Contributing to better tertiary teaching and learning outcomes – the full reports

The value of co-funded projects for budget-holders, practitioners and learners

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AKO AOTEAROA
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
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EXCELLENCE

Report 1:
Understanding project value and impact and the co-funding approach from the budget-holder perspective

Report 2:
Collation of information from Impact Evaluation Framework conversations about 22 co-funded Regional Hub Project Fund projects

Understanding project value and impact and the co-funding approach from the budget-holder perspective

Executive Summary

Ako Aotearoa funds evidence-based change projects with a high potential to benefit learners. Ako Aotearoa moved to a co-funding model in mid-2012, whereby project organisations contribute financially to the project. Now that a number of projects funded through the co-funding approach have completed or are nearing completion, Ako Aotearoa sought to understand, from the budget-holder's perspective, the value and impact of projects co-funded, and the value of the co-funding approach.

This document reports on interviews undertaken with the budget-holders, chief executive officers/Tumuaki, or delegates (budget-holders) from 32 projects co-funded by Ako Aotearoa that had completed or were near complete by October 2016. Most of the interviews were undertaken between October and December 2016.

Importance of funding

Budget-holders consider that Ako Aotearoa's project funding is fulfilling an important need. Co-funding is enabling the funding of projects of importance that may not have been funded otherwise or undertaken on a lesser scale. Budget-holders considered that their organisation's valued the projects more because they were co-funded.

In the main, projects had been prioritised for funding because they would respond to a direct organisation need or strategic priority (including improving learner outcomes), enable knowledge creation and innovation, or support staff interest and growth. Mostly, projects had delivered on these expectations.

Budget-holder oversight

Across the projects, budget-holders have had differing degrees of oversight, ranging from virtually no oversight, to strategic oversight, or close engagement with the project lead and involvement in planning the implementation of project findings.

Value of the projects

The projects are valued for creating and contributing knowledge and understanding in areas or contexts where this has been lacking. Project insights and findings are informing organisation decision-making, initiatives, and practice. Budget holders highly value that projects are providing the evidence-base to effect change, and to give impetus for change.

Projects involving multiple institutions have facilitated the accumulation of knowledge and strong practices from across different learning institutions, and have cemented relationships with other institutions.

Impact on practice, learners, and project teams

Budget-holders' understanding of actual impact for teachers and learners is mostly high level. For some budget-holders, understanding project impact has not been a focus, either because the project is considered successfully complete upon the finalisation of the project report, or because tracking impact is considered the role of the project lead, or outside the scope of the project work funded.

Changes in teaching practice have been observed in relation to improved curriculum design, the trialling and adoption of innovative and improved teaching and learner support methods, and enhanced self-assessment.

Benefits realised for learners relate to improvements made to learning environments, numeracy and literacy achievement, quality of learner work, attendance, retention and completions, and improved pathway opportunities and progression to employment and further study.

Projects have provided project team members with invaluable research and project work experience, enabling numerous learnings and insights to support future work. Examples were given of project team members growing in knowledge and capability, engaging in further work and study, and establishing important collaborative relationships.

Enablers of project success

Enablers of project success include the strength of project teams, solid project planning, the importance of the project to the co-funding institution and commitment to the project by senior leadership, as well as Ako Aotearoa's guidance and support.

For multi-partner projects, additional enablers include pre-established relationships with partner organisations and a shared commitment, clear team expectations and responsibilities, project management tools and support, and an accurately costed project.

Challenges to project success

The loss of key project team members has been a key challenge impacting significantly on project timeframes, and the implementation of project findings. Other challenges identified include projects exceeding estimated costs, and difficulties understanding and meeting Ako Aotearoa's reporting expectations (and the time required for this). These are areas Ako Aotearoa may wish to review or provide specific guidance and support.

Possible areas for engagement and support from Ako Aotearoa

Challenges identified provide the opportunity for Ako Aotearoa to consider possible areas for greater engagement with budget holders and project teams, and the provision of specific guidance and support, including in relation to project costings, and reporting, and project contingency planning and risk management (in particularly in situations where key project members leave a project). Organisations leading multi-partner projects may benefit from specific guidance and support relative to effective project management strategies and tools.

Some budget-holders suggested that Ako Aotearoa should involve budget-holders in defining project expectations, milestone reporting, and in the planning and oversight of the implementation of project findings, as well as determining impact.

The scalability of findings and good practice models, resourcing, and approaches to achieve wider implementation, were currently key challenges being grappled with by some projects. Budget-holders may benefit from support from Ako Aotearoa on these matters. Tracking ongoing project impact is also an area where there is a need for clarity of expectations and support.

Budget-holders made specific mention of the valuable guidance and support currently provided by Ako Aotearoa, and favourably commented on the level of engagement and commitment from Ako Aotearoa as a co-funding partner. This was considered quite unique.

1. Background

Ako Aotearoa works alongside tertiary education organisations to support them to explore and evaluate new approaches designed to improve tertiary teaching and learning. Ako Aotearoa funds evidence-based change projects with a high potential to benefit learners.

All Ako Aotearoa project funding operates on a co-funding basis and organisations contribute financially to the project (either internal costs and/or in dollars).

Ako Aotearoa's Regional Hub Project Fund (RHPF) supports exploratory regional-based projects that are expected to result in a measurable improvement in tertiary teaching and learning. RHPF projects will normally be funded up to $20 – 30,000, with a usual maximum of $10,000 contributed by Ako Aotearoa that is at least matched (internal costs and/or in dollars) by the co-funding organisation.

Ako Aotearoa's National Project Fund (NPF) is a strategic change fund that supports large-scale national-level evidence-based change in teaching and learning practice for the benefit of learners. Projects are usually two-three years duration.

Ako Aotearoa's project fund moved to co-funding in mid-2012 as part of a new business model that seeks to focus on projects that will effect change. This is a significant change from the past funding model whereby Ako Aotearoa used to fully fund projects. Part of the rationale for a move to the co-funding model was the premise that organisations actively investing in change projects would be more likely to act on the outcomes of results.

This document reports on interviews undertaken with the budget-holders, chief executive officers / Tumuaki, or delegates (budget-holders) from 32 projects co-funded by Ako Aotearoa that had completed or were near complete by October 2016.

Purpose of the work

Ako Aotearoa sought to understand, from the budget-holder's perspective, the value and impact of projects co-funded, and the value of the co-funding approach.

A number of co-funded Regional Hub Project Fund (RHPF) projects have now had the opportunity to complete and a number of National Project Fund (NPF) projects have recently completed or are nearing completion.

Interviews with the budget holders from each of 32 co-funded projects were undertaken to contribute to the review of the impact of co-funded National Project Fund (NPF) and Regional Hub Project Fund (RHPF) projects.

Approach

Ako Aotearoa initially invited the participation of budget-holders from each of 42 co-funded projects to participate in an in-depth interview.

NPF projects selected represented those that had completed or were expected to complete by October 2016. RHPF projects selected were complete and had had a six-month impact evaluation conversation, or an impact evaluation conversation was expected to occur by October 2016.

Budget-holders from each of 32 projects participated in either a face-to-face, Skype, or telephone interview between early November and December 2015 and between the end of September and early December 2016. The 32 projects represent 12 NPF and 20 RHPF

projects (Central Hub: 6; Northern Hub: 5; Southern Hub: 9).

Ten budget-holder interviews did not take place because:

– Four organisations did not respond to invitations to participate.
– Three organisations had experienced staff changes meaning that the budget-holder with knowledge of the project was no longer engaged.[1]
– One project was not yet at the stage where the budget-holder had been briefed on project progress.
– One budget-holder had relocated overseas.
– One budget-holder declined an interview.

The interviews were conducted using a discussion guide that was developed in conjunction with Ako Aotearoa. The discussion guide is contained in Appendix A.

The interviews were aimed at understanding why the budget-holders chose to co-fund the project, their perspective on the return on investment from co-funding it, and whether the changes and outcomes that they were expecting from the project were delivered.

Profile of projects included

Twenty of the 32 projects were co-funded by Universities (10) and ITPs (10). Three projects were co-funded by ITOs and one by the national representative of industry training organisations (the Industry Training Federation). Four projects were co-funded by PTEs. Each of the remaining four projects were co-funded by different entities.

Combined, the 32 projects represent a total investment of $3,127,372.33, being an investment of $1,221,602.33 from Ako Aotearoa; and $1,905,770 from the 32 organisations.

This represents a total investment of $2,576,343.33 for NPF projects: $1,011,786.33 from Ako Aotearoa and $1,564,557.00 from co-funded organisations.

For RHPF projects this represents a total investment of $551,029, being a contribution of $209,816 from Ako Aotearoa and $341,213 from co-funded organisations.

The projects have been completed for varying lengths of time, some for a very short period, and others for a longer time. RHFP projects have completed over different points in time from the second part of 2013 through to early 2016. Eight of the 12 NPF projects are just completing or are nearing completion. Appendix B provides specific details about the projects included in this work.

Just under half of the projects were focused on bringing together experiences and knowledge of good practice to inform internal organisational approaches and tools and to contribute to discourse and understanding for the benefit of the wider sector.

Several projects involved an action-based methodology, involving the piloting or implementation of different teaching and learning approaches aimed at contributing to knowledge development, improving learner engagement and the learning experience, as well as learner achievement outcomes.

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[1] The impact of the loss of budget holders and key project personnel, and managing that issue, is discussed subsequently in this report.

Several other projects evaluated teaching and learning models, as well as approaches that had been adopted, with a view to assessing their effectiveness and testing and confirming their validity, and using findings to strengthen what was in place.

Other projects were centred on developing a knowledge base and gathering learner voice to understand the learning experience to inform future initiatives and practice.

2. Budget-holder's shared perspectives

The importance and value of the co-funding

Commonly, budget-holders identified that the projects would not have taken place without the Ako Aotearoa funding, or that they would have occurred on a lesser scale.

"I hope that it is crystal clear to Ako Aotearoa that this funding is critical. It is very hard to get funding for this type of project."
University

"Co-funding makes it possible for smaller institutions like this to undertake a very big project. Without the funding it may not have happened at all and we would have been stuck in the old programme structure, or have undertaken change in a shallow way."
ITP

"We wouldn't have been able to validate what we are doing and develop the resulting teaching model without it."
ITP

Importance of the co-funding approach

Budget-holders (mostly from the university and ITP sectors) commented on the difficulties of accessing funding elsewhere, including to develop initiatives centred on improving outcomes for priority learners. Some budget-holders indicated that they had sought Ako Aotearoa funding because internal funding had not been available.

"The funding from Ako Aotearoa is invaluable. Projects such as these as seldom funded in the mainstream."
ITP

The co-funding has enabled project organisations, across different institution-types, to contract expertise to assist with the projects and to fill a resource or capability gap and which has added to the robustness of the projects. Usually this has been to provide qualitative and / or quantitative research expertise or research assistance.

For one small PTE, the ability to utilise the expertise of a numeracy and literacy specialist was identified as a key factor leading to the shift in learner engagement and achievement that occurred with the support of the project and which was achieved in an earlier timeframe than would otherwise have been possible.

Co-funding from Ako Aotearoa is seen to give projects credibility and this aspect is utilised by budget-holders to promote engagement in the project and project findings.

"The co-funding from Ako Aotearoa comes with a prestige value."
University

Budget-holders valued the robust practices that Ako Aotearoa has in place to quality assure projects and to lift the projects to a higher standard.

More budget-holders than not saw the benefits of a co-funded approach. The value given to a project by the project organisation, because it is co-funded, is considered a significant advantage of the co-funding model.

Several budget-holders specifically commented on the benefits of the co-funding approach in terms of facilitating a more accurate understanding of costs incurred in project work and contributing to the recognition given to a project. The nature of an 'in-kind' contribution was commonly identified as helping the project to be accepted by the institution for co-funding as it meant that organisations did not have to provide funding outright.

Table 1 outlines the benefits that interviewees identified with the co-funding approach.

Table 1: Benefits of co-funding

Co-funding has seen better accounting of projects costs	*"Through co-funding we have got better at detailing project costs."* (ITP) *"Typically we under cost such projects. But co-funding formalises and enables funding for realistic amounts of time expended, though we still do over-deliver."* (ITP) *"Co-funding is attractive because it means we can count the direct costs, including time spent."* (University)
Time and work is valued and recognised under the co-funding model	*"Co-funding makes sure that our time and work is specifically seen and valued."* (ITP) *"Because time and work is directly costed for, and we are responsible to a funding partner, it means that the project will be finished without it being stalled for whatever reason."* (ITP) *"Because the CEO signs-off you get interest, buy-in and continuity. There is commitment at a senior-level and some mitigation to avoid lost knowledge if there are changes in personnel."* (ITP) *"I like the shared funding model. I take more notice as a Dean because we have put money into it."* (University)
'In-kind' contributions support the project to be co-funded	*"It has worked well. Most contributions are in-kind. Being in-kind made it doable, we didn't actually have to front up with the money"* (ITO)

A small number of budget-holders viewed the co-funding model unfavourably. Typically, negative views of the co-funding approach arose in situations where projects had been under-costed, or unexpected issues arising during the project had driven-up time and cost substantially and usually in multi-partner projects.

"When faculty budgets are stretched and as funding gets tighter, co-funding becomes less attractive."
University

Two key concerns related to overheads (e.g. printing, internet, administrator time) and other activities (e.g. manager meetings and extra time given by project team member's) being unaccounted for, and co-funder's contributions exceeding that which had been funded. Two funders were concerned about the potential for project work to be cross-subsidised by other aspects of a university's operation.

"It is really important to have an accurate budget and to have honest conversations about the exact funding required and to identify what is required in terms of workload and commitments. You need to build in all costs, time for a research assistant, survey development, data entry, resources …Everything that will be put in to be achievable. It is important to get the academic logistics for the project right".
University

Possibly, from this feedback, Ako Aotearoa could consider its guidance to organisations to identify if additional information could be provided to budget-holders about the accounting of overheads and other costs, as well as matters to support budget-holder's estimation of funding.

