

## **Tui Tuia | Learning Circle welcomes Marisa Pene to Te Whānau Maioha to support kura (schools) and kaioko (teachers)**

In October 2021, Marisa Pene was appointed as Tui Tuia | Learning Circle's Programme Manager, Te Whānau Maioha.

The appointment coincides with the transition of the University of Auckland organisation known as FLS Future Learning Solutions to its new Tui Tuia | Learning Circle brand and name.

Marisa (Ngāti Kuia, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Ngāi Tahu, and Tokelau) comes to Tui Tuia with an impressive skillset in management, strategic development, community engagement, entrepreneurial and creative processes.

She also brings with her extensive experience in designing Kaupapa Māori and Pasifika frameworks, policy analysis, research and advocacy. She holds an MBA (University of Auckland), an LLB and BA in Sociology and Māori Studies from Victoria University. She has also run her own cultural and management consultancy and recently completed her PGDipBus in Māori Development at the University of Auckland Business School.

It is this depth of experience developed through previous roles and her academic proficiency that is deeply valued by Te Whānau Maioha (TWM). Marisa's most recent role was the Regenerative Kaupapa Māori lead for Enviroschools and Te Aho Tū Roa ki Tāmaki, where she supported the Enviroschools Auckland network and championed education for sustainability services in Māori medium settings.

"I'm passionate about bringing about a regenerative transition through environmental consciousness and education that will increase our understanding of Taiao, the Earth, and ourselves," says Marisa.

"An education where experiences are holistic, long-term - essentially indigenous; where rich action, contextual, experiential and reflective learning are the norm, is my mahi. I support education that is Taiao-centred, values- and Kaupapa-driven. With a special interest in regenerative practice, eco-systems design and permaculture, I believe we can all contribute to a more just society that respects both people and planet life."

TWM works in Māori medium spaces and its facilitators work holistically and relationally to support almost 75 kura (schools) and kaiako (teachers) nationally, focusing on the Kaupapa Māori education experience.

This includes the delivery of Te Reo Matatini and Pangarau maths based on best practice from Te Puna Wānanga (School of Māori education within the Faculty of Education, University of Auckland), and contributes to providing learning solutions for ākonga Māori (students) to achieve education success as Māori. TWM is also active in delivery to the Ministry of Education priorities for regionally-allocated professional learning and development programmes to support kura.

Marisa says her experience at Enviroschools has led her to this role and she is proud of the successes during her five years with that organisation.

“A highlight was instigating support for Māori medium education in Auckland via Te Aho Tū Roa and initiating and developing Ope, a regenerative community approach to growing the number of Enviroschools in Auckland in places where historically engagement had been low.

“Growing grass roots climate resilience has been an important driver and is happening in ways that realise the needs of both local curriculum and culturally sustaining pedagogy. Schools become hubs of their communities and their ecosystems, and are able to embrace the aspirations of their local community.

“One of the most successful practices from the Enviroschool environment I will be bringing to my role at TWM is encouraging Taio-centred contexts and mātauranga curriculum, together with experiential school and community collaborative teaching and learning. I believe it will become par for the course in our education going forward.”

Mātauranga is a modern term for the traditional knowledge of Māori; knowledge that is multi-disciplinary and holistic. Across the 75 Māori medium and English medium schools it works with, TWM programmes are grounded in mātauranga Māori.

“This is a dynamic system of knowledge that is aspirational, inspirational and continuously evolving, encompassing the past, the present and the future,” says Marisa.

“To teach mātauranga Māori in English medium schools with integrity, an acknowledgment and understanding of whānau, hapū and iwi is required. This supports schools to embed learning in a way that acknowledges, and grows in relationship with tangata whenua, and nourishes kaiako and ākonga knowledge and application.

“Strengthening teacher fluency in te reo will also empower ākonga to create new knowledge and develop their own Māori world view to meet future challenges or opportunities confidently as well as approach other world views empathetically.”

TWM is also a registered Regionally Allocated-Professional Learning and Development (RA-PLD) provider in the Te Reo Māori and cultural capability spaces.

