

## MECHANISMS OF MANA

One of the many deficiencies in the educational curricula of Aotearoa–New Zealand schools is the near non-existence of citizen and civics education.

Coupled with a history curriculum that has evolved from a complete whitewash of fabricated ‘facts’ to a [smorgasbord of often conflicting ‘facts’](#) – it’s no wonder that most Tangata Tiriti, and even some Tangata Whenua here, finish their formal schooling practically clueless about how they came to be here, how to live harmoniously here, and what their most basic rights and responsibilities are in this place.

However, whānau hapū and iwi Māori have consistently taught our tamāriki mokopuna the fundamental tikanga of mana and tapū which explain and enhance these important aspects of life here.

Since colonial times, a number of external mechanisms have undermined mana and violated tapū. However, there are also a growing number of external mechanisms which uphold and protect them.



One of those mechanisms of mana is the [United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) [EMRIP]. Last week, two of its members visited to help us and our Tiriti partner develop a *National Plan of Action* to implement the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) [UNDRIP].

The EMRIP members who visited were Laila Vars (Sami) and Edtami Mansayagan (Philippines). They were hosted by the [Independent Monitoring Mechanism](#) (IMM) of [National Iwi Chairs Forum](#) and the [Human Rights Commission](#) (HRC).

The pōwhiri took place on Monday 8 April in [Waipapa Marae](#) at the University of Auckland. It was followed by briefings from Ahorangi [Margaret Mutu](#) (Te Tiriti context), Dr [Claire Charters](#) (constitutional and legal context), Professor [Papaarangi Reid](#) (Health issues), Professor [Tracey McIntosh](#) (justice; social and economic issues), Dr [Dan Hikuroa](#) (environmental issues), Chrissie Cowan (Whānau Whaikaha – Māori with disabilities), and people from the HRC (human rights issues and prior work done on national action plans for human rights).

On Tuesday 9 April, the EMRIP members were at Hōani Waititi marae in West Auckland hearing from the Māori community there. The next day, Wednesday 10 April, they were in Wellington meeting with government ministers and departments. They had a day to themselves on Thursday 11 April, followed by a hui on Friday 12 April at Pipitea marae in Wellington to hear from the Māori community there. Then on Saturday 13 April they wrapped up their visit before flying home.

Several members of the IMM accompanied them for the week to ensure their visit sat within [Te Tiriti Partnership Framework](#) that the government has agreed to. With the completion of their visit, the EMRIP will now write up a report with recommendations on how to progress the implementation of the UNDRIP.

Back to the inadequate citizen and civic education taught here to all tamāriki mokopuna. That is slowly changing, thanks to individuals and organisations like Julia Caulfield and [CIVX EDUCATION](#) who are doing their best to fill the void left by governments and their Ministries.

In the meantime, whānau hapū and iwi will continue to declare and teach our tamāriki mokopuna the mechanisms of mana (tikanga) that allow Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti to co-exist harmoniously in this country.

