

“...focus on what the person’s strengths are in the home and look at the resources they have around them...”



A study of Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island Māori, and Niuean infant care practices

hrcnz Health Research Council
of New Zealand
Te Kaitiaki Rangahau Hauora o Aotearoa



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Kalesita Pole



Mele Talamahina

- **Language matters** – Families who didn't mainly speak English at home were less likely to follow safe sleep advice for babies.
- **Alternative health advice** – Parents who saw traditional or alternative health practitioners were less likely to follow recommended sleep positions.
- **Living conditions affect sleep safety** – Smoking, alcohol, crowded homes, and limited access to doctors increased the chances of unsafe sleep practices.
- **One-size doesn't fit all** – Health messages need to be in Pacific languages and reflect Pacific cultures, and wider issues like housing and healthcare access must also be addressed.

RESEARCH

Open Access

A study of Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island Māori, and Niuean infant care practices in the Growing Up in New Zealand study



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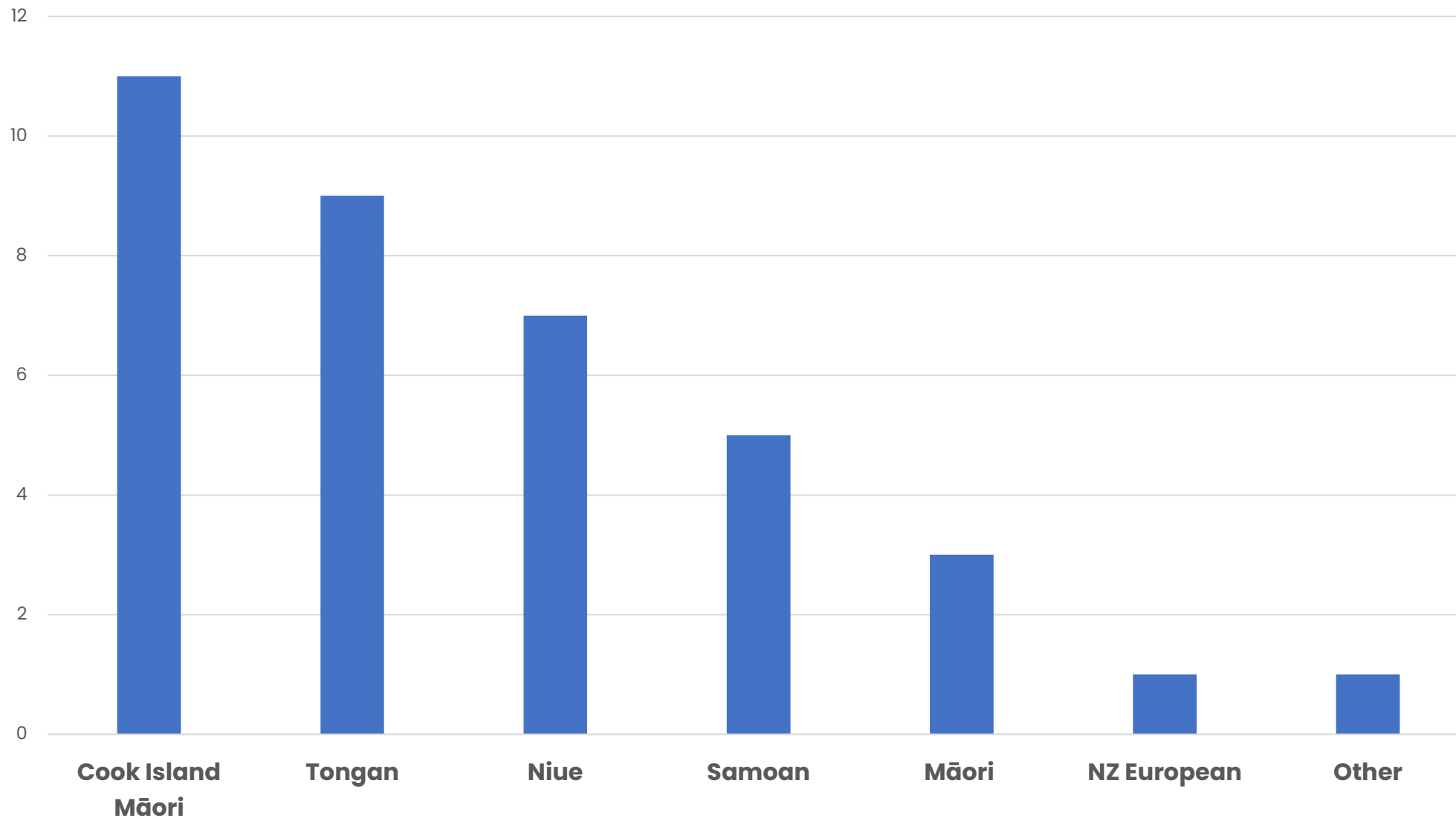


