

Built by Community, Not the System

The SAMER+ approach to ending family and sexual
violence in ethnic communities

Whakamanawa 2026





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What's in our name?



South Asian
Middle Eastern
former Refugee populations

A name grounded in **connection, companionship**
and **lifting others up**.

MANDALA

Harmony
Unity
Connection
Collective

+ SYMBOL

Bringing people
together
Giving and receiving
support
Growing diversity

COLOURS

An ethnic palette
reflecting the communities
at the heart of SAMER+.



Growing deep roots of trust, knowledge and connection
into a strong, interwoven community.

Who gets to shape prevention?

Start with your own place

- a) Who is involved in designing prevention in your community?
- b) Who might still be missing?



“Our communities bestowed us with strength and hope. We invite you to be part of this journey and kaupapa that needs harmonisation of all efforts to bring positive and sustained intergenerational change.”

SAMER+ Collective Governance Board



New Zealand's diverse population (2023 census)

861,576
people
(17.3 percent)
identify as
Asian.

442,632
people
(8.9 percent)
identify as
Pacific peoples
(may include
Fiji Indian
diaspora).

92,760
people
(1.9 percent)
identify as
MELAA.

The Asian and Māori
ethnic groups had
the largest numeric
increases between
the 2018 and 2023
Censuses, up
153,978 people
and **111,657** people
respectively.

The people behind the strategy

From national strategy to community-led action

Why SAMER+ embarked on a co-design journey with ethnic communities

1

DECEMBER 2021

Te Aorerekura launched

Aotearoa New Zealand's 25-year strategy to eliminate family violence and sexual violence.

THE NATIONAL SHIFT

From crisis response toward prevention, healing and wellbeing.

2

THE VISIBILITY GAP

One key action for ethnic communities

Many ethnic service providers in Counties Manukau struggled to see themselves, their realities or their aspirations reflected in the strategy.

