



Figure 1:
Te Houhanga-a-Rongo Marae

Te Kawa Waiora

Hui Wānanga Report

DATE	17-18 July 2021
VENUE	Te Houhanga-a-Rongo Marae, Dargaville
WRITTEN BY	Charles Royal
ON BEHALF OF	Reconnecting Northland
FOR	Waimā, Waitai, Waiora

The Te Kawa Waiora team convened our fifth hui wānanga at Te Houhanga-a-Rongo Marae, Dargaville, on the 17th and 18th of July 2021. We were welcomed by Ngāti Whātua into their beautiful meeting house, 'Rahiri', named after the eponymous ancestor of Ngāpuhi. The hui was attended by local whānau members together with two members of our Research Committee – Anne-Marie Jackson and co-chair Tāoho Patuawa. Anne-Marie belongs to this marae, being a descendent of Parore Te Āwha, and Tāoho has strong connections there too, being a member of Te Roroa.

Day One

Following the pōwhiri, Charles presented an overview of the Te Kawa Waiora project explaining goals and objectives set for the project as well as the three core questions of the project, namely:

- What is the traditional tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) view of the river and its tributaries?
- What is the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) view of change in the rivers since the 19th century?
- What is the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) view of the river now? What do they believe needs to be done now?
 - How can we measure the mauri of the river?
 - How can the tangata whenua (iwi, hapū, whānau) help with improving the river and its tributaries?

Discussion ensued regarding some of the local traditions and kōrero pertaining to this area. One of the key features of this location is the presence of the Kaihū River. It runs immediately behind the marae and the marae is protected by a stop bank. Flooding does occasionally occur and living with the river is one of the features of life here. The local people care for their river and are deeply concerned about its health. Where the river runs closest to the Wairoa River, the water quality is poor, and its overall health is not good. However, further northward, the river health and wellbeing are much better. The Kaihū River also speaks to the presence of Te Arawa traditions in this area as the river was named by Ihenga, an early Te Arawa tupuna, as Te Kaihū-a-Ihenga .



Figure 1: Hui attendees standing in the mahau of 'Rahiri'

Hui attendees spoke of the Wairoa River as the 'super highway', the primary arterial route by which people and goods were able to reach inland communities, both in pre-European times and today. Hui attendees also mentioned the taniwha Rangiriri and Pokopoko and one attendee stated that he had seen these taniwha in the past. Rangiriri and Pokopoko speak to and reflect the deeper energies and presences in this river system.

The hui then broke into two groups which further discussed traditional views of the river. Key ideas that emerged included the following:

- Wāhi tapu along the river, ancestral sites and localities such as pā, kāinga, battle sites and more
- Rituals and customs associated with those places, such as tohi, pure and more
- The river as a source of kai, including flounder, mullet, snapper, gurnard, tuna, kahawai, stingray
- The river as a place where one is cleansed (bathing, washing)
- The river as a place where one recreates and enjoys play
- The importance of environmental tohu (including flooding)
- The role of vegetation to filter water
- ‘Ko te awa he atua’
- The place of the Maramataka to guide many things including the tuna harvest
- Poutūterangi is the place where the Dargaville Museum stands
- Te Puru o Kaipara
- Moremonui
- Three tohorā were stranded at Mangawhare, named for three marae, Ōtūrei, Rīpia, Waikāretu (one tohorā was called Manaaki and is associated with Rīpia Marae)



Figure 2: The Kaihū River flows directly behind Te Houhanga Marae which is protected by a stop bank.

The afternoon of Day One was spent discussing change in the river since the 19th century. Notes taken during this session include the following:

- The river has gotten wider and deeper
 - Dredging and digging has taken place
 - Farming practices have had a huge impact
 - Logging, timber was taken from here to places like America, England, Holland, Spain
 - The water is browner (silt, decrease in vegetation)
 - The process from swamp to open farmland has had major impacts
 - 50,000 kauri trees were taken from the Kaipara
 - A large farm owned by 1 owner (indicates radically different ideas about land usage and relationship to land)
 - Drains and canals dug by hand
 - Creeks filled in, land developed
 - Changes in family status
 - Loss of two dairy companies
 - Decrease in harakeke
 - Loss of traditional waka use and types
 - Loss of use of traditional Maramataka, mātauranga
-

The evening of Day One explored indigenous river traditions from other parts of the country and the world. The discussion commenced with the idea advanced in Whanganui of the Whanganui River having a 'legal personality'. Other rivers and their traditions were also discussed – including the Mōhaka and Kaituna Rivers. Videos of indigenous river projects in Australia and the United States were also presented and discussed.