It is relevant to note here the common experiences of under costing commented on by budget-holders who had led projects involving multiple organisations. The significant time expended bringing multiple parties together had often not been well accounted for. This was perpetuated in cases where expected project engagement, work, and commitments from other parties, had not occurred. Again, this may be an area where Ako Aotearoa could review its guidance to budget-holders, and specifically in relation to the costing of multi-partner projects. In addition, budget-holders may benefit from advice in relation to steps to take when unanticipated events impact project-costing.

Concerns about under-costing and accounting costs were such that budget-holders identified that those issues would be key considerations shaping budget-holders' decisions about whether to apply for co-funding again in the future.

Challenges of co-funding for small organisations

A budget-holder from a small PTE found that the compliance costs had been too high when considered in relation to the amount of funding and the resources available to a small organisation. The time required to produce the project report, to report on milestones, and to travel to present on project findings, meant time taken away from teaching and learning by key staff.

For another small PTE, the co-funding model is of concern as the absence of shared institutional resources and limited financial resource is said to make it difficult for smaller organisations

to co-fund and likely requires voluntarism (as well as strong passion and interest) from the internal project team. This budget-holder suggested that for small organisations to be better represented, alternate funding models should be considered (e.g. differentiated funding).

Possibly these factors may underlie the only small number of projects co-funded by PTEs and is a consideration for Ako Aotearoa if it intends to increase the number of PTE's engaging in co-funded projects, especially as these issues were identified as potentially impacting on future decisions to apply for co-funding. Possible strategies might include reviewing the 50/50 funding contribution expected from small organisations in favour of a lesser contribution, or reviewing the nature and extent of compliance and reporting requirements.

Reasons projects were prioritised for co-funding

Budget-holders conveyed an array of different factors influencing the decision to co-fund particular projects.

> In the main, projects were prioritised for funding either because they would respond to a direct organisation need or strategic priority (including to improve learner outcomes), or because projects were able to contribute to knowledge creation and innovation, or would support staff interest and growth.

Projects were co-funded to:
- Contribute insights to inform organisation plans, actions, and initiatives, as well as to contribute to sector knowledge. Projects were considered to be of key relevance to the co-funding organisation. Several projects were prioritised for funding because they aligned with organisation's strategic vision, focus and strategic goals and objectives. An alignment with government tertiary education priorities and / or initiatives was also observed.
- Respond to issues identified with student engagement and learning and to an identified need to improve learner achievement and outcomes.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of programmes to ensure ongoing relevance to learners and to stakeholders.
- Evaluate existing approaches, or to trial and evaluate new approaches, before embedding or potentially implementing them on a wider scale.
- Build insights and knowledge in unstudied topical areas. The funding could support innovation and the reputation of the institution.
- Contribute to wider discourse and to add insights to improve practice and the quality of teaching and learning in specific areas. The co-funding would support an understanding of good practice for the wider benefit of the sector and contribute to meet a sector need.
- Support the passion and interest of staff and where there was a credible project lead / team and a strong and relevant project proposal.
- Contribute to the experience, reputation, and development of project team members and to support the development of new and emerging researchers.
- Support required research activity. For one institution, the project would enable it to become research active and to actively demonstrate to staff the value of research in action and to practice.

Have anticipated project expectations been met?

For most budget-holders (25), projects have met expectations as they have delivered on what was expected and proposed. They have also usually been well managed, as they have not presented any significant challenges and have met key milestones.

Section 3 of this report discusses value gained from the projects.

By contrast for just two projects that did not fully meet expectations, significant challenges (e.g. loss of project partners, limited contribution from other project partners) and / or greater than anticipated project time and costs have been a predominant focus. One other project did not achieve what was expected because of the learning platform used.

In four cases, expectations had only been partially met for reasons including: challenges specific to the contribution of inter-institutional partners; because the depth of insights was not to the extent anticipated; or project findings had not provided easy or specific solutions.

A focus on the implementation of findings on a wider scale is top of mind for budget-holders of projects where expectations have both been met or partially met.

What would budget-holders do differently next time?

Areas to do differently next time related to ensuring clearer expectations and tighter project management, looking closer at the insights and outcomes the project could deliver, and ensuring a plan for wider-scale implementation of project findings.

Budget-holders identified the following areas to do differently next time:

- Budget-holders taking more ownership and having more input to better manage hurdles that arose e.g. change in project lead, varying institutional engagement.
- Being more focused and exact about the time and resources needed to be put into the project and being clear about this internally with project team members. Specifically tracking actual costs against proposed costs.
- Being clear and upfront with Ako Aotearoa about expectations relating to matters such as the reporting process and style of reporting expected and dissemination requirements.
- Ensuring project roles and responsibilities were clearly set-up at the outset and that project teams contained the right people in the right roles matched to skills.

For two budget-holders whose expectations had not been fully realised, they indicated that they would be particularly focused on the wider or deeper value of the project the next time that they co-funded a project. If doing things differently, they would have specifically:

- focused on how to get deeper evaluative insights about what was being achieved, how and why;
- taken more time to critically look at the outcomes that the project was intending to generate and the results that the project could offer.

Some budget-holders indicated that next time they would ensure that there was a plan for wide-scale implementation of project findings aimed at changing practice, including consideration of how to shift the teaching practices of those who needed the most convincing; and identifying the right timeframes for reaching senior people across the project institution.

3. Budget-holder oversight

Across the projects there has been differing degrees of oversight by the signatories to the co-funding relationship (or assignee).

Some projects have had virtually no budget-holder oversight, including in university settings where trust in the project lead and / or academic freedom has seen a hands-off approach taken. Or, the senior strategic roles of budget-holders have meant that the oversight role has been deliberately hands-off but strategically focused on securing 'buy-in' for the project work and future implementation of findings.

Other budget-holders have had continuous close engagement with the project lead and involvement in planning the implementation of project findings. Usually, these budget-holders are in senior management positions, and have had either managerial responsibility for the project-lead, or have had, or will have, a continued role in the implementation of project findings.

Typically, where oversight had occurred, this has involved the monitoring of milestone completions and engagement with the project lead to discuss or troubleshoot any issues that arose as the project was underway. Sometimes the role has included involvement in the development of the project proposal. Reporting between the project lead and budget-holder has taken the form of either occasional, periodic, or regular conversations, and / or formalised reporting.

"As the budget-holder my key role is administrative oversight of the project from the proposal stage to reporting – checking milestone reporting and trouble-shooting. I have no involvement post the report being submitted."
University

For a small number of projects, no oversight role had been assigned. In these cases, either the project had completed and was no longer a core focus, or, due to organisational changes over time, the project lead had become the sole person driving the work.

Mostly, the budget-holder or senior person with oversight has had either 1) a limited or high-level knowledge of the project's findings and value or impact, or 2) had a detailed understanding about the project and its findings, and in some cases, was focused on the continued or potential implementation of the findings to effect change. Budget-holders falling in the latter category either:

- had a key involvement in the project and are in senior positions within their organisation;
- are senior managers and are the direct managers of project leads in their day-to-day roles; or
- are in senior roles, value the contribution that the project has or can make to strategic goals and organisation initiatives, and will have a key role, or continued role in, seeking to implement findings into practice.

"I am the project lead's manager and have an interest in the research. My main focus has been to ensure that the project lead has the time to do the project. We have had regular meetings. Once a week. I've asked about barriers so we can work through anything that may arise, but mostly it's been smooth sailing. My role is also one of encouragement. Each week, we've looked at workload, what has been happening, making sure things are up-to-date - such as meeting milestones and engagement with

the other institutions, sticking to timeliness and reporting requirements, and making sure everything is proceeding and addressed."
ITP

Some university budget-holders indicated that there was virtually no oversight as there is a confidence that project leads will meet their objectives. Reference was made to academic freedom and allowing the research to happen (unlike a managed research environment).

Four budget-holders discussed their oversight having involved direct reporting on project developments and findings to the governance of the co-funding organisation, for the purposes of 'buy-in' and the ongoing or future implementation of project findings.

For one university budget-holder, the interface with governance has ensured that the university's senior leaders are aware of the importance of the work and that the project lead is fully supported at the strategic level to enable her to be effective in the work she is leading. This leadership role is considered essential to achieving strategic buy-in, direction setting, to securing resources, to normalise the project lead's presence and involvement in governance processes, and to effect change.

"I'm not involved in the wheels on the ground. I'm not close to the findings and utilisation and impact. Rather my role is direction setting, support and strategy."
University

In view of budget-holder's project oversight roles, including regular monitoring and support, and key strategic support, planning and direction-setting, Ako Aotearoa may wish to consider opportunities to involve, or communicate with the budget-holder at different points of the project. This was a suggestion made by at least three budget-holders during the budget-holder interviews, and is discussed later in this report.

Weaving our Worlds. Māori Learner Outcomes from an Equity-focused Strengths-based Programme in Health Sciences[2]

Led by Associate Professor Joanne Baxter, this near complete NPF project co-funded by the University of Otago has examined whether an enhanced programme of support has contributed to improved outcomes for Māori Health Sciences first year students.

The project has also examined whether the programme has enabled improved outcomes for Māori students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and / or lower decile schools. The enhanced programme of support is based on strengths-based, non-deficit and culturally responsive kaupapa.

From a senior organisational perspective, this project, alongside several other strengths and evidenced-based programmes undertaken by Associate Professor Joanne Baxter and her team (e.g. bridging programme, secondary school outreach, structured support programmes) are considered highly successful in terms of their contribution to the changing nature of the health workforce and the graduation of 45 Māori medical students from the University of Otago in 2016.

Professor Crampton, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Health Sciences and Dean of the Medical School at the University of Otago, sees his role as one of leadership and overall responsibility to work with and support Associate Professor Baxter and her team in deconstructing and undoing deficit narratives and structures about Māori at an institutional and societal level and as essential to Māori learner success.

[2] Information from an interview with Professor Peter Crampton, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Health Sciences and Dean of the Medical School, University of Otago

4. Project value and observed impact

Value added

Preface

Budget-holders reported varying knowledge of the value-add of their projects. Most had a broad understanding about the project findings and their value overall. Approximately one third of budget-holders were unaware of project findings and how these had been used and had a limited understanding of the value that the projects had contributed.

This different level of understanding reflects the varied focus of budget-holders oversight roles (as discussed in the above section), as well as the fact that several projects were yet to complete.

Value observed

A significant aspect of added value commonly commented on by budget-holders is projects' creation and contribution of knowledge and understanding in areas or specific contexts where this has been lacking. Therefore, project insights and findings have informed internal decisions, initiatives, and practice.

Taken together, the collective insights from different projects also offer important learnings for the sector. For example, four projects[3] collectively signal the importance and need for employer's closer engagement and support of learners in industry training.

'Non-completers in industry training'. An Exploration of Apprentices' Views on the Barriers to Success in Industry Training

This recently completed NPF project led by Adrienne Dawson and co-funded by the Industry Training Federation (ITF) and seven ITOs, involved extensive learner engagement (interviews with 114 trainees across all 11 ITOs who had not completed training) to contribute knowledge to the industry training sector about why learners did not complete their training.[4]

The capturing of the issues and training needs that learners experience across different areas of training, enabled the development of a framework to guide an understanding of learners' support and training needs.

Key issues identified included less than optimal training conditions in the workplace, lots of 'bookwork', and expectations of self-directed learning. The need for assessment approaches that are more authentic and manageable was identified, as was the optimum use of trainee's time.

The project involved all industry training organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand

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[3] *'Contextualising Vocational Programmes to Match Institutional and Industry Settings'* led by Sean Squires of Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology; *'Review of Good Assessment Practice in Industry Training',* led by Natalie Bourke of ServiceIQ; *Non-Completers in Industry Training'. An Exploration of Apprentices Views on the Barriers to Success in Industry Training'* led by Adrienne Dawson of the Industry Training Federation; and *'He Toki ki te Mahi: Implementing and Evaluating Good Practice for Māori Trade Training'* led by Dr Catherine Savage of Te Tapuae o Rehua.

[4] The project report has been prepared for the ITF by Anne Alkema, Heather McDonald, and Nicky Murray of Heathrose Research Limited.

and will support the sector-wide use of the project findings. The ITF intends bringing together all ITOs to reflect on the findings and consider what ITOs can do individually and collectively to respond to the issues identified. It is anticipated that findings will be of value in engaging and raising awareness with employers.

The commonality of findings from this project and the Service IQ project 'Review of Good Assessment Practice in Industry Training' has been identified, as has the combined future use of the findings from both projects.

Several projects[5] have surfaced an evidence-base of what works for Māori learners and for Pacific learners for the benefit of the sector. These projects are grounded in strengths-based, solutions focused approaches, which contribute to prevail over a deficit discourse.

> *"The system has been passively obstructive for the recruitment of Māori in the last decade. The statistics are extraordinary and we are changing this. We want to change the narrative. The projects undertaken by Joanne Baxter and her team have been extraordinarily successful in changing the face of the workforce over the last five years. Soon it will be normal for anybody engaging in the New Zealand health system to see a Māori doctor. In 2016, 45 Māori medical students will graduate from the University of Otago…"*
> **Professor Peter Crampton, University of Otago**

Core principles and / or frameworks have been developed and used to strengthen and make immediate improvements to programme practices and systems, and which are considered to have utility to guide good practice for the benefit of the tertiary education and industry sectors.

Several budget-holders talked about the importance of now having an evidence-base to validate or give credibility to proposed or actual practices.

> *"We now have the evidence and credibility to promote this across the industry training sector."*
> **ITO**

> *"If grounded in research it is easier to influence staff."*
> **University**

Furthermore, the projects have enabled:

- the trialling and evaluation of innovative teaching and learning approaches leading to enhanced practices;
- evidence to inform organisational strategising, decision-making and prioritisation; and
- evaluative insights to validate or strengthen existing or trialled programmes, initiatives, and teaching and learning approaches. Having these insights has supported the continuance of initiatives or their potential for scalability.