*Representation mattered—
but so did agency.*

3

SAMER+ RESPONSE

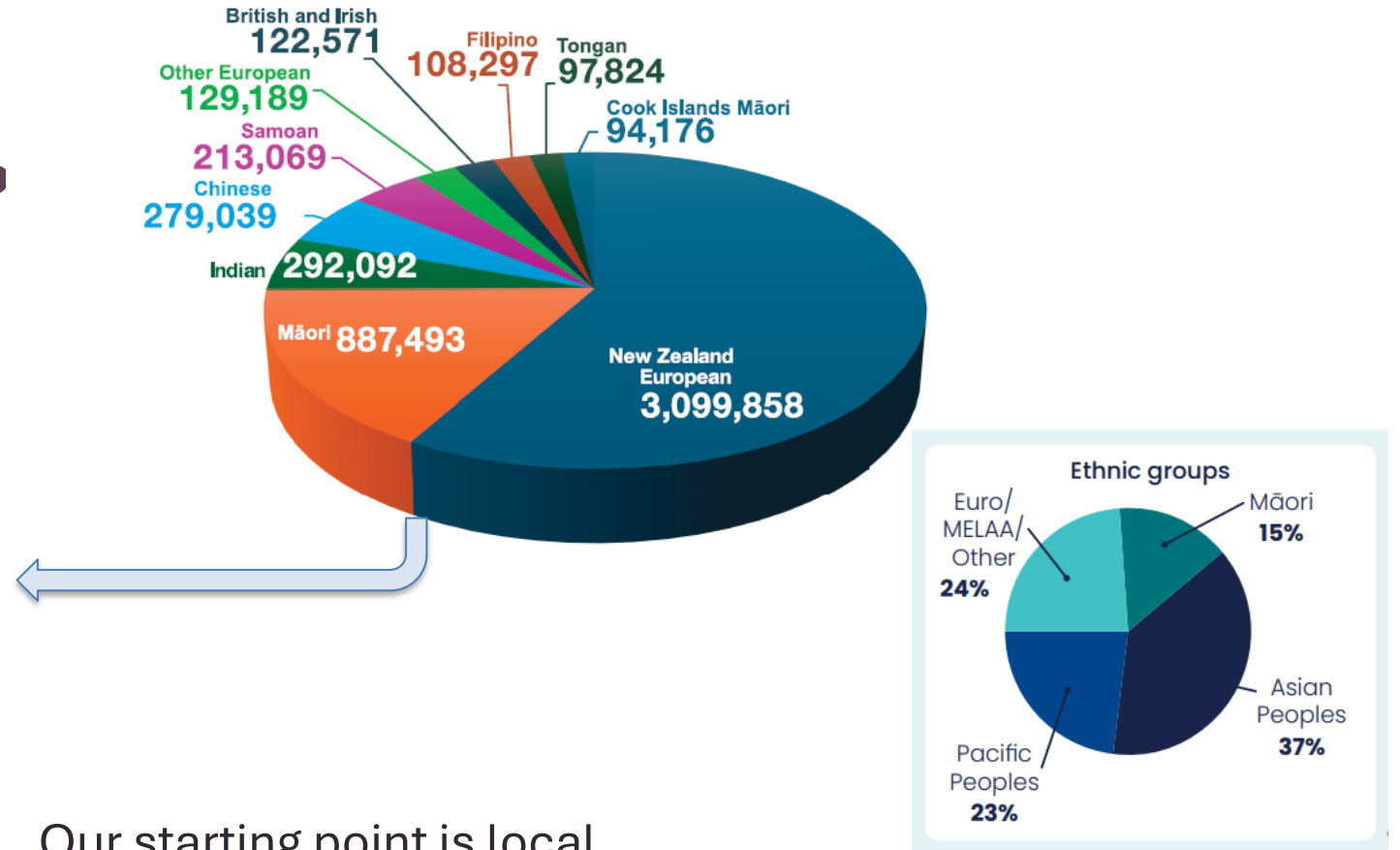
Co-designing our own community pathway

We listened to communities and service providers to shape responses around their circumstances, cultural strengths, priorities and aspirations.

WITH communities—not for them

The national strategy set the direction. Community voice shaped how we would travel.

Why Counties Manukau?



Our starting point is local.

Auckland's population is ~ **1.66 million** people.

Counties Manukau ~**658,200** (Health NZ estimate 2025).
~**150,000** people identify as South Asian, Middle Eastern, MELAA (caution of cross over of ethnicities over other groups)

The system challenge

Communities were diverse.

Needs were complex.

Services were fragmented.

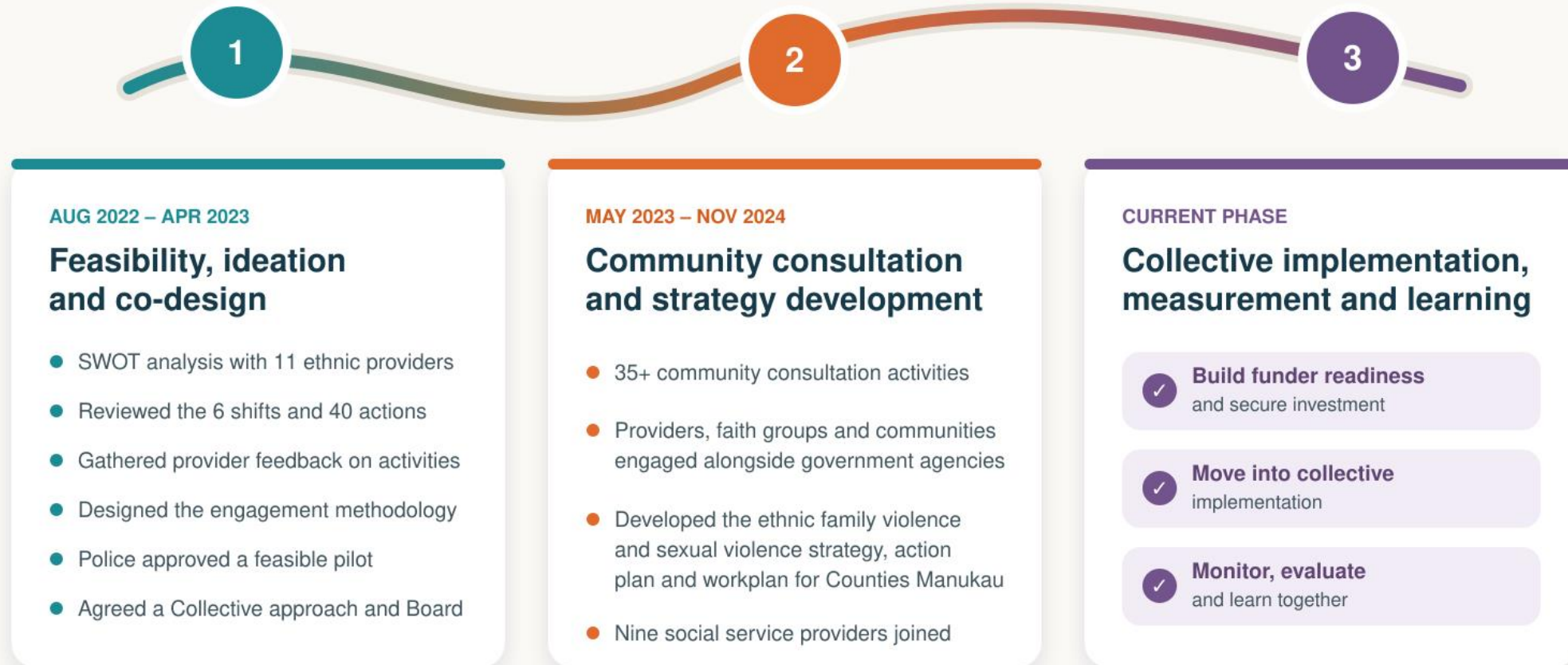
Community voice was not always visible in decision-making.

So we started by listening...

From listening to collective action

The SAMER+ journey

From feasibility and co-design to collective implementation



Each phase was built through listening, shared decisions and collective ownership.

What communities told us?