Figure 3: Kelly Retimana of Naumai Marae presented and discussed several historical maps of the area. Where 'wharepuni' is marked on this map, this refers to Te Houhanga Marae. Source: HT Ferrar, 1934. *The geology of the Dargaville-Rodney Subdivision, Bulletin 34.*

Day Two

Sunday morning was spent discussing ‘where to next?’ and ‘what can we do?’ Again, the hui was broken into groups where a lot of lively discussion took place regarding how to address the health of the river and to plan for its future. Numerous provocations and prompts were offered to the hui including the following:

- If Te Houhanga Marae was to create a Kaitiakitanga project for here, what would it look like? What is required?
- What would the kāinga look like if it’s mauri was healthy?
 - What do we mean by mauri today?
- What is the view of this marae regarding the Treaty of Waitangi and tino rangatiratanga?

Many ideas emerged including:

- Creating a regular waka event on the river (modelled on the Whanganui example called ‘Tira Hoe Waka’)
- Planting programmes
- A ‘Save the Wairoa’ campaign raising awareness about the river
- Improving political representation
- The use of tikanga to improve relationships to place, rekindling a sense of tapu and atuātanga in the river
- Use of tikanga such as karakia, Katanga, to acknowledge and nurture relationship
- Use the Maramataka to guide planting and harvesting and other interactions
- Help the eels with their migrations, protect the breeders
- Read the tohu
- Educating whānau to grow kai
- Reflect on what Tupuna did and said
- Education, re-establish lines to Taiao, Te Reo, Kura Kaupapa, school holiday programs, stories and legends told in schools
- Farmer and market gardener education
- Media/radio discussions about Te Ao Māori
- Hui wānanga about the river (BBQ, family days)
- Awareness through specialised branded apparel
- Partnerships - iwi and Govt co-governance
- Bring back traditional waka
- Using tikanga as standard life practices
- Traversing the river, creating our own memories
- Reconnecting traditions

The hui concluded at 1pm on Sunday 18th of July 2021.

Appendix 1:

Attendees:

Kelly Retimana

Ray Marychurch

Pene Taranui Hita

Shanele Kowalewski

Martha Toia

Nora Parore

Raymond Marychurch

Alan Nesbit (Sonny)

Tokotoko Retimana

Anne-Marie & Charlie Jackson

Te Kerekere Roycroft

Te Miringa Tito

Pirepire Marychurch

Keanu Townsend

Taoho Patuawa

Narina Larsen

Karlene Nesbit

Research Team:

Charles Royal & Celia Witehira

Appendix 2 Worksheets from group sessions

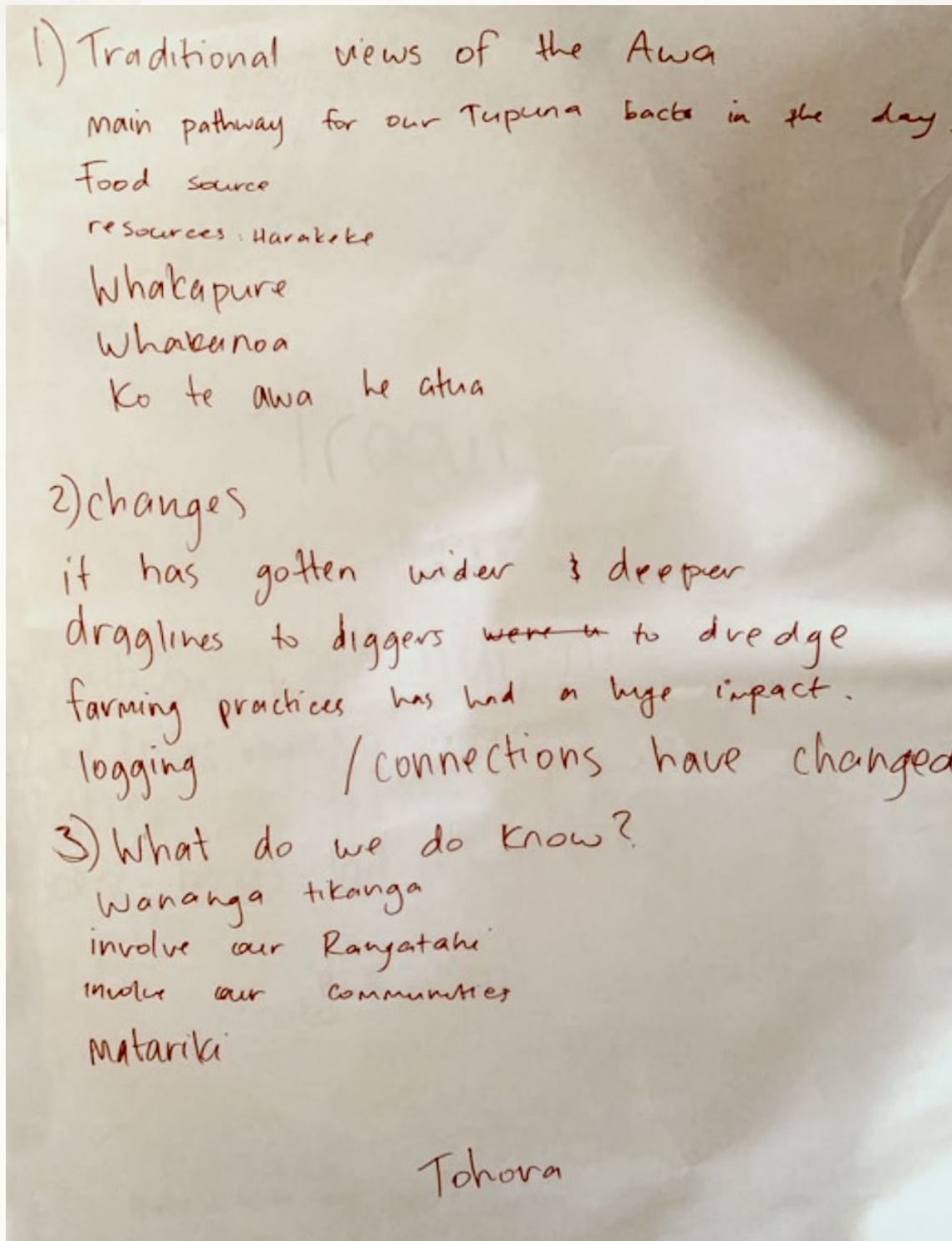
- kōwhiri ki pūnā - their replants

Traditional - Te Wairoa

- Super highway - Whakapapa connections - Pokopoko - Mahuhu water
- Swimming/bathing/washing - whare to different places
- travel kai, war, hui, timber/trade (Nth & Sth) floated logs down the river - Pahiri whare
- Harakeke (ropes, whare) - upper reaches = merging into Mangakahia to Wairoa to Wairoa.
- vegetation as filter (Raypo to Pouto - green) (Raypo to here - brown)
- Pokopoko - bends - tail lashings
- Pa sites on river-edges
 - 1 Rangiri
 - 2 Today's later
 - 3 Today's later
 - 4 Today's later
 - 5 Today's later
- Tukanga/Kawa Pokopoko - Wairoa the impregnable
- Pepeha = Pokopoko, Rangiri, Maungaroa, Kai of the seagulls. (stopped at Mangahare)
 - 3 Tokoroa - Otūreirei (Otūrei)
 - Manakē (Lipia)
 - Moana - Arikī (Whakarehu)
- Haka Tokatoka (Te Korā)
 - Mahuhu ki te rangi waka - Rangipāi drowned in Kapara trevally
 - * Earthquake from Kermadec
- Kai (Flounder, Mullet, Snapper, Gurnard, Kohawai, tuna, Stingray)
 - Rutai, pipi, scallops, karahū, cysters
 - Connection to lakes - Kai iwi cleansing place for warriors
- Kaihu a Ihenga - Tohu - when flooding, Ra mate
 - Food source slightly diff to Wairoa (Tuna, cysters)

