adults regardless of their cultural background or racial and socioeconomic status” (Strife & Downey, 2009, p. 109).

Te Whāriki

- Children develop...a relationship with the natural environment and a knowledge of their own place in the environment; respect and a developing sense of responsibility for the well-being of both the living and the non-living environment (Exploration, p. 90)
- Liaison with local tangata whenua and a respect for papatuanuku should be promoted. (Belonging, p. 54)

Te Whāriki – Part B

Kia mōhio ia ki te manaaki, ki te tiaki i te whenua, nō te mea i ahu mai te oranga i te whenua – ngā huarakau, ngā huawhenua, ngā rongoā, ngā tuna, ngā ika... Kia mōhio te mokopuna he kaitiaki noa iho ia no te whenua. Ehara i a ia te whenua engari i ahu mai ia i te whenua. (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 36)

The child should know how to nurture and care for the land, which is the source of wellbeing – the fruit trees, the vegetables, medicines, eels and fish... The child should know that s/he is merely a guardian of the land. The land is not of the child, but the child is born of the land/placenta [author's translation]

Titiro Whakamuri, Hoki Whakamua. We are the future, the present and the past: caring for self, others and the environment in early years' teaching and learning

Teachers, children and families of ten early childhood settings from around Aotearoa New Zealand were integral to the data gathering process, willingly sharing their stories, artwork, and photographs.

A fundamental aspect of the study was that *kaupapa* Māori perspectives would be integral to the enactment of pedagogies for sustainability. (Ritchie, Duhn, Rau, & Craw, 2010).

Kaitiakitanga at RHK

“Knowledge of Rakinui/Ranginui and Papatūānuku gives our tamariki a seed of knowledge and concern about the vulnerability of our world. We must all do what we can to look after [her]. By giving the young learners of our society ecological strategies in a realistic context, we are laying the foundations for a generation of earth users who know to care”

Some Provocations

- In what ways do we provide children with opportunities to understand that their sense of waiora/wellbeing involves not only caring for themselves (whakamana), but also for others (manaakitanga) and our environment (kaitiakitanga)?
- To what extent are sustainability practices within your centres respectfully incorporating te ao Māori values such as kotahitanga and whanaungatanga?
- How can we support children to generate narratives incorporating a fundamental and central recognition of our inter-connectedness and inter-dependence (kotahitanga) with our environment?
- How does our work in centres contribute to a paradigm shift away from a paradigm of dominance and exploitation of 'Others' (both Māori and environment)

(Discuss)

He mihi

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