Project aims

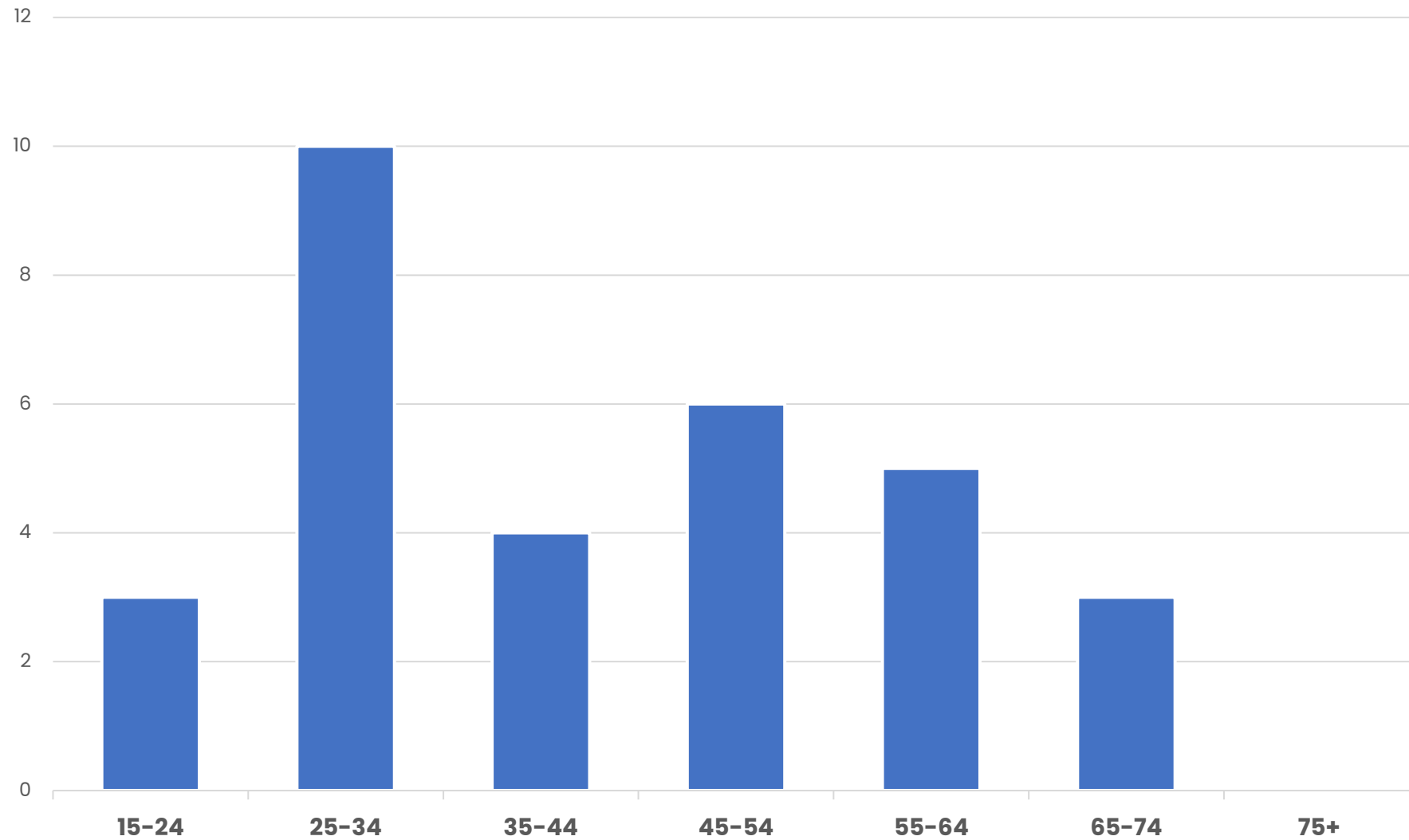
The aim of this study was to explore the **knowledge, awareness** and **understanding** of SUDI among Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island and Niue mothers and grandmothers living in Aotearoa, New Zealand.