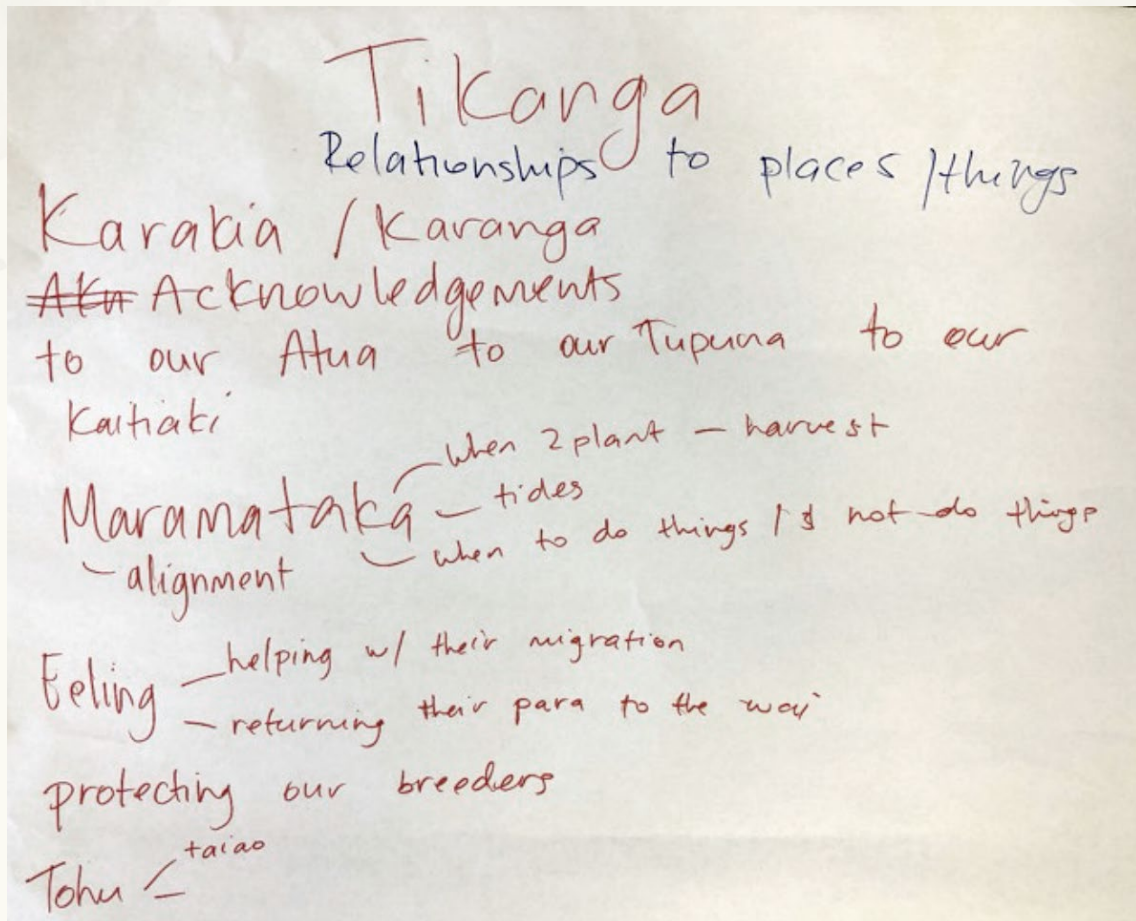
Appendix 2 (continued)

