AES Case Study Maori Research Graduate Programme

Kia taatou nga hau rereke. Pikiake te kaha, ko hingia te mana o nga tipuna.
Akongia mai nehera ,Ou kaiako me te ngakau nui o tetehi atu.
Mahi pukenga o nga mokopuna o te hapuu me te iwi whaanui. Ka tupu te oranga nui.

The winds of change are upon us. Rise up, be strong, gather the strength from your ancestors. Learn from the past, your teachers, and the passion of others. Use these skills to nurture our children, our communities, our people. Life is good.

Background

Governments have predominantly driven the commissioning and undertaking of formal evaluation of social services. Evaluation in New Zealand has often focused on social services where there is a disproportionate representation of Maori clients. The focus of evaluation has in the main, been performance and accountability driven. There is growing demand by government for evaluation and information about what works, for whom.

Success in operational delivery is heavily influenced by the capability of the service provider. There is an emerging recognition of the need to support the development of provider capacity in terms of training Maori with the necessary skills. Evaluation can be seen as one tool for assisting social service organisations with service improvement, by way of assessing their own progress, to instigate change, and make improvements leading to greater effectiveness.   As a result evaluation in this context is used as a management tool assisting organisational decision making for social service providers.

It is often difficult for Maori organisations to evaluate their own progress through a lack of internal skill or financial resources. To this end the cadetship project offers an alternative way to develop the evaluation capacity of Maori organisations and addresses the need to find appropriate ways to evaluate New Zealand indigenous services.

The Project

The Cadetship Project involves placing Maori Research Graduates into Maori Community settings to help develop capacity of Maori and Maori organisations in research, evaluation and self-monitoring skills. The project's purpose is to:
- Increase the number of Maori research and evaluation analysts
- Improve evaluation of initiatives "by Maori for Maori"
- Contribute to building the monitoring and evaluation capacity of Maori social service providers.

In time, the project aims to offer a number of Maori graduates (13, subject to funding) research and evaluation experience in external service delivery settings throughout New Zealand.

This initiative is innovative, it brings three distinctly different parties together working towards a common goal/collective purpose of supporting community development in research and evaluation.

Stakeholders
The first party DWI is a government agency who essentially utilise contractual agreements which require specific outcomes targeted to meet governments requirements in terms of performance expectations. DWI have provided the funding for the project.

The second party to the relationship, the host organisation, at times has had contractual commitments to government agencies in a variety of community development areas. The host organisation may be working within the values of an Iwi, Hapu or community Trust. It would be fair to say many Maori and community groups in these arrangements feel high levels of pressure to perform and a level of mistrust or defensiveness may occur towards government agencies.

The third party completes the employee role and provides supervision and training and in this case is an academic institution. The pressure in this role in supervisory capacity may be to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and maintaining academic standards and ethics.

Consequentially there are three independent organisational principles that drive each group while all are co-jointly placing resources and energy into a combined, targeted and responsive approach supporting organisational development and sustainability.

The following table reflects the shared responsibility and nature of the project.

Stakeholder	Responsibility
Host Organisation	1. Participate in the recruitment process 2. Provide day to day management of cadets work. 3. Provide a safe working environment. 4. Identify areas of growth and development needed to progress throughout the year both in terms of individual cadets and the organisational development. 5. Drive the content of evaluation identified to help build capacity. I.e strategic, infrastructure or service delivery
Supervisory body	1. Participate in the recruitment process 2. Contribute to developing the scoping project (evaluation) and Cadets work plan. 3. Assist graduate to develop and complete an evaluation project in response to organisational needs and goals. 4. Provide training and mentoring support, and contribute to the professional development of the Cadets 5. Provide H.R/employment guidelines to policy and legislative requirements, and are effectively the employer.
DWI	1. Manage the recruitment process 2. Drive document development and establishment processes.

	3. Support Supervisor through HR issues/management. 4. Co-ordinate management meetings at key milestones 5. Provide financial resources i.e. cadets salary and capped disbursement fund to host organisations. 6. Reports to government about the implementation and outcomes of the initiative
Cadet	1. Complete tasks within the requirements of organisation's protocols and job description. 2. Work professionally with internal and external people involved with the evaluation and organisation. 3. Complete and lead an evaluation project responsive to the organisations needs. 4. Act as a vehicle for information dissemination to community members and host organisation staff to the intricacies, approaches and processes of research, evaluation and self-monitoring. 5. Liase daily with the host organisations nominated buddy.