Appendix C shows the diverse range of co-funded NPF and RHPF projects completed or near complete by the end of October 2016 in relation to key themes and the important breadth of their potential and actual contribution to knowledge and practice.

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[5] *'Weaving our Worlds. Māori Learner Outcomes from an Equity-focused Strengths-based Programme in Health Sciences'* led by Associate Professor Joanne Baxter of the University of Otago; *'Change Strategies to Enhance Pasifika Success at Canterbury Tertiary Institutions'* led by Pauline Luafatu-Simpson of the University of Canterbury; *'Articulating and Implementing a 'Pedagogy of Success for Pacific Students in Tertiary Education'* led by Dr Maureen Southwick of Whitirea Community Polytechnic; *'Pasifika Success in Workplace Settings'* led by Peter Scanlan of Service IQ; and 'He Toki ki te Mahi: Implementing and Evaluating Good Practice for Māori Trade Training' led by Dr Catherine Savage of Te Tapuae o Rehua.

He Toki ki te Mahi – Implementing and Evaluating Good Practice for Māori Trade Training[6]

Te Ako Tiketike – Māori as Successful Workplace Learners[7] - is primarily an evidence based theory model. This soon to be complete NPF project co-funded by Te Tapuae o Rehua and led by Dr Catherine Savage, articulated what the implementation of this model would mean in practice and what mechanisms, systems, and structures are required to implement the model.

The project has supported the development of a robust practice model through ongoing experimenting, testing and evaluation. This is valued for resulting in a solutions-focused model believed to be scalable and applicable as a comprehensive organisational framework across industry.

The core vision of the project is to increase culturally responsive practice within Aotearoa New Zealand industry organisations to increase Māori learners' success and aspirations for leadership. This includes addressing a deficit focus and instilling an organisational culture of reflection, mentoring, learning and manākitanga, and a common and prevailing dialogue about Māori success and empowerment.

Ako Whakaruruhau embeds a care ethos and focuses on the quality of teaching, learning, mentoring, and support trainees and apprentices receive throughout their learning journey. It includes a focus on quality mentorship and which is identified as having a significant impact on trainee success.

Creating organisational change

Te Tapuae o Te Rehua is three years into a partnership with Hawkins Construction. Systems support and guidelines have been provided for Hawkins Construction organisation, its employers, and sub-contractors, to work successfully with Māori trainees and apprentices.

From the perspective of Hawkins Construction, the project has given the opportunity to explore how to shift a Pakeha lens on Māori trainee engagement and to instil cultural responsibility. This has required a shift in mindsets and language moving from deficit conversations to harnessing potential. Thus change is incremental and essentially supported by mentors who work with both employers and trainees and apprentices.

A key example of organisation culture-change is reflected in the Christchurch Townhall project and which has incorporated Māori connections to land and space. Construction of the site has involved an understanding of the history of the site and aspects of cultural importance. This knowledge has been transmitted to those who work on, and visit the site.

Reach and benefit

Fifty-three (53) apprentices have benefitted from the mentoring model (Ako Whakaruruhau) directly through the He Toki Ki Te Mahi Apprenticeship Training Trust.

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[6] Information taken from interviews with Dr Eruera Tarena, Kaihautu / Chief Executive, Te Tapuae o Rehua, and Nancy McConnell, Hawkins Construction, November 2016.

[7] Kerehoma, C., Connor, J., Garrow, L., & Young, C. (2013). *Māori learners in workplace settings.* Ako Aotearoa: Wellington. The model "Te Ako Tiketike – Maori as Successful Workplace Learners, was developed as part of that earlier Ako Aotearoa NPF funded project.

From the Hawkins Group, in Christchurch, six apprentices working across different sites are each supported through the whakaruruhau mentoring programme. In Auckland, by the end of 2016, 12 mentors had been trained by the project lead, and work is currently in development to provide placement and mentoring support (Ako Whakaruruhau) across the company's supply chain. In the Wellington region, eight mentors were trained at the end of 2016.

Added value for inter-institutional projects

Projects involving multiple institutions are identified as contributing value, including the sharing of knowledge from the experiences of different learning institutions, and cementing relationships with other institutions, which have been of significant benefit to subsequent work, and the development of communities of practice.[8]

"The biggest difference that the project has made is that it has cemented relationships with other ITPs. Increased collaboration nationally has led to a co-development team with an increased knowledge of the industry. Basically the project recommendations have been implemented in the new qualification. Overtime we expect that there will be a consistent and higher quality graduate. This will improve the standard of the automotive engineer in all areas within our consortium."
Malcolm Hardy, Head of School, School of Applied Technology,
Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology

In turn, multiple partners working to a common vision, and the identification of common principles and approaches important to strong practice, can contribute to consistent delivery and uniformity across the sector.

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[8] For example, the projects *Contextualising Vocational Programmes to Match Institutional and Industry Settings'* led by Sean Squires of Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology; *Change Strategies to Enhance Pasifika Student Success at Canterbury Tertiary Institutions'* led by Pauline Luafutu-Simpson of the University of Canterbury; and *Review of Good Assessment Practice in Industry Training',* led by Natalie Bourke of ServiceIQ.

Contextualising Vocational Programmes to Match Institutional and Industry Settings[9]

This northern hub project, led by Sean Squires and co-funded by Bay of Plenty Polytechnic (BOPP)[10], completed in June 2016. The project has contributed towards cementing inter-institutional relationships and the content of new automotive qualifications under development in Aotearoa New Zealand. Over time, it is envisaged that the project recommendations, as embedded in new qualifications, will contribute to the quality and consistency of educational delivery at a national level.

This project draws on the experiences of four Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs): BOPP, as the originator of the Level 3 Automotive programme package, and Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT), Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) and Christchurch Polytechnic and Institute of Technology[11]/Aoraki Polytechnic (CPIT Aoraki), as purchasers of the Level 3 training package.

BOPP, the host organisation, sought to understand the across-institution delivery of what it considered to be a very successful Level 3 Automotive programme and which was developed by specialist learning resource writers alongside the teaching team.

The project explored how learners and tutors responded to the programme material. It investigated preferences and experiences around training delivery options, including classroom, online, workplace, and off-job learning environments. Barriers and solutions were investigated distinctive to each location, to identify general principles for transferable learning across the wider trade education sector.

Organisational perspective on project impact and value

Existing relationships with ITPs have been strengthened and expanded because of the collaborative focus of the project. Subsequently, eight ITPs have actively engaged in the project and its recommendations.

The project recommendations have contributed in the review of automotive qualifications as part of the Targeted Review of Qualifications (TRoQ). It is anticipated that as the automotive qualifications develop, the project recommendations will inform the training delivery of 14 ITPs involved in the TRoQ.

It is considered that the relationships that have been cemented from this work and the collaborative knowledge and approaches that are informing the new automotive qualifications, will enable consistent delivery nationally that embraces the principles of effective practice confirmed by the project.

The project team believes that the project findings and key principles validated in the automotive area are transferable and suitable for other apprenticeship systems.

The project has resulted in a good practice guide to support other trade education providers to create optimum learning environments for their learners. The guide and project report can be accessed by the following link: https://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/ako-hub/ako-aotearoa-northern-hub/projects/contextualising-vocational-programmes

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[9] Information from budget-holder interview with Malcolm Hardy, Head of School, School of Applied Technology, Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology.
[10] Now named Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology.
[11] Now Ara Institute of Canterbury.

Of note, are the many benefits that projects are contributing to the co-funding institutions themselves. Budget-holders identified that the projects have contributed to:

- tangible information and tactical tools in supporting organisation decision-making, strategic objectives, and organisational self-assessment;
- the evidential validation and strengthening of initiatives and teaching and learning approaches;
- improved programme delivery;
- the enhanced reputation of the co-funding institution; and
- the meeting of research obligations.

For one PTE, a need to improve learner achievement outcomes was realised over a quicker period because of the project, and its contribution to being able to appoint a subject specialist and make curriculum changes occurred earlier than had been anticipated.

Project impact

Preface

More commonly, budget-holders' understanding of actual impact for teachers and learners has been at a high level, and in the context of changes made by project team members and within a small number of specific programmes.

For some budget-holders, understanding project impact has not been a focus, either because the project is considered successfully complete upon the finalisation of the project report, or because tracking impact is considered the role of the project lead or outside the scope of the project work funded.

Understanding impact was outside the scope of projects aimed at knowledge creation for future use and / or the benefit of the wider sector.

Views expressed included that:

- understanding impact is the role of the project lead and not the budget-holder;
- impact has not been not systematically tracked;
- implementation to achieve change is not built-in to the funding. Taking the findings further to effect change requires an additional funding commitment;
- measuring impact requires something further:
  - it would be the next project - a follow-up or monitoring study;
  - it should be Ako Aotearoa who measures wider impact / impact externally;
  - could there be a joint way between Ako Aotearoa and budget-holders to gather evidence of impact?

"This research has brought together a sector view using case studies. Ako Aotearoa should take the results and consider how the findings can be tested or applied on a more substantive scale in different contexts. Ako Aotearoa needs to decide if it is doing substantive research or small case studies."
ITP

Also, budget-holders recognised that the level and type of impact that could be expected would vary depending on the specific project. Some projects have not led to changes in practice, but rather focused on knowledge creation - value would come from the publication of findings. From that perspective, the project is about developing knowledge rather than focusing on how the knowledge is subsequently used.

Table 2 provides a summary of the different focus of the projects co-funded, and in general, the related level of understanding about the use of project findings and project impact identified by budget-holders.

Table 2: Awareness of impact related to project focus

Project type	Implementation and use of findings	Information on impact
Action-based project involving the trailing of new approaches and / or review of changed curricula	Findings have been used during the project or have since been used internally on a wider scale	Learner impact mostly tracked during or after the project and evaluation built in as the project has unfolded
Evaluation of existing and new approaches	Project findings have been used to improve processes, to validate practices and / or to develop teaching and learning models	Some projects have information on learner impact. Others have not or only on a short-term basis
Projects focused on the identification of good practice	Mostly the dissemination and use of findings are in planning or have occurred in different ways	Mostly too soon to tell or impact not known
Documented effective strategies /guidelines	Dissemination of findings on an ad hoc basis	Limited information on impact
Added to the knowledge base	Ad hoc dissemination	No information on impact

Budget-holders considered that there needed to be clear expectations around what the completion of the project could realistically result in, and how far the expectation of evidence of change should go.

> *"It is useful for Ako Aotearoa to reflect on what it wants and to signal this, taking into account the type of project and objective measures."*
> **University**

Impact on teaching practice

> *"One year ago lecturers did not conceive that they could teach this way" [using mobile devices]."*
> **University**

Changes in teaching practice observed, or the adoption of new practices that had occurred because of co-funded projects included:

- changes in curriculum design to embed project-based learning;
- approaches taken to better integrate theory and practice and to enhance the application of knowledge;
- a number of teachers from across institutions adopting and utilising mobile devices in their teaching;
- enhanced self-assessment – including the establishment of a rich baseline of data which organisations intend to use in the future as a key self-assessment tool.

Learners and mobile devices. A framework for enhanced learning and institutional change[12]

This completed NPF project co-led by Dr Stanley Frielick and Dr Thom Cochrane and co-funded by the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) is an example of how a project can utilise new technologies and social media to disseminate progress and results in 'real time'.

The project commenced at the beginning of 2014 and examined the effective use of mobile devices in tertiary education and implications for strategic and organisational change. It was guided by a theoretical framework based on key success factors for pedagogical transformation and the empowerment of learners through mobile learning.

Case studies were undertaken across the six tertiary institutions involved in the project and across different disciplines. The project follows the experiences of 39 academic staff (local practitioners) that were provided with mobile devices and then supported in their professional learning through a community of practice approach, with the assistance of local coordinators and the central AUT project team.

This approach generated a collaborative network of practice that enabled the sharing of new knowledge amongst an online social community and social network. The collaborative network was curated by the project hashtag #NPF14LMD. This online access opened the way to wide dissemination of the project process and real time findings.

Each practitioner provided a reflective case study of their professionals learning journey, with narratives in a range of formats of their individual pedagogical transformation and change. Six hundred and sixty-three (663) project-related conversations were recorded over the two-year duration of the project. The hashtag remains active and enables the ongoing sharing of views and experiences.

An important output of the project is the He Whare Ako, He Whare Hangarau app and associated literature review. This is a bi-cultural framework for m-learning that shows the relationships between kaupapa Māori and contemporary Western concepts of digital learning.

Along with the ongoing social media network that provided a real time window into the project progress, the final report is now published as an online resource using the innovative Scalar authoring and digital publishing platform. This report is now publicly available at http://mobilelearners.nz/learners-and-mobile-devices/index

Making a difference for learners

Budget-holders of some of the projects identified actual or presumed benefits for learners because of the projects. The following are identified benefits realised for learners:

- Learners experiencing better learning environments and learning opportunities.
- Processes established to facilitate peer support, mentoring, and to recognise and celebrate the success of talented students.

[12] Information from interview with Dr Stanley Frielick, previously Director of Learning and Teaching, Auckland University of Technology, December 2016

- Positive changes to peer learning relationships.
- Data showing improvements in literacy and numeracy for learners previously disengaged from education.
- Better attendance, retention, and engagement in learning.
- Improved assessment completion rates for Pacific learners.
- Better quality of learner work.
- Data showing improved achievement results.
- Increasing graduation rates for Māori medical students.
- Improved pathway opportunities and progression to employment and further study.

Pacific Success in Workplace Settings[13]

This recently completed NPF project led by Peter Scanlan and co-funded by the ServiceIQ has contributed sector knowledge by identifying key attributes for success for Pacific people in the specific context of industry training in the workplace.