- **31** mothers and grandmothers
- Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island, or Niue heritage
- Child or grandchild under two years
- Living in Aotearoa New Zealand

Ethnicity



Age range





Knowledge & Awareness



Infant Sleep Practices



Sources of Information

Knowledge & Awareness

“I guess it’s just the sleeping position...they should be on their backs...”

(Cook Island Māori mother)

“I heard smoking, a mum smoking that sleeps with a baby.”

(Samoan mother)

“Don’t lie baby on their tummies.”

(Tongan grandmother)

“I understand you know if you’re drinking, you don’t want to be sleeping with your babies of course.”

(Tongan grandmother)

Infant Sleep Practices

Sleep position

“If you turn it [baby] up, they're going to choke. You have to turn it, if they you know, vomit, they're on the side, they won't choke.”

(Cook Island Māori grandmother)

“We sleep baby on the side...so baby won't choke from the milk...when I come to look at the recovery position from CPR, I think it's like that, make sure baby is on the side.”

(Niue grandmother)

“Every night I would rotate the baby, that way baby doesn't lose hair on the side and the head... the head doesn't become... deformed.”

(Niue mother)

Infant Sleep Practices

It's easier to bedshare

“Heaps of mum co-sleep anyway, like that’s something you will never stop. What they [health professionals] could do is, give options of how to safely sleep on the bed. Maybe freely provide those kinds of things so that baby can still be safe on the bed.”

(Tongan mother)

“I was just too tired...too tired to try and put him back into the cot during the night so it just turned into co-sleeping.”

(Samoan mother)

“When I went over to my in-laws, my husband’s Nana and his mum had told me, sleep with the baby. When you sleep with the baby, *mohe ma’u*, like she will sleep right through the night.”

(Tongan mother)

Sources of Information

“I wouldn’t share that [bedsharing] with my midwife. I didn’t want her to feel like you know, I was being a really neglectful sort of mother that didn’t care...I chose to believe my elders.”

(Samoan mother)

“I think it would be nice if the person [health professional] giving advice could focus on what that person’s strengths are in the home and look at what resources they have around them, as opposed to directing and telling them what to do.”

(Niue grandmother).

I was like okay they're always going to say co-sleeping's not good because of SUDI and the cot deaths, and she [mothers] was like ‘but at the same time if you're going to sleep with her you have to keep that in mind and be careful as well.’ (Samoan mother)

Main findings

- This research confirms mothers and grandmothers have an **understanding** of SUDI and safe sleep practices.
- **Bedsharing**: convenience of breastfeeding, parental tiredness, fear of choking and concerns about baby's head shape presented challenges when trying to follow safe sleep guidelines.
- **Family members** were the main source of maternal and parenting information
- Focusing on the **strengths** of families and establishing relationships is critical for SUDI public health messaging.



Mele Talamahina



Dr Nuhisifa Seve-Williams





My Baby's Village



MOANA
CONNECT

My Baby's Village in Action



Cross sectoral
collaboration



Elevating Pacific cultural
care systems



Cultural Care Workshops



le Pili
Niue



Tivaivai Bag
Cook Islands



Fijian Masi
Fiji



Kahoa Kakala
Tonga

Facilitate and support effective advocacy

(SUDI prevention social media campaign 2021)

What is SUDI?

SUDI (Sudden Unexplained Death in Infancy) describes the unexpected death of an infant. This includes cases of unexplained causes and those caused by accidental and preventable circumstances. Many of these deaths are preventable. Importantly there are steps parents and their family can take to reduce the risk to baby.

For more tips and resources about ways how to help visit:
www.mybabysvillage.co.nz



It takes a Village to raise a child.