Its services are called on by English medium schools to develop a broad range of support from intensive programmes for teachers of Te Reo Māori, to introducing whole school or whole year level Te Reo Māori programmes, to cultural competency frameworks and local curriculum.

“RA-PLD has afforded schools the opportunity to explore and pilot together quite innovative pedagogy and approaches to respond to the needs schools have identified, whether they be integrating digital fluency into culturally sustaining contexts, or exploring how Te Tiriti o Waitangi can be expressed in the ethos of a school,” explains Marisa.

“For Māori medium, informed by our close working relationships with Te Puna Wānanga - School of Māori Education at Auckland University, we are able to support in all aspects of

mātauranga o Aotearoa. This includes the relationship with guiding kaupapa within those realms such as Te Aho Matua and Te Whāriki. Our specialities are Te Reo Māori including language acquisition, Hangarau Matihiko, Ngā Toi, Aromatawai, and Pāngarau me Te Reo Matatini.”

Te Pūawaitanga Harakeke – Māuri Tū Māuri Ora Pāngarau and Te Reo Matatini support for kura, ākonga and their whānau, is a beacon programme for TWM. Currently the cohort based in Tāmaki and Te Tai Tokerau is oversubscribed, with a waitlist longer than those TWM can currently support.

An aspect Marisa was exploring in her previous role and is keen to continue with TWM is the work people including Harko Brown and Wiremu Sarich have been engaged in to revive Ngā Taonga Tākaro – traditional play, which she says had many purposes, but was primarily the means of learning for tupuna Māori (ancestors).

For Marisa, arriving at a time of Tui Tuia | Learning Circle’s name change is exciting.

“Tuia references the connected nature of all things, animate and inanimate, tangible and intangible. Stepping into such potential represents enormous, and much needed, transformative and regenerative possibilities, for education and society.

“My personal commitment is that Māori medium education, especially Kura Kaupapa Māori and Kura ā-lwi - and Kohanga Reo - are the education preferences of choice for whānau Māori. This would be an awesome thing to see in my lifetime. I say this coming from a Taiao kaupapa background, and at a time when we face the existential challenges biodiversity loss and environmental degradation impacts. Indigenous communities and their knowledge systems held in language hold important guidance of incredible benefit to us all.”

Marisa says that pre-Covid, kaiako in Māori medium were already precious in their scarcity. Lockdown, especially in Auckland, has proved challenging for ākonga to stay in touch with kaiako, let alone kaiako and facilitators. The impact of the Health orders is adding stress on an already strained workforce that is exacerbated as infection rates for Māori increase.

“Faced with these complexities, education must equally evolve in ways such as supporting dual delivery - in-person and online, synchronous and asynchronous. TWM is developing a range of digital pātaka (storehouse) to support kaiako and teachers, but also the whānau who are increasingly being called upon to bridge the chasm as Covid unfolds. We are also planning, co-designing, and partnering strategically to ensure a full complement of services are available to support kura in their journey of excellence.

“Kua takoto te mānuka - the wero is laid down for TWM to rise to these challenges. In the immortal words of Arundhati Roy, ‘Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing’.”

### **About Tui Tuia | Learning Circle (formerly known as Future Learning Solutions)**

Tui Tuia | Learning Circle delivers quality education and mentoring programs designed to inspire, uplift and help prepare schools and kura, whānau and communities for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Our passionate and experienced team work alongside leaders, teachers and school communities in New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific, co-constructing Professional Learning & Development (PLD) programmes which focus on lifting professional practice and improving outcomes for learners. Our alignment with the University of Auckland enables us to deliver services and solutions that are grounded in best-in-class research, insights and innovation.

Our programme offering includes Leadership, Assessment for Learning, Cultural Capability for Māori and Pasifika, Mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori, Curriculum Design as well as specialist services like Reading Recovery, Literacy support and Learning Languages programmes.

For more details, please visit: [learningcircle.co.nz](https://learningcircle.co.nz)