It is intended that the project will help ITOs and others involved with workplace-based learning to formulate effective intervention programmes for Pacific learners.

The project is a partnership between four ITOs: ServiceIQ, The Skills Organisation, Careerforce, and Competenz, and Pasifika Perspectives Limited. The aim of the project was to identify critical success factors and interventions specific to the training models of ITOs and to invest in a toolkit for ITOs to apply the results.

ServiceIQ saw the relevance of this project for all ITOs and that it provided the opportunity to make sure that there was absolute clarity in understanding the specific needs of Pacific learners as distinct from Māori, and to capture specifically what contributes to Pacific people's success. This knowledge came from learner voice.

The project documented the experiences of approximately 30 Pacific trainees, their fanau, and employers, and other key stakeholders. It facilitated the development and piloting of two initiatives (supported study groups and peer mentoring) to better understand links between interventions and retention, completions, and higher achievement specifically in workplace settings.

Improving the learner experience

An example of the value of one of the initiatives trialled saw a dramatic increase in Pacific learners' assessment completions (as relayed by ServiceIQ). Identifying an issue with course completions, a fono was facilitated with Pacific trainees to understand underlying reasons. Issues with the complexities of assessment were identified and discussions centred on supporting learners to interpret and meet assessment criteria. Assessments were completed in group settings. Anxiety around assessment was removed.

This approach centred on how the system needed to improve and better work for Pacific learners, rather than expecting positive results to flow from conformity to set approaches.

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[13] Information from budget-holder interview with Glen Keith, Manager, Strategic Engagement, Service IQ, December 2016.

The value of being involved in the project and the positive impact for project team members was commonly understood by budget-holders. Many of the budget-holders considered that the co-funded projects supported by Ako Aotearoa provided project team members with invaluable research and project work experience, enabling numerous learnings and insights to support future work. As a result of the projects, project members had grown in knowledge and capability, engaged in further work and study, and established important collaborative relationships.

"It can help team members to get on the ladder."
ITP

"It's good to experience the co-funded project process as a new researcher. It helps to prepare to move to the major funding league."
ITP

"Ako Aotearoa's co-funding helps to grow research careers."
University

Several budget-holders saw Ako Aotearoa co-funded projects as opportunities for new or emerging researchers to gain research and project experience to grow in this work. Indeed, this opportunity was a contributing factor underlying some decisions to co-fund.

Positive developments identified for team members from different projects included:

- established relationships with collaborative partners;
- growth in capability and knowledge and the development or enhancement of research and project-related skills;
- seeding careers in research. The project experience has facilitated a passion and interest in the linkages between teaching and learning and research and which has led to team member's subsequent involvement in other projects;
- the experience having led project team members to engage in post-graduate study;
- enhanced reputations.
- The project *'Learners and Mobile Devices: A Framework for Enhanced Learning and Institutional Change,* co-funded by the Auckland University of Technology and co-led by Dr Stanley Frielick and Dr Thom Cochrane, is an example of how a project can utilise new technologies and social media to disseminate progress and results in 'real time'.

Factors influencing project impacts and success

Enablers to project success

Budget-holders identified several enablers to project success, including the strength of the project team make-up, and project planning, organisation and management, the relevance and importance of the project to the co-funding institution, and the commitment to the project by senior leadership, and Ako Aotearoa's guidance and support.

Identified enablers influencing project success are as follows:

- Motivated, passionate project team members.
- A collaborative team that worked well together, who shared project responsibilities and workload, and kept one another on track.
- Good project planning and a solid methodology to ensure an effective project team and that the right questions were asked.
- Effective project organisation and management, especially important for inter-institution projects, and including mechanisms to keep project partners engaged and connected and in regular discussion. For one university, an intranet type approach, using an established project tool, was considered to be a key success factor in keeping connected institutions that were geographically and conceptually different.
- The relevance of the project topic to the funding organisation, usually relating to an integral part of the curriculum and programme delivery.
- The projects are topical and innovative and contribute to the scholarship of teaching.
- The timing of the project coinciding with current areas of related focus in the tertiary education sector contributed to the importance given to the project and it gaining traction internally and with other partners (e.g. Targeted Review of Qualifications, the government's focus on priority learners, internal priorities).
- Use of project findings has been assisted by the projects' contribution to an evidence-base. Further, the projects contribute to tangible tools that can be progressed (not just abstract ideas).
- Commitment and involvement of senior people within the project organisation who see the importance of the project and are able to influence and ensure that project findings are implemented.
- Ako Aotearoa's communication, flexibility, openness, and genuine desire to make a difference.

"Without exception the people at Ako Aotearoa are committed and so wonderful to work with including when things go to custard. Ako Aotearoa is willing and patient. You can be honest with them. This means you can deliver a much better product rather than going into defensive mode. Relationships are of upmost important in project work."
ITP

Enablers to success in the case of multi-partner projects

Budget-holders from multi-partner projects identified additional enablers to project success that related to the working relationship with other institutions. Enablers included pre-established relationships, shared commitment, clear team expectations and responsibilities, project management tools and support, and an accurately costed project.

Enablers to successful multi-partner collaborations were identified as follows:

• Pre-established external relationships with partner organisations and which provided a foundation from which to work together.
• The project being an extension of work already with some traction, and buy-in from partners, and there being a national driver supporting the need for the project.
• Clear parameters and expectations about roles and responsibilities.
• An assigned person at each institution to keep commitments on track.
• A project tool or process to keep institutions regularly engaged.
• Projects driven by a common passion and shared focus of working together to do better for learners and to provide a better learning experience.
• Projects accurately costed and time carefully managed so that there was no over-delivery.

Challenges to project success

Key challenges encountered in multi-partner projects related to commitment and availability of partner institutions, and the loss of project members. The impact of these challenges included significant delays with projects progressing / completing and project costs exceeding estimations.

Challenges encountered in multi-partner projects were such that a small number of projects have been significantly delayed in their progression and the time and costs incurred exceeded original costings. It has been challenging to address issues that have arisen and a number of learnings have been taken from these challenges, especially for project teams new to inter-institutional work. Challenges identified are:

• a lesser commitment and level of input from other institutions if not assigned as the lead institution;
• securing timeframes for all parties to meet, engage, provide feedback, and meet milestones at different stages of the project;
• the loss of project partners and team members due to organisational change and changes in roles.

For other projects, key challenges to project success related to a loss of project team members, over-delivering, resistance to change, and understanding and meeting Ako Aotearoa's reporting expectations (and the time required).

The following are the key challenges to project success identified.

- For two projects, losing senior managers who had key roles driving the projects. This meant that a key oversight role was lost, and the ongoing implementation of project findings lost momentum in the absence of a senior leader focused on using project findings to drive change within the organisation. Similarly, the loss of key project team members due to new or disestablished roles has impacted on the use of the findings to effect change.
- Resistance of staff to new approaches and to be involved in the project.
- Keeping the project contained and ensuring project team members do not over-deliver.
- Uncertainty about the style of report expected by Ako Aotearoa, the time required to produce the report, and the time and effort needed to complete peer review and produce a final report satisfactory to Ako Aotearoa.
- Gaps in the time between completing the research and report publication and loss of momentum.
- Difficulties implementing or encouraging changed practice on an ongoing or wider scale, without additional resource or mechanisms available to do so beyond the parameters of the project (a matter discussed further in the section below).
- For two small PTE's, the paperwork and accountability requirements (presenting, reporting and report dissemination) has been a challenge, especially when this requires key staff to take time away from their core roles.

Addressing challenges: what could Ako Aotearoa do differently?

In the main, budget-holders valued the support from Ako Aotearoa and favourably commented on the level of engagement and commitment from Ako Aotearoa as a co-funding partner and how the projects have benefited from Ako Aotearoa's staff experience and expertise. Mention was made of the advice and input given to the projects to contribute to a better product and the uniqueness of this contribution from Ako Aotearoa as compared with other funders.

> The main feedback about suggestions to do things differently from some budget-holders related to Ako Aotearoa involving budget-holders more in the project process, including in pre-project discussions to determine expectations about key project matters, and to involve budget-holders in milestone reporting and impact evaluation discussions.

Suggestions in response to the challenges identified earlier are set out below.

- Developing a risk profile and expectations of risk mitigation to inform proposal determination, including an assessment of whether project teams have previously undertaken collaborative project work and have appropriate risk mitigation strategies identified, and appropriate risk mitigation strategies if project members leave.
- Ensuring clear expectations about the style of reporting expected, perhaps providing a reporting template or exemplars, and exemplars to convey expectations for reporting project milestones.
- The challenge identified with project reporting may also be an opportunity to consider different reporting approaches and formats that would more easily produced, but still meet the need for the publication and dissemination of findings.
- Proactively offering specific or additional one-to-one support for first time project leads, possibly in the form of ongoing feedback and dialogue.

- To mitigate issues with project team changes, one budget-holder thought that in such situations both Ako Aotearoa and the budget-holder should together evaluate whether the project should continue, so that Ako Aotearoa, as the more objective partner, could assist with risk identification and management.

"If Ako Aotearoa continues to co-fund it needs to consider how to manage organisational change impacting on projects over time."
ITP

Another strategy could be pre-agreed risk management/contingency plans between Ako Aotearoa and the budget-holder that proposes the action that will be taken in the event a project lead becomes unable to continue a project. Also to be considered are the risk of a budget-holder having to leave a project, and how the loss of oversight or reappointment of a new budget-holder will be managed.

Addressing challenges in multi-partner projects

For multi-partner projects, budget-holders themselves identified that for future inter-institutional projects they would ensure clear agreement with the partners about their roles and commitments and determine fixed feedback loops based on pre-determined dates set at the beginning of the project (given challenges faced of having to find times suitable for multiple partners).

"Multi partner work requires lots of time and management. This needs to be specifically costed and defined from the outset including a communication plan, timetabling availability, weighing in different levels of experience."
ITP

One budget-holder suggested that it would be helpful for Ako Aotearoa to produce a guidance document to support teams new to multi-partner projects to manage arrangements and to mitigate challenges and risk.

"Last year I listened to a talk about the challenges of collaboration in research and the importance of setting up expectations about how to collaborate at the beginning. I wish I had heard that before embarking on the project. If someone had said 'collaborative projects are hard and these are the things that you need in a collaborative project and to determine at the outset'… Things like do we have the right mix? Who has sign-off? What will we report on and how?
Budget-holder

Pre or early project guidance and support could extend to information about realistic project pricing proposals, factoring in contingencies, project management and project management tools.

Another budget-holder considered that there should be 'joint-owner' rather than 'co-funder' engagement from across each partner institution to recognise the roles and responsibilities of the different organisations involved.

Another idea for consideration might be for Ako Aotearoa to consider linking budget holders and / or project leads to a project mentor or project lead of a previous successful Ako Aotearoa multi-partner project, who could share knowledge of experience, including in the project development phase, and could provide support for project contingency planning and how issues could be addressed as they arose. Support with project reporting could also be available.

One budget-holder of a multi-partner project considered that it would be valuable for Ako Aotearoa and all project partners to come together soon after the report's publication to openly discuss views on how the project went, learnings for the future, and 'other' matters (ITO).

Challenges furthering the implementation of project findings and understanding impact

The scalability of findings and good practice models, resourcing, and approaches to achieve wider implementation, were currently key challenges being grappled with by some budget-holders (particularly in the industry training area) or project leads (in the absence of there being anyone else in the organisation with oversight for a project).

Challenges being grappled with include, for example, the question of how one organisation can actively engage multiple industry training organisations and / or industry in the uptake of models that can shift workplace culture, training, and support, to achieve better results for apprentices and industry trainees. And the question of how a project-lead can drive change and resource the tracking of project impact when there is no longer a person in the project organisation with oversight or with the authority to drive the implementation of project findings.

In considering such challenges, a budget-holder from a multi-partner project talked about the significant value that could be gained from bringing together key people for whom the findings were relevant from across the sector to engage in the findings, and to workshop where and how they may take the findings further to influence change.

One budget-holder raised the question of where the responsibility and funding for disseminating and getting traction on the project findings stopped, and considered that this was a key question for discussion with Ako Aotearoa.

From that budget-holder's perspective, it would be desirous for there to be an action plan to be agreed between Ako Aotearoa and the project partners, and which would detail how the findings would be utilised and embedded, and how impact would be evaluated, with funding to do this built-in. The final project milestone could be a post-evaluation report on the difference that the project had made and the impact and implementation of findings.

"It needs to be planned and driven by senior leadership. Otherwise the report is the end deliverable and leadership stops at the report. Then it's just 'hope' that the sector takes the findings on."
ITO

Some budget-holders considered that it would be useful for Ako Aotearoa to involve them in conversations about expectations relating to impact and the use and dissemination of project findings at different points of the project (e.g. as part of the proposal development process, as the project is progressing, and at the point of the impact evaluation conversations facilitated by Ako Aotearoa).

"It would be of value to have these conversations with Ako Aotearoa upfront. What are the expectations beyond the project report? Ideas for dissemination. I can see that the findings would be relevant at a much wider level. Potentially there is huge opportunity to take it to other domains – but how would this be funded?"
Budget-holder

Taking this point further, budget-holders considered that the involvement of the budget-holder in the ongoing monitoring of impact and outcomes was needed to secure that focus. Despite being signatories and committing to contractual project requirements, reporting to milestones and meeting project commitments was often left to the project lead to ensure.

One university budget-holder considered that to be effective, a small number of key objectives and project milestones should be jointly agreed and monitored on a minimum six-monthly basis. It was suggested that milestone reporting should take the form of active dialogue and conversations involving the budget-holder (rather than just written reporting).

5. Reflections on the co-funding investment

Has there been a return on investment?

There were mixed views on whether the projects were a return on investment, and commonly budget-holders were unsure because projects were not yet complete or the implementation of findings and impact on learning and teaching was not yet known.

