Māori and the justice system
A community Response

An examination of the quality of legal representation young Māori men receive in the criminal justice system
THE WIDER CONTEXT

• Traditional Māori practices of justice
• Impact of Western justice
• Individualism v’s collective
“Māori represent roughly half of all criminal justice offenders and victims, a proportion far greater than would be expected for the size of the population. There is an urgent need to address this over-representation for the benefit of Māori and New Zealand society as a whole (Statistics New Zealand, 2009, p. 22).
HOLISTIC LEGAL SERVICES

Social  Cultural  Economic  Political  Global
Complex & multi-layered narratives

- 5 of the participants had multiple experiences of marginalisation, and systemic failure
- Only one participant achieved NCEA Level 1
- All eight participants were unemployed
- All were represented by legal aid lawyers
- Two sort legal advice from Community Law Centres
- Relationship with New Zealand Police, integral to outcome for one participant
Community Law Centres

• The role of community law centres in demystifying the legal system
• Holistic legal services – the personal is political
• Advocacy in court
• The importance of community and legal relationships
• Maori caucus – the ‘watch dogs’, systemic change
• A new model to respond to the unmet legal needs of Maori
Māori Response to Justice

- Tikanga Programme
- Relationships were key to legal representation
- Whānau Support
- Role of Māori social workers in court
- New Zealand Police - Māori liaison officers
- Kaupapa Māori legal services
The role of Community Law

- Advocate government for a more equitable justice system
- Māori responses to justice – National Maori CLC
- Kaupapa Maori legal services teams in each centre
- Address systemic bias and discrimination
- Removing barriers to justice
- Demystifying the legal system – information and education

The Future
I would like to acknowledge the men strength, and resilience of the men who participated in this research.

It is my aspiration that this research project reflects the voices of these young men, rather than mine.