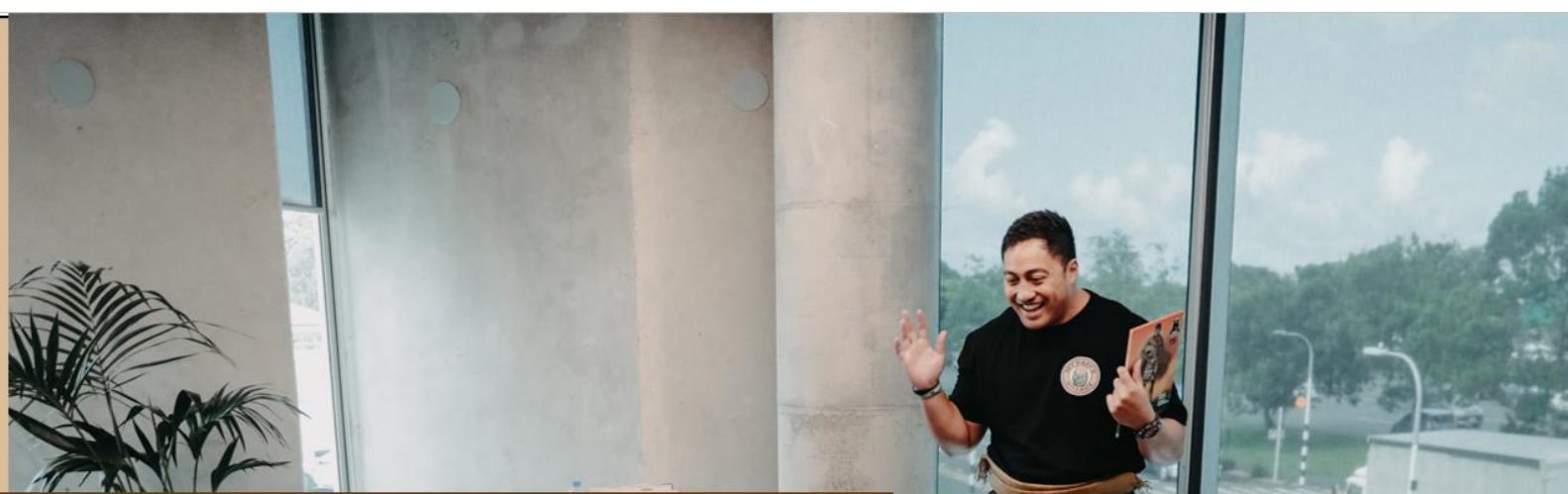
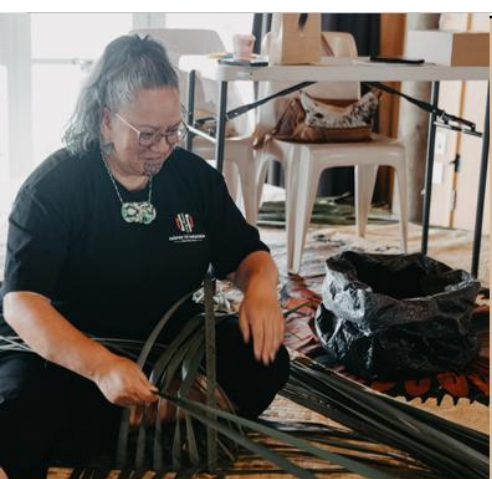


As family and friends we can play a part to provide a village of support and care for our babies, parents and carers.

For more tips and resources about ways how to help visit:
www.mybabysvillage.co.nz



Key message: SUDI Prevention is everyone's business.
Family and friends can play a role in supporting parents of infants.