> *"There will only be a return on investment if the loop is closed and projects findings are implemented and used."*
> **ITO**

Budget-holders were more likely to consider the project in terms of the different aspects of value contributed (e.g. knowledge creation, improved teaching practice), and which were not often considered in terms of financial gain.

Do the projects reflect value for money?

Mostly, budget-holders considered that the projects had been value for money, or they were not yet sure, given the stage at which their projects were at.

Key factors shaping the predominant view that projects had been value for money, were that the different projects:

- had contributed to the development of project members' capability;
- were unlikely to have taken place if not co-funded by Ako Aotearoa; and
- had contributed knowledge, validation of practice, and to the cementing of collaborative relationships.

Budget-holders commented as follows on the question about value for money:

> *"It was definitely value for money due to the experience for the team and the ability to show others the value of research and for relationship building with tutors within the institution."*
> **ITP**

> *"Yes it was good for the growth of the project lead, good for the team and their introduction to research. It validated what we are doing. Got people talking and agreeing at a national-level."*
> **ITP**

> *"It would not have been possible without the funding."*
> **University**

> *"Yes due to the large range of outputs and widespread engagement achieved."*
> **ITP**

> *"At this point it is hard to say. It's more about the value of doing the work itself for the project team who felt great doing it, rather than an actual return on investment."*
> **University**

6. Wider comments about Ako Aotearoa's project funding

Some budget-holders gave wider-level suggestions for Ako Aotearoa's consideration in relation to understanding the value and impact of co-funded projects, recognising the collective wealth of knowledge being generated by the co-funded projects over time, and how this knowledge might be further used for the wider benefit of the sector.

Driving larger scale research

A small number of budget-holders commented on their desire for Ako Aotearoa to utilise the knowledge from small scale projects to build larger research projects and to test and apply findings on a larger scale and in multiple contexts.

> *"I would like Ako Aotearoa to focus on innovative, larger scale research. To stop dabbling around the edges. To take the results from these studies and to apply the findings in several ways. To track the wider impact. Lead large scale research. Longitudinal studies."*
> **ITP**

Impact symposia

One budget-holder suggested an 'impact symposia' to bring together project teams from across co-funded projects as a forum to share and discuss the different impacts of projects evidenced and observed. It was considered that such an approach, involving sharing and reflection, and presenting to one's peers, could well facilitate the contribution of a wealth of information on project impact. Different methods and approaches for evidencing impact could support projects teams experiencing challenges in this area.

Focus on the under-served and key areas of challenge in tertiary education

> *"Innovation starts at the margins. It is important for education to protect those at the margins."*
> **ITP**

A small number of budget-holders commented on the importance that Ako Aotearoa prioritised, or ensured the funding of, projects that were considered to contribute to better educational experiences and outcomes for priority learners and key areas presenting challenges in tertiary education. It was suggested that Ako Aotearoa develop an etiquette of approach to inform project teams working in these areas (such as with Pacific learners).

> *"To what extent does Ako Aotearoa prioritise the difficult issues of learner success in tertiary education – where is the most struggle in the system that needs to be addressed?"*
> **University**

Formal recognition and mentoring

Recognising the different experience of project teams, one budget-holder suggested that it would be of value for Ako Aotearoa to identify and recognise exemplary project work. The example was given of the United Kingdom Higher Education Academy and its recognition of different levels of contribution to teaching scholarship. Profiles could be built to demonstrate key project aspects contributing to exemplary outcomes. In turn, recognised project leads from successful past projects could be invited to mentor project teams undertaking co-funded projects for the first time.

7.   Summary

Value of funding

Budget-holders consider that Ako Aotearoa funding is fulfilling an important need. It is enabling the funding of projects of importance that may not have been funded otherwise or undertaken on a lesser scale.

Budget-holders valued the robust practices that Ako Aotearoa has in place to quality assure projects and to lift the projects to a higher standard.

Project's contributions of an evidence-base to effect change, and to give impetus for change, are highly valued.

Several recently completed or near complete projects offer significant potential value and represent:

- Collaborative insights across multiple providers with project outputs providing shared knowledge and consistent understanding of strong practice for the benefit of the sector (developed into frameworks / guidelines to shape practice and change).
- Strength and evidence-based contributions to understand what supports successful experiences and outcomes for priority learners. Projects have been purposefully framed in opposition to deficit discourse / narrative and in support of solutions-focused responses.
- The creation and contribution of knowledge and understanding in areas or contexts where this has been lacking.
- Significant engagement and contribution to, and from, the industry training sector.

And some challenges

While some budget-holders believe that co-funding provides greater transparency and gives greater recognition to the projects, others were concerned with under-costing and overheads being unaccounted for. Project under-costing had been common for multi-partner projects.

Multi-partner projects contribute significant benefits because of multi-organisation involvement. However, such projects seemed more likely to encounter challenges, delays, and / or increased costs to the project teams.

The nature and level of budget-holder oversight varies. Some budget-holders have not been involved with project's, some have focused on milestone completions and budgets, and others have an in-depth understanding of the difference the project is making and are supporting and / or driving it at a senior level.

Possible ways Ako Aotearoa may be able to respond to challenges identified

Under-costing, and difficulties with accounting for costs, including overheads, was a common challenge identified by budget-holders. Potentially greater guidance from Ako Aotearoa may assist with this concern. In addition, there may be opportunity for Ako Aotearoa to consider the interaction between itself and budget-holders and project teams in circumstances where challenges and changes arise that will impact on the progress, budget, and oversight of projects (e.g. loss of key people). Loss of project team members and key people driving, and with oversight of projects, has impacted projects significantly.

Project reporting arose as an issue for several projects, with issues relating to understanding Ako Aotearoa's expectations, and challenges for small PTEs in meeting these requirements. These appear as other key areas for Ako Aotearoa's review.

Organisations leading multi-partner projects may benefit from specific guidance and support relative to effective project management strategies and tools.

Implementation and impact of project findings

Some budget-holders are grappling with how findings will be shared and implemented externally. A key challenge relates to the difficulties of undertaking further work, and implementing or encouraging changed practice on an ongoing or wider scale, without additional resource or mechanisms available to do so beyond the parameters of the project.

Different projects will have different potential to demonstrate impact depending on the focus of the project and the implementation of findings. In some cases, significant change / observed impact will mostly likely take time (e.g. 2-3 years), and depend on a commitment or action from organisation's senior leadership.

Budget-holders considered that there needed to be clear expectations around what the completion of the project could realistically result in, and how far the expectation of evidence of change should go. Some budget-holders considered that there was a need for pre-planning for the implementation of findings and tracking of project impact to be built into project requirements. Budget-holders should be involved in setting these expectations.

Some budget-holders said that they would like to be involved as part of conversations between Ako Aotearoa and the project team about project implementation and impact. This would ensure the necessary focus was given and that expectations were well understood.

Suggestions for contributing to a better understanding of project impact included Ako Aotearoa-led 'impact symposia, 'work-shopping' findings with key people from relevant sectors, action plans detailing actions and evaluation by project partners, with funding built-in, and project milestones including evaluation reports on the difference that the project has made and the impact and implementation of findings.

Appendices

A.   Discussion guide informing budget-holder interviews

Introductions

- Reason for the interview and how information will be used (will provide opportunity to review any written information before it appears in any public document)

Expected value and impact

- Why did you prioritise this project for funding?
- What did you expect the main value would be in co-funding the project? What did you hope would be achieved?

Main value and impact observed

- Has the project met expectations?
- Has the project gained the traction that you hoped?
- What have been the main changes or impacts of the project? (e.g. benefits for learners, changes in practices internal & external, & project members)
- Or if too soon, what do you expect will be the main changes or impacts of the project?
- Over what timeframe did / will these changes take place?
- Do you expect these changes to have a wider / greater impact over time?
- Would these changes have occurred without the project?
- What factors have been key to facilitating the changes that have been made?
- What factors have acted to limit the impacts of the project?

Evidencing value and impact

- If pre-identified measures of success – are you aware of any evidence collected in relation to these measures? Where are things at regarding these measures?
- Any other pre-identified baseline measures of benchmarks guiding an understanding of impact?
- What has your level of oversight been of the project?
- How have you monitored the project or evidenced the changes observed?
- What has assisted or enabled an understanding of impact?
- What have been the challenges?

Sustainability of changes

- Are the changes made sustainable? What indicates this?

Dissemination / promotion

- To what extent has the project outcomes been disseminated / promoted?

Concluding questions reflecting on overall value and future work

- Overall, has the project has been a success for your organisation?
- What do you consider has been important to the overall success of the project?
- Was it worth co-funding the project? Has it been value for money?
- What would you look for in deciding to co-fund a project again?

- Is there anything key that you'd do differently next time?
- Are there any factors that have helped or hindered the project getting off the ground and / or achieving desired results?
- Is there anything Ako Aotearoa could do differently next time to support the impetus of the project?
- Reflecting on the project, to what extent has there been / will there be a return on your investment?

Co-funded NPF Projects (completed or due to complete by October 2016)

ID/code	Project title	Host organisation	Budget-holder interviewee	Org. type	Project contact leader	Co-funding	Start (S) and completion (C)	Completed IEF interviews (time points)
NPF 12-006	Professional Development to Improve Outcomes for Under-25 learners	Eastern Institute of Technology and Bay of Plenty Polytechnic	Dr Amanda Torr Director Academic	ITP	Judith Honeyfield	AA:$150,000 Org: $302,320	S: May 2013 C: Due for launch Oct 2016	None
NP14-004	Articulating and Implementing a "Pedagogy of Success" for Pacific Students in Tertiary Education	Whitireia Community Polytechnic	Dr Margaret Southwick	ITP	Dr Margaret Southwick	AA:$75,000 Org: $75,000	S: February 2014 C: Due end 2016	None
NPF 14-006	Weaving our Worlds: Māori Learner Outcomes Form An Equity-Focused Strengths-based Programme in Health Sciences	University of Otago	Professor Peter Crampton Pro-Vice-Chancellor Division of Health Sciences	Uni	Professor Associate Professor Joanne Baxter	AA: $150,000 Org: $207,923	S: February 2014 C: Due end 2016	None
NPF 14-013	Ako Whakaruruhau: Implementing and Evaluating Good Practice for Māori Trade Training	Te Tapuae o Rehua	Dr Eruera Tarena	Iwi & tertiary p/ship	Dr Catherine Savage	AA: $150,000 Org: $150,000	S: March 2014 C: Due Oct 2016	None
NPF 14-023	Learners and Mobile Devices: A Framework for Enhanced Learning and Institutional Change	Auckland University of Technology	Dr Stanley Frielick	Uni	Mark Northover	AA: $150,000 Org: $150,000	S: February 2014 C: Due Oct 16	None

Co-funded partnership projects

ID/ code	Project title	Host organisation	Budget-holder interviewee	Org. type	Project contact leader	Co-funding	Start (S) and completion (C)	Completed IEF interviews (time points)
13-006	Knowing Practice. Vocational Thresholds for GPs, Carpenters, and Engineering Technicians	NZCER	Graeme Cosslett Director	Research Org	Karen Vaughan	AA: $118,631.70 Org: $283,645	S: October 2013 C: January 2016	None
12-001	Phase 1 Raising the 'e'-bar. Reviewing and Implementing the NZ e-learning Guidelines	NZ Tertiary College	Selena Fox	PTE	Selena Fox	AA: $30,000 Org:$60,000	S: C:mid 2014	None
13-002	Case Studies of Good Self-Assessment Practice	NZQA	Paul Stone, Manager Quality Assurance	Govt	Vincent Rosario	AA: $12,055.13 Org: $29,616	S: C: Oct 2014	None
13-010	An Online Orientation to Open, Flexible and Distance Learning	New Zealand Association for Open, Flexible and Distance Learning (DEANZ)	Dr Mark Nichols	Assoc.	Dr Mark Nichols	AA: $23,100 Org:$23,100	S: Oct 2013 C: Mid-2014	6 month: August 2015
14-004	'Non-completers in industry training'. An Exploration of Apprentices' Views on the Barriers to Success in Industry Training	ITF	Adrienne Dawson	Peak body	Adrienne Dawson	AA:$53,000 Org:$78,675	C: Oct 2016	None
15-002	Pacific Learner Success in Workplace Settings	Service IQ	Glen Keith	ITO	Peter Scanlan	AA:$50,000 Org:$104278	S: beginning 2015 C: end 2016	None
15-010	Good Practice in Assessment Review	Service IQ	Glen Keith	ITO	Natalie Bourke	AA:$50,000 Org: $100,000	S: C: due Sept 2016	None

Completed co-funded RHPF projects (due for at least one IE conversation by end of October 2016)

ID/ code	Project title	Host organisation	Budget-holder interviewee	Org. type	Project contact leader	Co-funding	Start (S) and completion (C)	Completed IEF interviews (time points)
S1203	Contemporary Assessment practices in University: Impact on teachers and students	University of Otago	Professor Richard Blaikie, Deputy VC, Research & Enterprises	Uni	Associate Professor Tony Harland	AA:$9865 Org:$9865	S: January 2013 C: May 2014	6 & 12 month: September 15
S1204	Work-based learning (WBL) -A new learning paradigm: The learner, employer and facilitator experience	Otago Polytechnic	Phil Ker, Chief Executive	ITP	Glenys Ker	AA: $10,000 Org: $12,850	S: December 2012 C: March 2014	6 month: skipped 12 month: Sept 2015
S1205	Teaching for numeracy and mathematics transfer in tertiary science	University of Canterbury	Professor Wendy Lawson, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Faculty of Science & Erik Brogt, Project contact lead	Uni	Erik Brogt	AA: $10,000 Org: $10,000	S: November 2012 C: 3 June 2014	6 month: March 2015 12 month: Sept 2015 24 month: 13 June 2016
S1301	Learning a Trade: Becoming a Tradesperson Through Apprenticeship	Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology	Margaret Leonard, Research & Knowledge Transfer Manager	ITP	Selena Chan	AA:$11100 Org: $15,100	S: February 2013 C: July 2013	6 month: August 2014 12 month: May 2015 24-month: March 2016
S1303	Implementing tikanga and mātauranga for effective learner outcomes & institutional change with a focus on Allied Trades	Tai Poutini Polytechnic	Annabel Schuler, Projects Academic and Quality – CE's office	ITP	Tonga Karena	AA: $20,000 Org: $65,000	S: July 13 C: July 15	6 month: February 2016