TRUST
CULTURAL SAFETY
LANGUAGE
ACCESS
MIGRATION
DISPLACEMENT
FAMILY
FAITH
RELATIONSHIPS
PREVENTION BEFORE CRISIS

What we built from what we heard...Our Theory of Change

Priorities

Leadership,
Advocacy
and Influence.

Research, Data,
Insights, Innovation,
Knowledge
Management.

Harmonising and
Partnerships and
Collaboration.

Objectives

Accelerated and
focused community
and resource
mobilisation.

Communities owning
solutions for change
and strength-based
wellbeing.

Respecting cultural
diversity and strength
of ethnic providers.

Maintaining high
standards of
professional and
integrity towards safe
practice.

Pathways

Advocacy and
community leadership.

Whole of systems
strengthening.

Innovation and
good governance.

Enhanced social
behaviour change.

Capable workforce
(Entry to Expert).

Safe, accessible, timely
response coordination.

Community engagement
and empowerment.

Increased investment in
primary prevention.

Monitoring, evaluation,
learning.

Mid-Term Change by 2027

Integration of
Te Tokotoru Model - a systems
approach to invest into
dimension of strengthening,
healing and responding.

Programmes that uplift all
sector providers to better
support SAMER+ population.

Greater public engagement
and knowledge of prevention
strategies.

Long-Term Change by 2030

Children, young, and vulnerable
people are safe in all settings
at all times and receive effective
services and care.

Those who choose to use violence
are held accountable for their
behaviour and given the support
that they need so that they
don't reoffend.

All systems and institutions
effectively support people who
have experienced harm and have
a focus on healing.

All services and prevention
programmes are delivered
in a culturally sensitive,
mana-enhancing, improved
and responsive manner.

Impacts

Thriving children,
youth, families,
and communities
through an
empowered
ecosystem.

Intergenerational
positive change
and acknowledging
of violence free
Aotearoa from a
global perspective.

Effective and
enabling
environment that
fosters knowledge,
sustainability of
collective efforts
and good
governance.



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"I am happy that SAMER+ Collective has been established to address the problem of family and sexual violence occurring within our South Asian, Middle Eastern, Refugee, Rainbow and other ethnic communities. We will always be supportive of the projects and programmes that aim to make our women safer everywhere, including their homes and places of work."



HON PRIYANCA
RADHAKRISHNAN -
FORMER MINISTER FOR
DIVERSITY, INCLUSION
AND ETHNIC
COMMUNITIES
SEPT 2023



For SAMER+, prevention means acting earlier, listening better, strengthening capability and creating the conditions for safer families and communities.

From strategy to action

Community Capability Growth

Tailor made to the needs of the community and stakeholders.



Community Governance & Leadership

2 workshops
30 participants from
24 organisations

Building governance capability, including financial oversight, risk, strategy, outcomes and emerging leadership.



Ethnic Media + Safer Reporting

3 workshops
+ 1 Community
Practice Guideline

Moving from awareness and sensationalism towards safer, prevention-focused communication about family and sexual harm.



Ethnic Rainbow Inclusion

2 workshops

General community workshop and multidisciplinary workforce development with MDCAT team at Counties Manukau Police.



Safeguarding & Child Protection Capability

Targeted training and
workforce development

Strengthening community and sector capability to recognise, respond and support safety for children, young people and families.



Community Knowledge + Practice Resources

Culturally grounded tools,
resources and guidance

Turning community knowledge into practical resources that providers and communities can use.

From strategy to action

Systems Influence & Sector Contribution

From community voice to national impact.



Community Voice → Evidence

39+ consultations
~1,000 community voices
9 organisations

Community lived experience shaping SAMER+ strategy, priorities and practice.



National Suicide Prevention Contribution

Recommendations contributed to New Zealand's national strategic direction for suicide prevention: *Every Life Matters – He Tapu te Oranga o ia Tangata: Suicide Prevention Strategy 2019–2029.*

Ensuring the voices and needs of our communities are reflected at the national level.



Research + Knowledge Contribution

Presented at the National Asian Health CAHRE Conference 2026.

Sharing our community-led prevention approach and learnings.



Social Investment Agency (SIA) Engagement

Presented SAMER+ and its community-led approach to the Social Investment Agency (SIA), Wellington.

Contributing to national conversations on social investment and innovative prevention approaches.



Funding + System Relationships

Ongoing discussions with government agencies, philanthropy and local government.

Building investment and sustainability for long-term impact.



Cross-Agency Partnerships

Working with NZ Police, Oranga Tamariki, Corrections, health, schools, specialist and community organisations, and faith/community networks.

A stronger, more connected prevention ecosystem in South Auckland.

Evidence: what can we say today?



Participation and learning are early signals.



Track knowledge, confidence, practice, collaboration and longer-term outcomes.



Do not equate workshop attendance with reduced violence.

Questions for Reflection

- **What are the challenges and aspirations you have for your ethnic communities?**
- **What could you change to better support ethnic whānau?**
- **How can prevention and safe responses work together?**
- **What would genuine community ownership look like in your region?**

Community voices leads to collective change



“Community voices must shape not only what we do, but how we decide, invest and measure change.”