Commitment to Co-operate and collaborate

Each organisation has made through a joint Memorandum of Understanding a commitment to co-operate and collaborate. The memorandum of understanding has cemented the relationships in keeping with the kaupapa (purpose) of the project but also allows flexibility to allow individual organisations to capitalise on the resource to build internal capability and organisational capacity.

Each agency has agreed to co-operate and collaborate in:

- The development of a monitoring and evaluation program that assists the development of the host organisation.

- Sharing data, policies and other information relevant to progressing shared values and common goals.

- The planning and implementation of operational arrangements that provide for efficient, friendly and effective communications between the parties and the people they serve.

- Issues management, where issues could potentially impact on their organisations, people or clients.
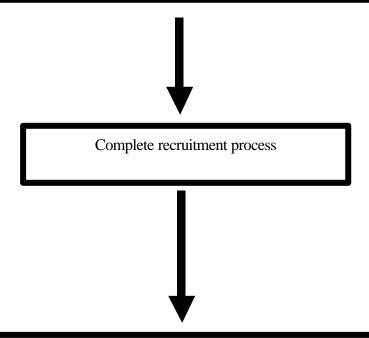
An employment contract between the cadets and IRI ensures professional work ethics are maintained.

The Establishment Process

The following process was completed to establish the project.

Develop documents ie.
- ➤ Memorandum Of Understanding
- ➤ Job Description and person specifications
- ➤ Contract with supervisory (DWI).
- ➤ Employment contract for researchers (Academic Institution).

Complete recruitment process

Project begins with:
- ➤ 1 weekTraining Evaluation in a community setting
- ➤ 8 weeks induction completed- getting to know the organisation begin scooping
- ➤ By the 16th week evaluation plan completed.
- ➤ Evaluation begins

The evaluation projects revolved around the needs of the individual organisation and could include evaluating service delivery provision, organisational and/or infrastructure development or developing strategic direction.

Confidentiality, and sharing of the learnings

While the three parties agree to cooperate and collaborate there is a crucial need to find the correct balance between protecting each organisations work and sharing the lessons learned. There appears to be a growing emphasis from community groups to take ownership of intellectual property, information and learnings. The parties agreed that for each there will be learning experiences which can be utilised for future projects but this release of information must maintain the organisational integrity of all the parties involved in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Communication

The Memorandum provided a means of clarifying the role of communication in this tripartite relationship for the purpose of effectiveness and continuance of communication. Monthly supervisory meetings and quarterly management meetings have been set at milestones throughout the year.

Evaluation of the project

The evaluation of the project will reflect the return on investment in terms of capacity building and sustainability of organisational service provision. It examines important issues such as adequate or appropriate targeting of resources, and DWI's ability to foster or contribute to the objectives. The following section is only indicative of the final evaluation.

Proposed Evaluation Objectives:

The evaluation driven by the CORE team will focus on the following objectives:
- Identify and describe the barriers to Maori organisations in developing research & evaluation capacity.
- Measure the changes in pattern of research & evaluation, and self-monitoring for participating organisations.
- Assess the appropriateness of assistance provided to organisations in meeting the needs and addressing the barriers to building capacity in research, evaluation and self-monitoring.

Measurements will reflect:

1. The organisational capacity in research, evaluation and self-monitoring before the programme.
2. The skills shared by the researcher in their role whilst completing the project.
3. The ability for the organisation to establish research, evaluation and self-monitoring projects after the year is concluded.

4. The capacity of the organisation to share the newly gained knowledge/skills with other Maori/ community organisations.

Key policy questions that this evaluation may provide input to include:

1. Has the project contributed to the desired results of building research, evaluation and self-monitoring capacity of Maori organisations?
2. What are the reasons why the desired effects have not been achieved?
3. What are the further needs Maori organisations need in the area of research, evaluation and self-monitoring that requires different or additional policy interventions?
4. Are there ways in which DWI could respond at both National and regional levels that could further assist Maori development in this area?
5. What is the appropriate balance between government and provider evaluation and self-monitoring.