ID/ code	Project title	Host organisation	Budget-holder interviewee	Org. type	Project contact leader	Co-funding	Start (S) and completion (C)	Completed IEF interviews (time points)
S1307	Change Strategies to Enhance Pasifika Student Success at Canterbury Tertiary Institutions. A Collaborative Research Project Between the University of Canterbury, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, and Lincoln University	University of Canterbury	Lyn McClelland – Director Student Services and Comms.	Uni	Pauline Luafutu-Simpson	AA: $15,000 Org: $38,780	S: February 2014 C: December 2015	6 month: September 2016
S1403	Informing the development of a student profile for LLB degrees taught at NZ universities	University of Canterbury	Professor Ursula Cheer and Associate Professor Lynne Taylor	Uni	Professor Ursula Cheer and Associate Professor Lynne Taylor	AA: $17,600 Org: $18,910	S: January 2014 C: July 2015	6 month: February 2016
S1404	Brown Paper Bag Clinics: Community Pharmacy Education	University of Otago	Professor Richard Blaikie, Deputy VC, Research & Enterprises	Uni	Stephen Duffull	AA:$10,000 Org: $29,360	S: June 2014 C: December 2015	6 month: June 16
S1405	Immersive Learning in Health Education	Otago Polytechnic	Alistair Regan, Director & Jenny Aimers, Research and Enterprise	ITP	Elizabeth Ditzel	AA: $10,000 Org: $67,563 Other: $12,820	S: April 2014 C: December 2015	6 month: June 2016

ID/code	Project title	Host organisation	Budget-holder interviewee	Org. type	Project contact leader	Co-funding	Start (S) and completion (C)	Completed IEF interviews (time points)
N53	The Talented Students' Project (Phase 3)	University of Auckland	Professor Graeme Aitken, Dean of Education Faculty	Uni	Dr Christine Rubie-Davies	AA:$10,000 Org:$15,000	S: February 2013	6 month: Planned for September 2016
N56	Where do they go? The post-classroom journeys of our Youth Guarantee graduates	Hair to Train, Tauranga	Donna Waterson, General Manager	PTE	Donna Waterson, General Manager	AA: $9,900 Org: $10,800	S: June 2013 C: March 2014	6 month: September 2014 12 month: May 2015
N59	Critical Success Factors in Inter-institutional Project Collaborations	Bay of Plenty Polytechnic, Tauranga	Dr Alan Hampton, Chief Executive	ITP	Judith Honeyfield & Cath Fraser	AA: $20,000 Org: $20,510	S: May 2014 C: April 2015	None
N61	Contextualising vocational programmes to match institutional and industry settings	Bay of Plenty Polytechnic	Malcolm Hardy HoS, Applied Technology	ITP	Sean Squires	AA:$10,000 Org:$10,000	S: Mid 2014 C: Report dated Feb 16	None
N63	Bridging to Tertiary Study: A support resource for Maori Students	University of Waikato	Jenny Roberston Research Management Adviser	Uni	Dr Diane Johnson and Dr Sophie Nock	AA: $11,351 Org:$52,550	S: November 2014 C: August 2015	None
C52	Project based learning in arts and design. What makes it work?	Eastern Institute of Technology	Chris Ver-berg, Head of School, ideaschool	ITP	Chris Ver-berg, Head of School, ideaschool	AA: $10,000 Org: $21,750	S: November 2013 C: November 2014	6 month: June 2015 12 month: March 2016

C55	Evaluation of Pacific Learner Success in the Trades	Wellington Institute of Technology	Lisa Wong Senior Research Advisor	ITP	Tavita File-moni	AA:$10,000 Org:$10,286	S: October 2013 C: December 2014	6 month: April 2015 12 month: February 2016
C56	Evaluating a Mentoring Scheme for Trainees in the Primary ITO	Primary ITO	Mike Styles	ITO	Mike Styles	AA:$10,000 Org:$10,000	S: December 2013 C: September 2014	6 month: April 2015 12 month: 19 October 2015
C57	A beginners guide to plagiarism	Whanganui Learning Centre	Gail Harrison, Manager	PTE	Dr Deb Hill	AA: $10,000 Org: $16,657	S: November 2013 C: May 2015	6 month: March 2016 12 month: August 2016
C58	Strategies for Co-constructing learning in an initial teacher education programme	Massey University	Professor John O'Neill	Uni	Alison Sewell	AA:$10,000 Org:	S: Early 2014 C: October 2015	6 month: May 2016
C63	Resources for Maori Second Chance Learners with a Numeracy and Literacy Focus	Matapuna Training Centre	Jodie Cook, CEO and Anwyl Minnaar	PTE	Peter Howarth-Jarratt - then: Anwyl Minnaar	AA: $10,000 Org:$12,575	S: June 2014 C: November 2015	6 month: May 2016

C. Projects' Key Areas of Contribution to Knowledge and Practice

Development of resources, strategies, and guidance to support and influence wider sector practice in topical areas
A Beginner's Guide to Plagiarism (Whanganui Learning Centre)
Alternative Assessment Arrangements Policy for Students with Disabilities in Tertiary Education (ACHIEVE)
An Online Orientation to Open, Flexible and Distance Learning (DEANZ)
Case studies of Good Self-Assessment Practice (NZQA)
Good Practice in Assessment Review (Service IQ)
Learners and Mobile Devices: A Framework for Enhanced Learning and Institutional Change (Auckland University of Technology)
Phase 1 Raising the 'e'-bar. Reviewing and Implementing the NZ e-learning Guidelines (New Zealand Tertiary College)
The development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS) in New Zealand (University of Waikato)
Investigating teaching and learning issues to recommend responses
Contemporary Assessment Practices in University: Impact on teachers and students (University of Otago)
'Non-completers' in Industry Training. An Exploration of Apprentices Views on the Barriers to Success in Industry Training (Industry Training Federation)
Teaching for Numeracy and Mathematics Transfer in Tertiary Science (University of Canterbury)
Trailing new approaches to enhance teaching and learning in health education
Developing Critical Thinking Skills for Industry Trainees in the Health and Community Support Sector (Careerforce)
Immersive Learning in Health Education (Otago Polytechnic)
Review of Medicines Clinic – a novel opportunity for understanding health literacy (University of Otago)
Approaches to support learning in initial teacher education
Facilitating Critical Thinking in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) (Te Rito Maioho Early Childhood New Zealand)
Strategies for Co-constructing Learning in an Initial Teacher Education Programme (Massey University)
Evaluating a mentoring programme in industry training
Evaluating a Mentoring Scheme for Trainees in the Primary ITO (Primary ITO)
Identifying teaching practices and models that work for priority learners
Ako Whakaruruhau: Implementing and Evaluating Good Practices for Maori Trade Training (Te Tapuae o Rehua)
Implementing Tikanga and Mātauranga for Effective Learner Outcomes & Institutional Change with a Focus on Allied Trades (Tai Poutini Polytechnic)
Maori and Pasifika Students at PTEs: motivation and engagement (New Zealand Institute of Sport)
Articulating and Implementing a "Pedagogy of Success" for Pacific Students in Tertiary Education (Whitireia)
Change Strategies to Enhance Pasifika Student Success at Canterbury Tertiary Institutions. A Collaborative Research Project Between the University of Canterbury, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, and Lincoln University (University of Canterbury)
Evaluation of Pacific Learner Success in the Trades (Wellington Institute of Technology)
Pacific Learner Success in Workplace Settings (Service IQ)
Professional Development to Improve Outcomes for Under-25 Learners (Eastern Institute of Technology and Bay of Plenty Polytechnic)

Where do they go? The Post-classroom Journeys of Our Youth Guarantee Graduates (Hair to Train)
Project-based learning
Project based Learning in Arts and Design. What Makes it Work? (Eastern Institute of Technology)
Resources for Maori Second Chance Learners with a Numeracy and Literacy Focus (Matapuna Training Centre)
Work-based learning
Knowing Practice. Vocational Thresholds for GPs, Carpenters, and Engineering Technicians (NZCER)
Learning a Trade: Becoming a Tradesperson Through Apprenticeship (ARA)
Work-based learning (WBL). A New Learning Paradigm: The learner, employer, and facilitator experience (Otago Polytechnic)
Longitudinal studies capturing learner experience in specific disciplines to shape and guide future practices
Informing the Development of a Student Profile for LLB Degrees Taught at NZ Universities (University of Canterbury)
Learning in Today's Academic Environment (University of Otago)

Collation of information from Impact Evaluation Framework Conversations about 22 co-funded Regional Hub Project Fund projects

Executive Summary

Ako Aotearoa funds evidence-based change projects with a high potential to benefit learners. Ako Aotearoa's Regional Hub Project Fund (RHPF) supports exploratory regional-based projects that are expected to result in measurable improvement in tertiary teaching and learning.

RHPF co-funded projects are evaluated using Ako Aotearoa's Impact Evaluation Framework (IEF) which examines project impact in four dimensions: reach, impact on teaching practice, impact on learners, and impact on the project teams. Ako Aotearoa staff visit and conduct evaluative interviews with project team contact leaders at six, 12, and 24 months after a project has been completed.

Ako Aotearoa moved to a co-funding model in mid-2012, whereby project organisations contribute financially to the project. Now that a number of projects funded through the co-funding approach have completed, and have had at least one six-month impact evaluation conversation, it is timely to reflect on their impact.

This document reports on the collation of information from the impact evaluation conversations previously held across each of 22 Ako Aotearoa co-funded RHPF projects that completed between July 2013 and December 2015. Relevant information obtained from interviews with project budget-holders in 2015 and 2016 is also reported.

All 22 projects have been completed for at least six months and have had six-month impact evaluation conversations. Just nine projects have had 12 or 24-month impact evaluation conversations. As such a key limitation of this work is that impact is being reported mainly for projects that have only been completed for a short period.

Project reach

Data collected from Ako Aotearoa's website on project webpage views and output downloads enables project reach to be gauged. The data is useful for showing individual projects that have had a notably higher number of views than others, and for demonstrating interest and relevance to the sector.

At six months post project completion, the 22 projects collectively received 2,613 webpage views. Unique users accounted for 85% of webpage views.

There is a significant increase in page view numbers when data is taken into account for the nine projects that have been completed for 12 or 24 months. Total page views more than double at 5,667, and is an indication of the ongoing relevance and reach of the projects over time.

The same pattern is evident for project outputs downloaded. At six months post project completion, 1,200 project outputs had been collectively downloaded across the 22 projects. Again, 85% were by unique users. Output downloads more than doubled to 2,281 when data from the nine projects that had 12 or 24-month impact evaluation conversations was taken into account.

Information collected on dissemination activities to date shows that project dissemination activities are greatest in the first six months following project completion. Few additional dissemination activities have been observed for projects that have had 12 and 24-month impact evaluation conversations.

Impact on teaching practice

It is estimated that 2,327 practitioners have benefitted or improved their practice because of the 22 projects. This figure comprises 13 projects that had one impact evaluation interview six months post-project completion, and nine that have also had 12-month post-project interviews. Teachers employed at project organisations receive the most impact. At six months post-project completion, there had been impact on just 661 practitioners.

Two projects had a significant impact on the total number of teachers estimated to have benefitted or improved their practice, representing around 88% of the total number of estimated teachers impacted. Both projects have contributed to the introduction of a key organisational policy change or delivery of a new initiative and through such initiatives, large numbers of teachers or learners are estimated to have been impacted.

Five projects had no information available about the number of teachers impacted. Reasons that no information was available include that it was too early or too difficult to gauge the numbers of practitioners impacted.

The implementation and use of project findings to benefit teaching practice is a continuous process with the potential to effect change occurring at different points in time.

Impact on learners

Collectively, 6,672 learners are identified as likely to have benefitted from 15 completed RHFP projects. This figure includes projects completed for a period of six months, 12 months, and 24 months. One project had a significant impact on this figure, with 4,000 learners estimated as benefitting from the project's contribution to a university's assessment policy.

As with impact on teachers, estimated numbers of learners identified as benefitting solely at the six-month post-project completion point, is much lower at 2,288.

It was common for project team members to comment that it was difficult or not possible to identify impact on learners, and for some projects it would be very difficult to track and attribute benefits to learners over time within the parameters of the project (e.g. given the specific scope, or in the absence of any tracking of impact).

Impact on project teams

Seventeen of the 22 projects have benefitted project team members, including benefitting careers and capability, and professional relationships and reputations.

Benefits to communities, organisations and industry

While outside the parameters of Ako Aotearoa's IEF, several RHFP projects are benefitting their organisation, communities, sub-sectors, and industry.

Summary

The findings demonstrate value and impact across all dimensions of the Ako Aotearoa IEF. The significant increase in impact observed over time (e.g. between the six and 12-month impact evaluation conversations) demonstrates the importance of tracking change over time, and also the limitation of this work given that just nine of the 13 projects have had 12-month impact evaluation conversations.

There are some limitations in collectively analysing the collated data across multiple projects.

As observed, individual projects can significantly impact the data. Also, without comparative benchmarks or targets, it is not possible to come to conclusions about the meaning of the data and the strength of impact and reach overall. For example, it is not possible to say whether 2,613 page views is a good result or not as there is no desired target or comparative figure to benchmark it against. However, collective, comparative analysis of the individual projects has provided an insightful overview of the projects, and their individual impacts.