Worksheets from group sessions



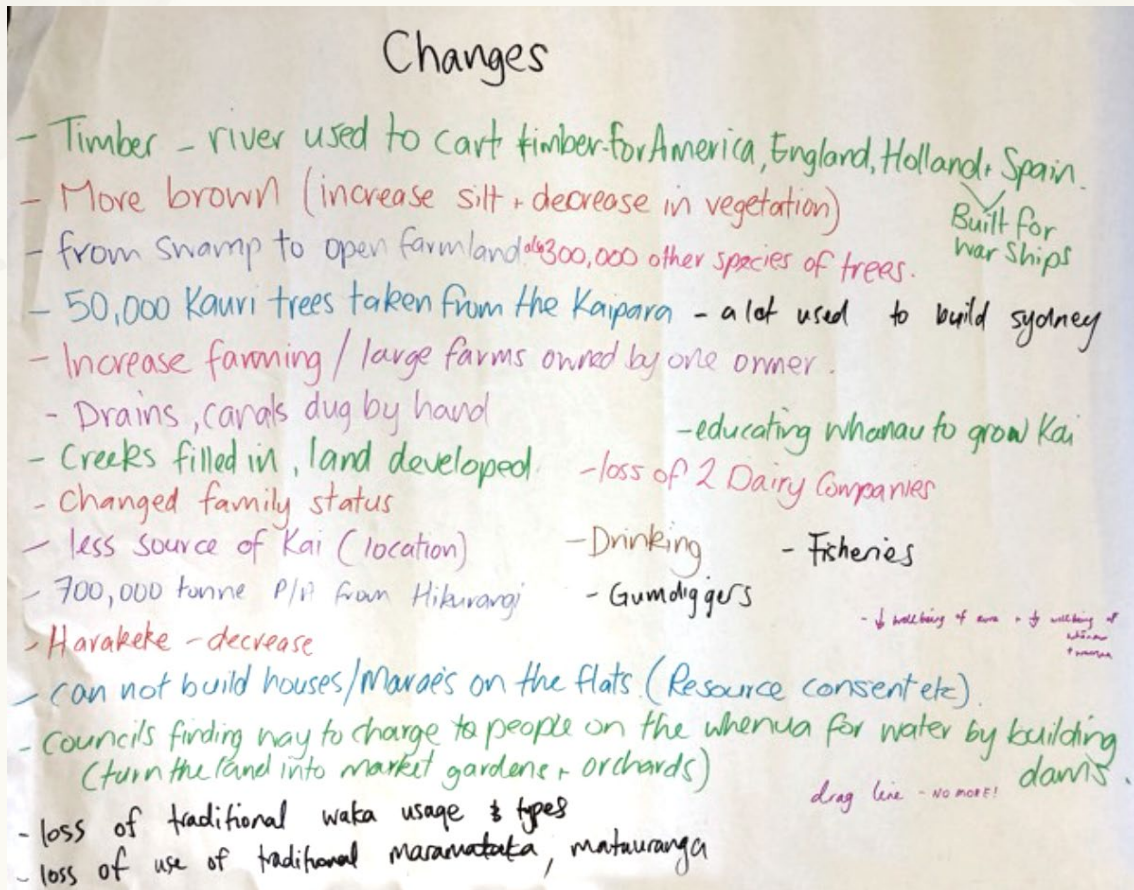
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Worksheets from group sessions