Analysis:

The evaluation is formed in such a way that four key aspects of the project will determine the final project performance.

Previous application:

The first part will be a historical analysis which will identify the skills and capacity of Maori community organisations in terms of research, evaluation and self-monitoring, and the organisational approaches prior to the project.

Researchers & training programmes contribution:

The second part will determine whether the person specifications, of the positions were targeted appropriately given the needs of the organisation and relevant to the objectives of the programme. Determine whether the training and supervision provided was appropriate and responsive within the context of developing organisational capacity.

Organisational growth:

This part will aim to describe ways in which organisational capacity has been altered, and what generally organisations will need in the future to continue to improve their capability. It will also give a realistic overview of how the organisation will cope with research, evaluation and self-monitoring after only one year of assistance.

Process:

The final section will assess DWIs ability to be responsive as a government agency to assist capacity building, and will highlight difficulties in departmental processes which can be used as a guide for correction. Lastly this part will highlight any further areas in which organisations could see DWI participating in a proactive way to assist Maori capacity building.

CORE Team

The Centre for Research & Evaluation will conduct/manage the evaluation using Maori staff or outside assistance.

Independent peer review

Once completed DWI will seek external peer review of the evaluation in terms of validity and reliability.

Lessons learnt to date

The innovative aspect of this initiative brings with it complexities requiring unique ways in which to respond to problems. This section reflects the lessons learnt to date from DWI's point of view. For example:

The tri-partite arrangement increases three fold;

- Time needed for decision making
- Solving difficulties in accordance with each organisations protocols
- Need to seek agreement
- The need for good relationship management
- Essential to have constant and consistent project management
- Awareness of risks and attuned to potential risks

One example is the need to seek discussion and agreement around the content of this paper, using processes suitable to all parties at decision-making time.

The success of this project needs support at a number of levels;

- Senior government
- Senior Maori officials
- Day to day project management
- Intersectoral support

With this comes a raft of new agendas into the equation that can impact on each or any of the three participating parties.

Human resources;

- Clear recruitment processes
- Takes time for consultation and specifications agreement
- Diverse organisational needs and expectations
- Each individual graduate has different skills, needs for development
- Clear agreement on HR issue management protocols.

Each party has differing expectations of the researcher stemming from the organisational approach and understanding of the role. The challenge here is to maintain realistic expectations of the researcher and provide career growth whilst responding to the host organisational needs and reach the projects objective of growing organisational capacity.

Evaluation Supervision and expertise;

- ➢ Limited supply of evaluation supervision and expertise in NZ
- ➢ Limited supply of Maori researchers

While a generic person specification was developed each host organisation has unique needs and each researcher has expertise and skills in various areas. The challenge is to balance the support and training given to each researcher with the organisational needs. Whilst for this project the supervisory body has excellent networks around the current three participating regions, future projects in other parts of NZ may have difficulty accessing the required supervisory skills.

Documentation development;

- ➢ Finding the appropriate form that suited the programme and approach
- ➢ Iterative process
- ➢ Negotiation and consultation

A clear example of challenges with document development in terms if DWI were around the Memorandum of Understanding, one departmental view is that a formal, legal contract should be used to ensure compliance to the purpose of the project. However the project model emphasis was to build capacity in a collaborative and cooperative way.

Relationships;

- ➢ Range of different organisational needs and agendas
- ➢ Maori & Crown dynamics
- ➢ Maori and non Maori dynamics
- ➢ Academic and Community dynamics
- ➢ Government agency and community group dynamics

These challenges not only deal with the individual organisational agendas but DWI acknowledges the broader agendas for particular parties as well. For example that some providers are in a contractual relationship with DWI in other areas and at different levels, or that they may be engaged with government at the political level in context of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Crown / Academic / Community ⟶ Challenges

Conclusion

The costs for individual communities to access this kind of expertise are high. An initiative of this nature provides a solution to aid the development of capacity and capability of organisations in research, evaluation and self-monitoring skills. This project demonstrates how government departments, academic institutions and community organisations can develop innovative practices in which to work in partnerships in the future.

Full acknowledgement must go out to the many people (both directly involved and others who provide well-timed advice) who support the kaupapa of this project.

The views in this paper are solely of the Project Manager based in Centre for Operational Research and Evaluation, Department of Work and Income New Zealand.

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