Mobilise Pacific Community

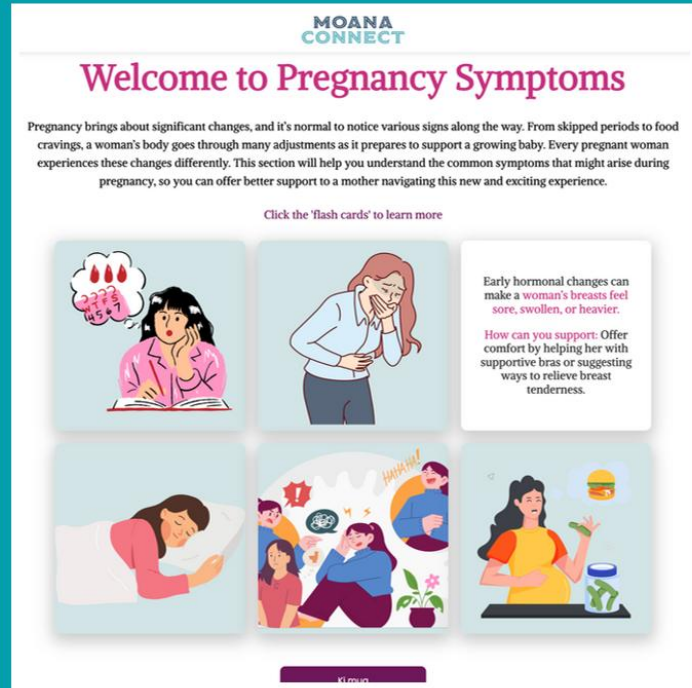


Tapuaki

Pacific Maternal, Paternal, Infant Wellbeing
Workforce Development Programme



The Learner Journey



E-Learning

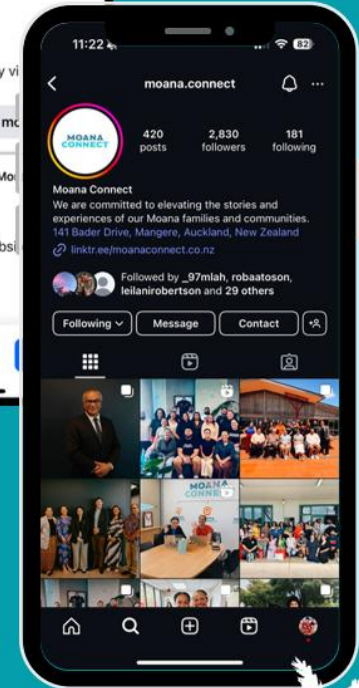
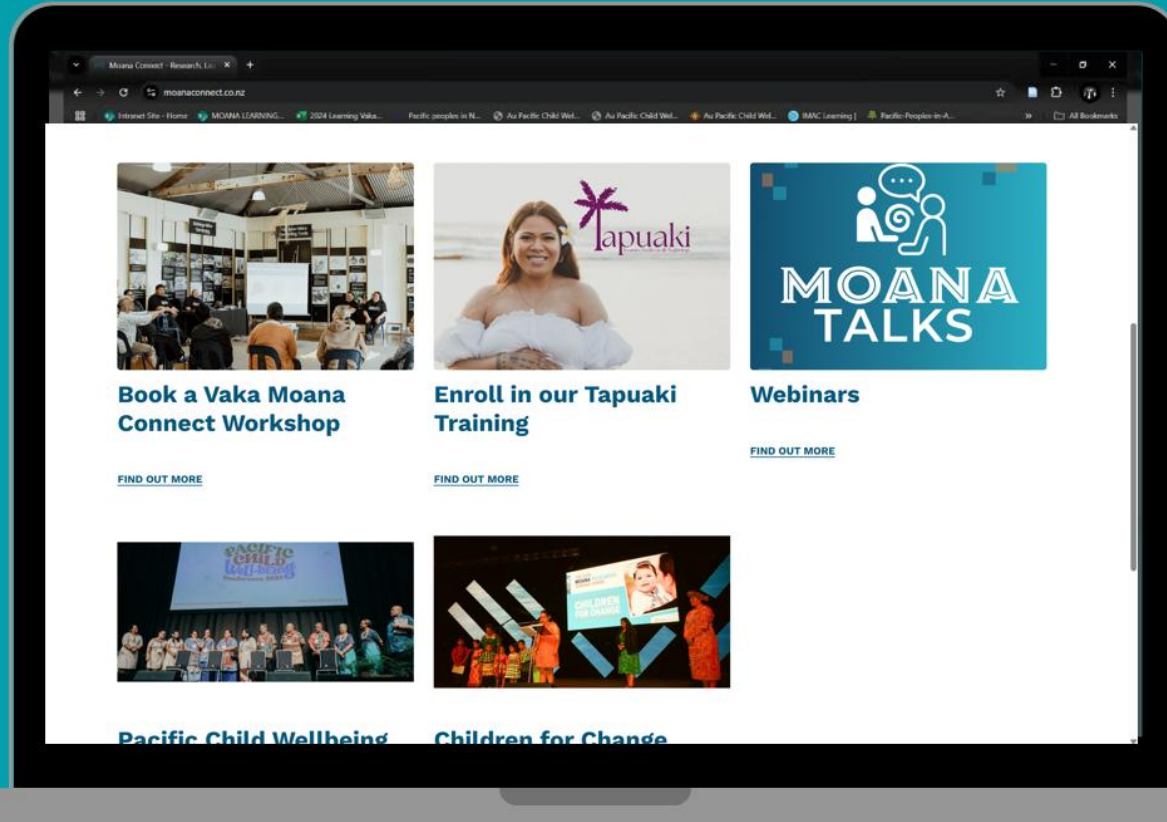


Block Day



Cultural Care
Workshop

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