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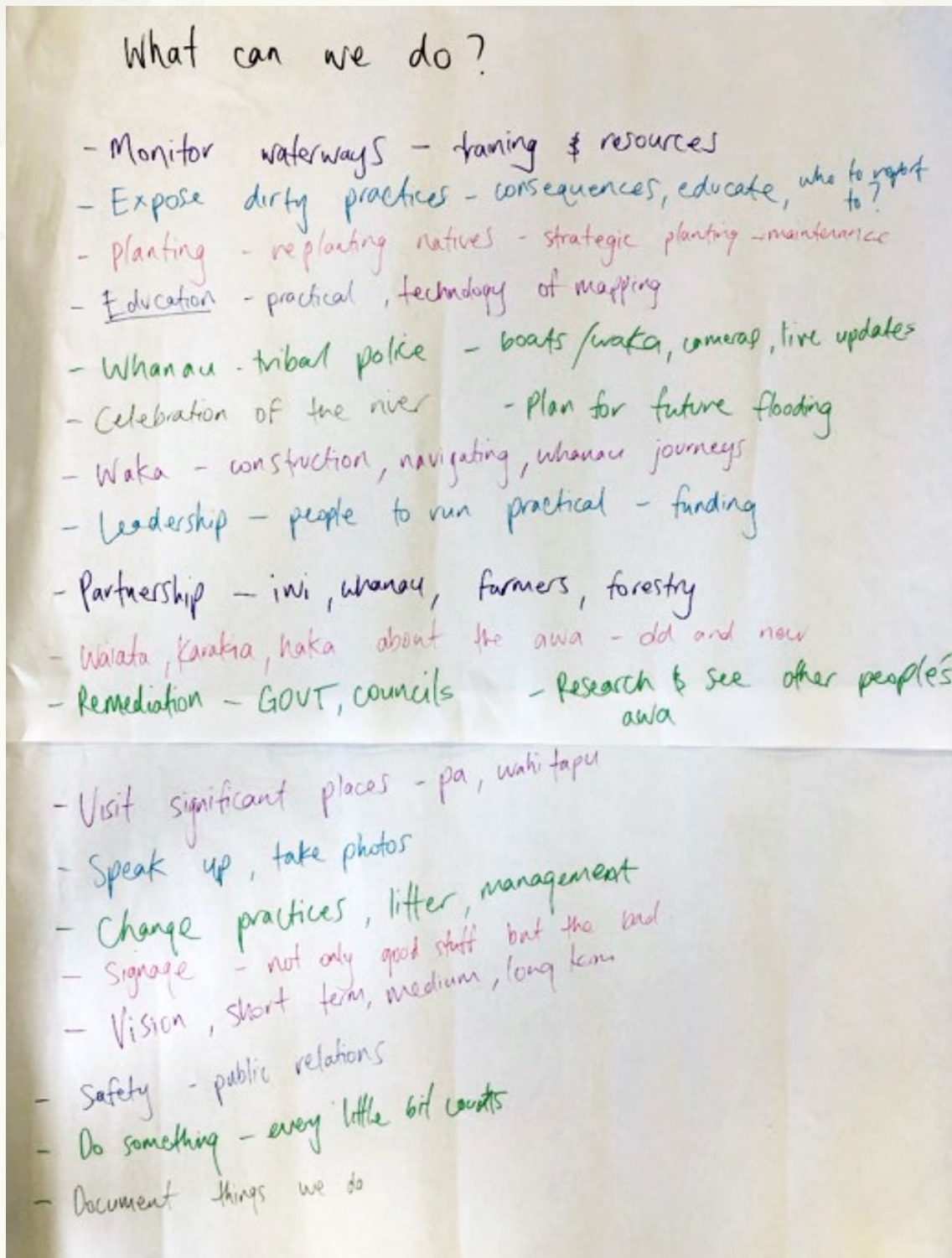
Worksheets from group sessions

Looking forward

- Iwi/hapū office.
- Reflect on what tūpuna said/did but look/more forward
 - progression/evolving tikanga relative to context
- Education - re-establish links to
 - School holiday programs in our daily lives
 - stories & legends being taught in schools - & on TV
 - revitalisation of tā moko
 - Taiāo
 - Te Reo
 - Kura kaupapa
 - via tamariki, mokopuna, kaumātua, whānau
- Partnerships - Iwi & govt agencies (co-governance)
 - Iwi monitoring, what do our people see? And, policing Taiāo.
 - Te tiriti, He whakaputanga
 - Māe Kōwhiri for understanding - spirituality, practicality, mentally
 - attending meetings
 - involved in decision meetings
 - people by council representation / truly representative
 - Farmer and market gardener education.
- Transition to change -
 - Bring back traditional waka building & usage (hauāruvuku in 2018).
 - Businesses as driven by advertising/omarewā.
 - Hui/Wānanga about the river (BBQ, family days)
 - Ahoāruvuku through specialised branded apparel!
 - Planting along waterways
 - using tikanga as standard life practices.
- Traversing the river, creating our own memories, re-connecting → re-creating tradition.

Appendix 2 (continued)

Worksheets from group sessions





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