It is important to recognise that different projects have different purposes and that this may shape the different ways projects can be expected to effect change. Further, the projects demonstrate that the implementation of project findings and the process of change occurs in different ways and at different times. To that end, the ability of the IEF to track projects individually over a two-year period post completion, provides an important opportunity to understand a project's ongoing contribution to teaching and learning over time.

Possibly, variable impact information across the projects, and project teams' ability to identify and estimate impact, signals that the development and use of common tools, such as an outcomes framework, rubrics, indicators of impact, and guidance about methods for estimating and collecting evidence of impact, could be useful to support project teams and impact evaluation conversations in the assessment of project impact. A starting point may be to build on the 2012 document "Creating Sustainable Change to Improve Outcomes for Tertiary Learners. A framework for thinking about projects in tertiary education" developed for Ako Aotearoa by Anne Alkema in 2012. A set of common tools would contribute to a consistent approach. In addition, clearer expectations around the collection, estimation and evidencing of impact would assist this important focus.

1.   Introduction

This document reports on the collation of information from impact evaluation conversations held across each of 22 Ako Aotearoa co-funded RHPF projects that completed between July 2013 and December 2015.

The purpose of this work has been to provide an understanding of the collective impact that completed co-funded RHPF projects have had on tertiary teaching and learning, using previously collated information for each project captured using the Ako Aotearoa Impact Evaluation Framework. Relevant information obtained from interviews with project budget-holders in 2015 and 2016 is also reported, to contribute to this understanding.

National project fund (NPF) projects are not reported on in this document, as impact evaluation conversations were only completed for two NPF co-funded projects at the time of this work. Most NPF projects have not yet had an impact evaluation conversation because the projects have not yet completed or have been completed for less than six months. Information about NPF projects is included in the companion report 'Understanding project value and impact and the co-funding approach from the budget-holder perspective'.

Background

Ako Aotearoa works alongside tertiary education organisations to support them to explore and evaluate new approaches designed to improve tertiary teaching and learning. Ako Aotearoa funds evidence-based change projects with a high potential to benefit learners.

Ako Aotearoa moved to a co-funding model in mid-2012. All Ako Aotearoa project funding operates on a co-funding basis, and organisations contribute financially to the project (either internal costs and/or in dollars).

Ako Aotearoa's Regional Hub Project Fund (RHPF) supports exploratory regional-based projects that are expected to result in a measurable improvement in tertiary teaching and learning. The RHPF has three funding streams based on Ako Aotearoa's three regions: Central Hub RHPF; Southern Hub RHPF; and Northern Hub RHPF. RHPF projects will normally be funded up to $20,000 – 30,000, with a usual maximum of $10,000 contributed by Ako Aotearoa that is at least matched (internal costs and/or in dollars) by the co-funding organisation.

Impact evaluation

Ako Aotearoa's Impact Evaluation Framework (IEF) is used to evaluate RHPF co-funded projects. The IEF supports project teams to explore the impact that their projects have had on learners, practitioners, and project teams themselves. It is also a support mechanism to help project teams maximise the impact of their work.

The IEF was first developed in 2010 and trialled in 2011. Ako Aotearoa's IEF examines project impact in four key dimensions:

• Reach (generation and dissemination of project outputs).
• Impact on teaching practice.
• Impact on learners.
• Impact on the project teams themselves.

In each of these dimensions several themes are explored (these themes are outlined later in this report).

Ako Aotearoa staff visit and conduct a series of evaluative interviews with project team contact leaders six, 12 and 24 months after a project has been completed. The four IEF dimensions (reach, impact on practice, impact on learners, and impact on project team's) are explored in a process that seeks to distinguish between independent evidence and that attributed by project teams.

Impact evaluation conversations are conducted in the context of the original project goals. The results from the conversations are developed into a project 'story' that summarises the key achievements of the project to date from the understanding and perspective of the project team, as well from the future focus of activities. These 'stories' are added to at each interview point, and act as a comprehensive account of the impact of an individual project over the two years after the project has completed.

Projects included in this review

Twenty-two projects have been reviewed as part of this work (see Appendix A). Thirteen are southern hub projects, two are northern hub projects, and seven are central hub projects.

The main criteria for project selection were that each project had completed a six-month impact evaluation conversation by the end of October 2016. Initially it was anticipated that 27 RHPF projects would be included. However, seven of the projects had not had an impact evaluation conversation by the end of 2016 and have not been included.

Thirteen of the 22 projects have only had six-month impact evaluation conversations. Therefore, the extent of information available about project impact should be understood in this context and as a limitation of this work.

Five of the projects have had both six and 12-month impact evaluation conversations. Just three have had a six, 12 and 24-month IE conversation. One project 'skipped' its six-month impact evaluation conversation and has just had one 12-month impact evaluation conversation. Together the 22 projects have had a total of 31 impact evaluation conversations[1].

As at December 2016, all projects had been completed for over one year. Ten of the projects were completed over two-years ago.

Of the 22 projects:

- eight of the co-funding project organisations are universities;
- six are Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs);
- six projects are co-funded by Private Training Establishments (PTEs);
- two co-funders are Industry Training Organisations (ITOs), and
- one co-funding organisation is a national network.

Collectively the 22 projects represent a total investment of $690,500, being an Ako Aotearoa investment of $236,843, and a co-funder investment of $453,657[2].

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[1] Not all projects have had expected IE conversations.

[2] Two projects have also received an external contribution from a partner source ($12, 820 for one project and $45,000 for the other project ($30,000 in 2016 and $15,000 in 2017).

Approach

The collation and reporting of impact evaluation information on the 22 co-funded RHPF projects has involved a review of the data and qualitative information collected from each project's impact evaluation conversations. This information was coded and collated using the four key dimensions and sub themes within Ako Aotearoa's IEF. Relevant information has also been collated about the value and impact of the projects from interviews undertaken with the project budget-holders from 16 of these RHPF projects.

Budget-holder interviews were undertaken for three of the RHPF projects initially identified for inclusion but which have not yet had their IE conversations. As such, information collected from those interviews is presented in the companion document 'Understanding project value and impact and the co-funding approach from the budget-holder perspective'.

2. Collation of information

Reach: generation and dissemination of project outputs

Evaluating reach through web activity

Each of the projects has a project webpage on the Ako Aotearoa website. The IEF gauges interest in the projects from the total number of views each project page on the Ako Aotearoa website has received, as well as project page downloads.

Each of the 22 RHFP projects has produced at least one output that can be freely downloaded on the project's designated Ako Aotearoa project webpage. Most of the 22 projects have produced more than one output.

Table 1 shows the total number of page views for all projects at the point of their six-month IE conversations (reflecting 13 projects have only had six-month IE conversations), as well as total number of page views across all IE conversations.

Table 1: RHPF project interest and reach – project page views

	Project page views at 6-month IE conversation	Project page views: all IE conversations
Total	2613 (mean 118.77)	5667
Unique	2213 (85%)	4540 (80%)

Of note, the total number of page views more than doubles when the additional data is added from just nine projects that have also had 12 and 24-month impact evaluation conversations. This is an indicator of the continued and potentially greater interest in the projects over time. It also demonstrates the limitation of looking at data for projects that have only had a six-month post-project impact evaluation conversation.

Also of note is the unique user[3] percentage which shows that most project page views are from first time (and not repeat) users. This is an indicator of the wide appeal and potential relevance that the projects have had.

Table 2 shows the total number of related project output downloads from the Ako Aotearoa website for all projects at the point of their six-month IE conversations, as well as total number of page views across all IE conversations.

Of note again, is the high number of unique users and the indication of project relevance that this shows.

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[3] Total views and downloads includes repeat visitors. Unique refers to the number of individual visitors and only counts repeat visitors once.

Table 2: RHPF project interest and reach – project output downloads

	Output downloads at 6 month IE conversation	Output downloads: all IE conversations
Total	1,200 (mean 54.55)	2281
Unique	1017 (85%)	2015 (88%)

When comparing project page views with page downloads, on average, 46 % of people viewing the project pages also downloaded project outputs at six months post-project completion.

These figures do not include views or downloads of project information from other websites. For example, impact evaluation information for the project *'Medicines Clinic – A novel opportunity for understanding health literacy'* led by Stephen Duffull*,* records that project information on the University of Otago's School of Pharmacy website received 110 views in just a two-month period.

Some projects generate considerably more interest than others, receiving high page views and downloads, and is an indicator of their relevance to the sector.

- The project *'A beginner's guide to plagiarism'* by Dr Deb Hill has received a significant number of project page views and output downloads and the greatest number across all the 22 RHPF projects.
  Just six months post completion, project outputs and information received 1,058[4] views (913 or 87 % were unique users). That figure includes a news alert relevant to the project and which led to 318 views. The project resource had been viewed 565 times and downloaded 426 times at the time of the six-month impact evaluation conversation.

- The project *'The Development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in New Zealand'* by Dr Elizabeth Gordon, had received 186 page views at the six-month impact evaluation conversation and which increased to 508 views (458 or 90 % being unique users) at 24 months post-project completion.

- The project *'Learning a Trade: Becoming a Tradesperson Through Apprenticeship'* led by Selena Chan, received 122 page views six months post-project completion and that increased to 438 views (by 385 or 88 % unique users), at 24 months post project completion.

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[4] 565 webpage views, 112 Ako Aotearoa shop page views and 381 views of a news alert relevant to the project.

The Whanganui Learning Centre co-funded project *'A beginner's guide to plagiarism'* led by Dr Deb Hill and completed in May 2015, has produced a graphic plagiarism guide that is clearly of relevance and achieving wide reach in an Aotearoa New Zealand and international context.[5]

The plagiarism guide is in graphic form and uses simple language and cartoon characters to convey key messages. A high number of Ako Aotearoa page views and downloads of the resource, and feedback provided to the project team, signal that this project output has wide reach and is of strong relevance locally and in an international context.

The project team has received feedback from practitioners conveying their appreciation of the resource and intended use of it, including from China, Australia, and Ireland.

"I have been meaning to write to say that I've uplifted a copy of your avoiding plagiarism guide from Ako Aotearoa and have circulated it round my colleagues - we've decided to adopt it with the students here. Our students are mainly mature students, and predominantly have only studied vocational courses before. We're discovering that they have very limited knowledge of academic skills, so this guide is perfectly pitched for our students - so thanks!"

"I work in a training centre in…Ireland teaching…adults with various disabilities. I have been a long time trying out various methods in the classroom to demonstrate to learners how not to plagiarise…Your guide has been immensely useful as it is simple and uncomplicated. The use of the illustrations really helps the learners gain an understanding of why it is so important and gives them a bit of courage to try to write in their own words with less reliance on others' ideas. I have passed this guide onto many of my colleagues, all whom share my opinion on it."

The plagiarism guide can be accessed at: https://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/ako-hub/ako-aotearoa-central-hub/resources/pages/beginners'-guide-plagiarism

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[5] Information taken for six and 12 month IE conversations.

Evaluating reach through fora and activities

Table 3 shows the different dissemination activities that have been undertaken across the 22 RHFP projects.

Table 3: Dissemination activities for RHPF projects

Dissemination activities for 22 RHFP projects at six-month IE conversations	
Conference presentations	28
Meetings and / or general presentations	23
Ako Aotearoa branded workshops	6
Media (e.g. TV, radio, newspaper)	5
Journal articles	4
General publications (e.g. chapter in book)	4

At the time of their six-month impact evaluation conversations, a total of 70 separate dissemination activities had been undertaken across the 22 RHFP projects. Oral, rather than written dissemination of the projects, has been more commonly facilitated by the project teams. Most projects have had at least one conference presentation and / or general presentation about the project just six months after project completion.

Project dissemination activities are greatest in the six-month period after project completion – very few additional activities have been recorded for those projects that have had 12 and 24 month IE conversations. This is an area for continued consideration as a greater number of projects undergo 12-month impact evaluation conversations, to assess if this is a continued trend.

Five projects have disseminated their work widely, each undertaking eight to 10 dissemination activities at the time of their project's six-month IE conversation[6].

Three projects[6] led to a small number of Ako Aotearoa branded workshops at the time of the six-month IE conversations. The project *'Change Strategies to Enhance Pasifika Student Success at Canterbury Institutions'* has led to the recent development of an Ako Aotearoa professional development workshop delivered by the project contact lead, Pauline Luafutu-Simpson.

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[6] *'Change Strategies to Enhance Pasifika Student Success at Canterbury Institutions'* led by Pauline Luafutu-Simpson, *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Immersive Learning in Nurse Education. Go over it, see it, get it!'* led by Elizabeth Ditzel, *'Facilitating Critical Thinking in Initial Teacher Education'* led by Tui Summers, Learning in Today's Academic Environment' led by Dr Kate Wynn-Williams, and *'Review of Medicines Clinic – a novel opportunity for understanding health literacy'* led by Professor Stephen Duffull.

[7] *Learning in Today's Academic Environment'* led by Dr Kate Wynn-Williams, *'The Making of Lawyers'* led by Professor Ursula Cheer, and *'Learning a Trade: Becoming a Tradesperson Through Apprenticeship'* led by Selena Chan.

Impact on teaching practice

Overall, it is estimated that 2,327 practitioners have benefitted and / or improved their practice because of the 22 RHPF projects.

Table 4 shows that at the time of the 6 month IE conversations, it was estimated that around 661 practitioners across 22 projects had benefitted and/ or improved their practices.

Table 4: Estimated number of teachers impacted by project findings

	6 month IE conversation	12 month IE conversation[8]
Estimated teachers impacted internal to project team organisation's	562	2,208
Estimated teachers impacted external to project team organisation's	99	119
Total	661	2,327

After 12-month impact evaluation conversations had been held for nine projects, an additional 1,666 practitioners had benefitted or improved their practices[9]. As Table 4 shows, mostly it is practitioners internal to the project institutions that have benefitted, with only small numbers estimated to have benefitted or changed their practitioners from external institutions[10].

