



The Meke Foundation

Strategic Plan 2025-2028



INTRODUCTION



The MEKE Foundation is a Māori-led social enterprise and community wellbeing organisation co-founded by Levi Armstrong (Ngāti Kahungunu) and his wife Dana.

It operates as the institutional arm of the MEKE (Move, Engage, Konnect, Evolve) initiative, designed to catalyse holistic, culturally grounded health, fitness and life-skills programmes in often under-resourced communities.

Drawing on three core components — PATU (the whānau-based fitness model), the Meke Meter (a culturally responsive wellbeing self-assessment tool), and Domynis (a mobile “pod” fitness / wellness container) — the Foundation works to bring accessible, empowering wellness opportunities into neighbourhoods where barriers like cost, space, or transport might otherwise exclude participation.

Through partnerships with local councils, educational institutions, funders, and community stakeholders, the MEKE Foundation supports delivery of programmes such as Meke Academy (targeted at rangatahi who struggle in conventional schooling), community “pod” activations in areas like Maraenui, and growth strategies for scaling its impact nationwide.

TIMELINE OF MILESTONES

- **2012:** PATU Aotearoa is established.
- **2012:** [Evaluation of PATU completed](#)
- **2016:** [PATU features on Radio NZ](#)
- **2012:** [PATU Aotearoa screens on Te Karere](#)
- **2015:** [PATU Aotearoa wins Contact Energy People’s Choice award](#)
- **2019:** [PATU Aotearoa opens in Maraenui](#)
- **2020:** [Taita College and Boys and Girls Institute open a POD](#)
- **2020:** [First POD opens in Napier, Marine Parade](#)
- **2020:** [The MEKE Initiative receives Health Research Council NZ funding for research](#)
- **2021:** [Maraenui POD screens on One News](#)
- **2022:** [The MEKE Initiative Research Report is completed and published.](#)
- **2024:** [Story completed by Sport NZ](#)
- **2025:** [The Meke Academy receives Proceeds of Crime funding](#)
- **2025:** [A POD opens in Camberley, Hastings](#)

*the underline feature represents a web link – click on it to be taken to the article.



Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Vision	A future where whānau in high-deprivation communities are empowered, connected, and thriving—physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.			
Mission	To deliver culturally centred, accessible, and holistic initiatives that empower communities to overcome inequities, build resilience, and achieve their aspirations.			
Who We Focus On	High deprivation communities: Residents of areas with significant socioeconomic challenges.	Children and youth: Especially those at risk of social isolation, disengagement from education, substance misuse, and offending.	Community members seeking connection: Anyone who feels disconnected, lacks self-esteem, or needs opportunities for positive engagement.	Whānau with barriers to traditional services: Those who find it difficult to access mainstream health, fitness, or wellbeing services due to cost, stigma, or cultural mismatch.
How we achieve our aspirations	The Meke Academy: A holistic initiative focused on supporting children and youth that have disengaged from mainstream systems and are known to police and Oranga Tamariki.	The POD: A mobile wellbeing container providing a flexible, accessible space for fitness, social connection, and community-led activities.	PATU Aotearoa: Delivered in conjunction with the POD, a group exercise programme delivered by community for community to improve wellbeing, connection and cohesion.	The Meke Meter™: An indigenous self-reflection tool for holistic wellbeing to track progress and impact across our initiatives.
Goals for 2025-28	Sustaining impact Ensure our existing initiatives remain strong, resourced, and delivering consistent positive outcomes for whānau and communities.	Amplify impact and the stories of change Capture and share authentic voices and evidence of transformation to influence systems, inspire others, and strengthen advocacy.	Strengthen partnerships Deepen collaboration with funders and agencies to co-design solutions and scale collective impact.	Grow the reach of impact Expand initiatives into more high-deprivation communities across Aotearoa, ensuring greater access to positive outcomes.

Programme deep dive: The Meke Academy

This programme focuses on transforming the lives of high-risk rangatahi by providing alternative education pathways, holistic support, and strong community partnerships—reducing youth offending and building wellbeing for individuals, whānau, and the wider community.

Target Group

Children and youth at high risk of offending or persistent reoffending.

Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short-Term Outcomes<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Fewer incidents of offending by youth○ Improved engagement in school and education○ Improved quality of life and mental wellbeing• Long-Term Outcomes<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Reduction in serious and persistent offending behaviour○ Reduction in risk factors contributing to offending○ Reduction in harm caused by youth offending○ Increased attainment of numeracy, literacy, and NCEA Level 2 and 3 qualifications○ Reduction in drug use and reliance○ Improved community wellbeing and connection			
How We Achieve Our Outcomes	Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alignment with NZ Curriculum via Te Aho o te Kura Pounamu (Correspondence School)• NCEA Level 1 and 2, numeracy and literacy support• Pathways to higher education (EIT Level 2 and 3)	Quality of Life: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily exercise and fitness programmes• Counselling and addiction support• Life navigation and mentorship from those with lived experience• Health checks and holistic wellbeing services	Pastoral Care: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wraparound support involving Youth Justice, lawyers, and whānau• Individualised plans for each young person	Strengths-Based Approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focusing on building on the strengths and potential of each young person

Programme deep dive: The Meke Initiative (POD + PATU)

A container gym and flexible community exercise programme—designed to bring health, fitness, and social connection directly into disadvantaged communities. Its unique design allows it to be “embedded” into a community where needed, providing a safe, accessible, and culturally relevant environment for group exercise, social gatherings, and community-led activities. The pod can also be relocated as community needs change.

Who we focus on

- Whānau in high-deprivation areas, especially those with predominantly Māori populations.
- Children, youth and adults who face barriers to accessing traditional gyms or wellbeing services.
- Individuals at risk of social isolation, chronic health conditions, or negative lifestyle factors (e.g., inactivity, substance misuse).

Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased engagement in physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices.• Improved mental, physical, and social wellbeing.• Enhanced sense of belonging, unity, and community pride.• Reduced barriers to participation (cost, accessibility, stigma).• Decreased social isolation and improved community connection.• Creation of pathways to education, employment, and leadership within the community.			
How We Achieve Our Outcomes	Providing a free, accessible, and welcoming space (POD) for all ages and fitness levels.	Delivering group exercise programmes (PATU) that are culturally grounded	Hosting community events, challenges, and whānau days to build engagement and motivation.	Supporting local trainers and entrepreneurs to lead sessions and develop their own initiatives



Ngā mihi