Impact is mostly observed in the context of changes made by project team members and within a small number of specific programmes. By contrast, where a small number of projects have influenced and identified change across large organisations, estimated impact is significantly greater.

Two projects have had a significant influence on the figures in Table 4. Together, the projects *'Evaluating a Mentoring Scheme for Trainees in the Primary ITO'* led by Mike Styles, and *'Contemporary Assessment practices in University: Impact on Teachers and Students'* led by Professor Harland, are estimated to have impacted 2,040 practitioners. The two projects represent around 88 % of the total number of estimated teachers impacted.

Numbers estimated for those two projects represent the total number of people potentially impacted in the project organisation by the introduction of a key policy or delivery of an initiative.

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[8] 12 month figures include the six-month results.

[9] While three projects have had 24-month post project IE conversations, no further data was available about impact on teaching for these projects.

[10]External estimates commonly take into account numbers of external practitioners engaged through workshops or seminars presented by project team members.

Completed in 2014, the University of Otago southern-hub co-funded projected *'Contemporary Assessment practices in University: Impact on teachers and students'* led by Professor Harland, is an example of project findings resulting in sustainable significant change in teaching practice through contributing to changes made to the University of Otago's assessment policy.[11]

The primary aim of this project was to examine the impact of high-stakes summative assessment on student learning and teaching at the University of Otago.

The study built on a pilot project conducted in 2011 by Professor Harland and was concerned with the frequent internal summative assessment and grading of learners (over-assessment) and teachers believing that they had little choice in grading, even when practices were understood to be less than optimal.

The report made the following key recommendations for assessments that carry a mark or grade:

1. Endeavour to decrease the number of assessments.
2. Align assessment tasks with the most important outcomes for learning.
3. Require larger more integrated assessments that test a range of skills, abilities, and knowledge forms.
4. Ensure that assessment leads to deep approaches to learning that also encourage autonomy, life-long learning, independence, and responsibility as desired graduate outcomes.
5. Do not use assessment solely as a behavioural mechanism that encourages students to work or motivates them to study.

The significant impact of the project findings on teaching practice follows the university's incorporation of the project findings into the process of writing a new assessment policy and which is thus influencing assessment practices university-wide.

Twelve months after project completion, an estimated 1,600 teaching and professional staff have been impacted through their delivery of new courses at the University of Otago using the new assessment policy.

This change in practice is identified as benefitting approximately 4,000 first year students enrolled in courses that now operate under the new assessment policy.

At the six-month impact evaluation conversation, Professor Harland had presented at two universities in the United Kingdom and potentially these presentations may have influenced practices overseas.

The project report can be accessed at: https://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/contemporary-assessment-practices

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[11] Information taken for six and 12-month IE conversations.

Impact on teaching practice is considered in relation to the following six themes that come within Ako Aotearoa's IEF:

- Enhanced evidence-based practices, significant change in practice, or introduction of a new practice.
- Contributions to curriculum design.
- Increased human resources (HR) and professional development (PD).
- Enhanced existing initiatives: supporting an existing organisation drive or change agenda within a teaching and learning environment.
- Enhanced self-assessment or quality assurance (QA).
- Strategic policy.

Figure 1 shows the different ways that 17 of the projects have been identified as impacting on teaching practice.
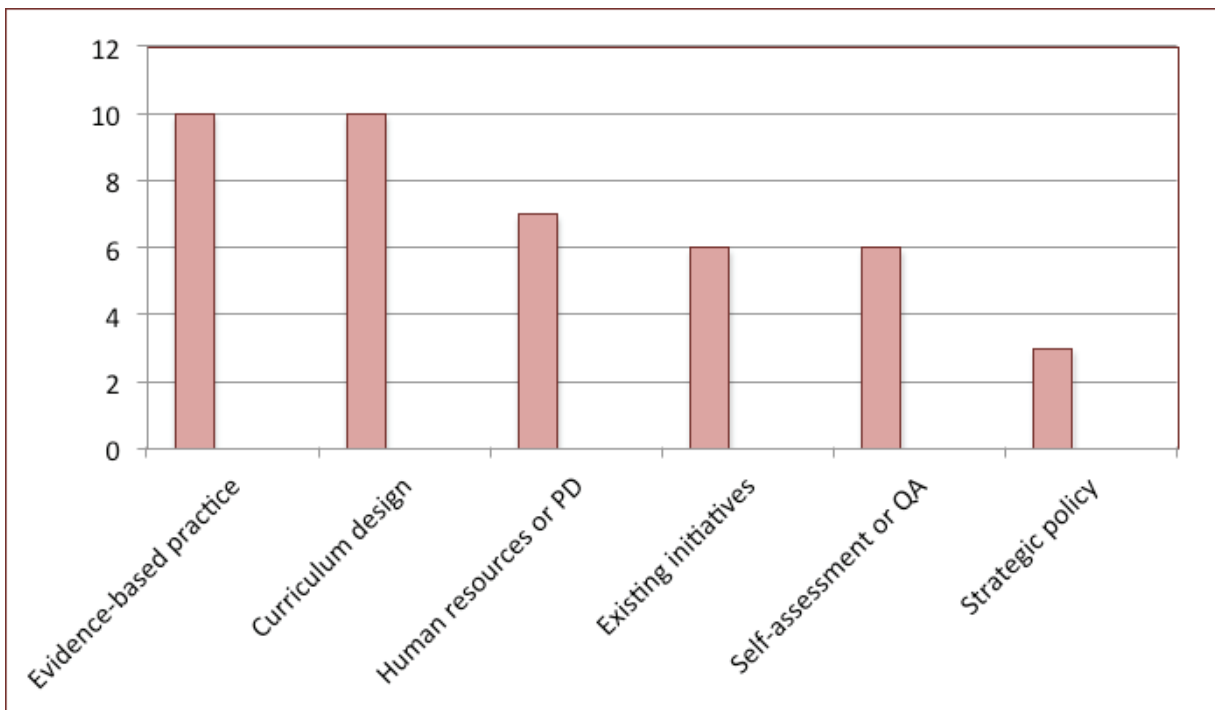

Figure 1: Nature of project's impact on teaching practice

A number of projects have impacted teaching practice in several ways.

- The project *'Motivation and Engagement of Māori and Pasifika students at PTEs: Lessons for improved teaching and learning techniques'* led by Dr David Lillis, is one such example.

Completed in September 2015, the New Zealand Institute of Sport co-funded central hub project *'Motivation and engagement of Māori and Pasifika students at PTEs: Lessons for improved teaching and learning techniques'*, **led by Dr Davis Lillis, shows the several changes made by the organisation and impacting on teaching practice because of the project findings.**[12]

This study, undertaken during 2014, engaged Māori and Pacific students about ways of enhancing teaching and learning at PTEs. The study:

1. Confirmed the importance (for academic success) of positive tutor-student relationships, cultural responsiveness, the use of varied teaching and learning approaches and attractive physical environments.
2. Found only minor systematic differences in engagement and motivation across ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic level, indicating that Māori and Pacific students are not greatly different from others in either engagement or motivation.
3. Identified that the single socio-economics-based difference identified related to learning more if the tutor cares how the student is doing.
4. Found that Māori and Pacific Island respondents spend more time providing care for dependents in and study-related activity weekly than other students.

The following recommendations were made for enhanced teaching and learning:

1. Employ tutors who are responsive to all students, but particularly tutors who are experienced in teaching priority learners.
2. Employ tutors who use a range of teaching and learning methods and who have industry experience that they can bring to the classroom.
3. Encourage a flexible approach to running classroom sessions. Include breaks for students to either rest or undertake physical activity.
4. Create attractive physical environments that motivate students, and promote a sense of belonging for Māori and Pacific students. This could include Māori and Pacific art, posters, sculptures, and icons.

The following changes to organisational and teaching practices were identified:

• Enhanced initiatives: for example, haka learning has been embedded in the curriculum. Parents of Pacific learners are formally invited to an evening to engage with staff and to strengthen relationships with families.
• Enhanced self-assessment: through filtering student feedback and survey information by ethnicity.
• Increased professional development
• Enhanced staff recruitment practices: through greater focus on matching applicant attributes with qualities identified as leading to good learning experiences for students.
• New practices: including increased used of Māori and Samoan languages and the contracting of an external service to provide for the pastoral and psychological needs of students.

The project leader notes that all these measures are sustainable and embedded. Taken individually they are small measures; collectively they are significant, expected, and will be monitored. It is identified that most of the organisation's 60 plus staff will have

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[12] Information taken from six-month IE conversation.

changed their practice in some way because of the project and associated professional development. The project report can be accessed at: https://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/ako-hub/ako-aotearoa-central-hub/resources/pages/motivation-engagement-Māori-pacifi

For some projects, impact on teaching may not be seen to any great extent in the short-term as required implementation of project findings and / or the way in which they feed into organisational change may take time.

- The project *'Change Strategies to Enhance Pasifika Student Success at Canterbury Tertiary Institutions'* is an example, and one where implementation is currently in the planning phase and integrated with a new Ako Aotearoa National Project Fund project currently underway. At an organisational-level, the strategic value and potential of the project findings are clearly seen. It is anticipated that implementation of the findings will occur in different ways over time, with impact likely to be seen over months and years.

In the meantime, participant feedback following project fono and the first professional development workshop session developed from this project (attended by 12 participants in 2016), highlights small-scale changes being made to teaching practice considered to be making some difference to learners. Practitioners have commented on having a better understanding of the role of support and family for Pacific learners, incorporated relevant greetings, phrases, images and backdrops, and an awareness of the need to better acknowledge Pacific values and experiences in class.

"I feel more empowered to act/work within a values based practice."
Fono participant

"Greater awareness of influence of values, need to create 'safer' environment and more embedding and acknowledgement of Pasifika within my daily teaching."
Fono participant

"Some learners are now more open and not as quiet as they were, they feel more included in the learning."
Professional development workshop participant

Completed in August 2015, the University of Canterbury co-funded southern hub project *'Change Strategies to Enhance Pasifika Student Success at Canterbury Tertiary Institutions. A Collaborative Research Project Between the University of Canterbury, Ara Institute of Canterbury and Lincoln University'* **led by Pauline Luafutu-Simpson, has produced an evidence-base to support organisational enhancement and outcomes for Pasifika learners and to complement and enhance organisational self-assessment.**[13]

The project arose from a focus on inequities for Pacific people and the paucity of relevant South Island specific research. It sought to move Canterbury tertiary institutions towards a deeper understanding of Pacific success that would include wider adoption of identified good practices and provide the catalyst for improving participation and success rates for Pacific people at the tertiary level.

This project was phase two of a three-phased project focused on exploring learner voice to gather and build strategies to support learner success across three institutions. Phase one was a 2013 pilot funded by Ako Aotearoa's southern hub and involved a literature search and interviews to create knowledge and a toolkit of good practice. Phase three will focus on the implementation and evaluation of findings through a National Project Fund project currently underway.

The project has resulted in three areas recommended for transformative change to support Pacific success (academic interface, organisational practices and engaging spaces) and which forms the basis for a Pasifika Success Toolkit.

The project findings are valued at a senior level for contributing to a deeper understanding of Pacific success specific to Canterbury, and propose common and concrete recommendations for change. The findings are grounded in the voices of Pacific learners from different institutions, backgrounds, and experiences. The resulting shared and common knowledge has produced an evidence-base that is vital to effect change across a large institution and can potentially facilitate consistent good practice across different institutions.

"Staff across the partner institutions are buzzing about the sharing of practice and the positive, collaborative engagement that has occurred." (Senior leader)

The University of Canterbury intends using the project findings institution-wide to inform initiatives and change strategies to lift programme completion rates and to enhance an understanding of good practices that work for Pacific learners

The project findings and toolkit are valued for their potential to compliment and add to existing self-assessment information collected and used by the University to shape Pacific learners' experiences, learning and success.

The project report can be accessed at: https://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/enhancing-pasifika-student-success

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[13] Information taken from co-funder interview with Lynn McClelland, Executive Director, Student Services and Communication and Chair of the University's Pacific Peoples Advisory Committee (October 2016) and six-month IE conversation.

The implementation and use of project findings to benefit teaching practice is a continuous process with the potential to effect change arising and occurring at different points in time.

- This can be seen across the different phases of the longitudinal study *'The making of lawyers: expectations and experiences of first year New Zealand law students'* and *'Informing the development of a student profile for LLB degrees taught at NZ universities'* led by Associate Professor Lynne Taylor and Professor Ursula Cheer. As the project evolves, the project is influencing practices in different ways. More recently, the project findings have contributed to the:

  – Council for Legal Education now requiring Aotearoa New Zealand law schools to report student pass grades and grade distributions by gender and ethnicity, as well as globally. Law schools will also have to report degree completion rates by gender and ethnicity.

  – Incorporation of a Student Wellness Plan in the University of Canterbury's College of Business and Law's Strategic Plan and planning for a range of wellness initiatives in first and second year courses. It is anticipated that the implementation of the Wellness Plan will benefit all students enrolled in the School of Law in 2017.

Impact on learners

Of the 22 RHFP projects, 15 described impact on learners. Project teams estimate that 6,672 learners are likely to have benefitted from this collective body of work.

The 6,672 figure is the total number of learners identified as being impacted at the conclusion of all impact evaluation conversations and therefore, includes projects that have had impact evaluation conversations six months, 12 months and 24 months after the projects have concluded. By contrast, at just six months post-project completion, 2,288 of learners were identified as having been impacted.

One project has had a significant bearing on the estimated number of learners impacted.

- It is estimated that 4,000 students have been impacted by the project *'Contemporary Assessment Practices in University: Impact on Teachers and Students'* led by Professor Harland, because of changes to university assessment policy and practices that were contributed to by the project findings. That figure reflects the number of first year university students enrolled in courses now operating under the university's new assessment policy.

Four other projects[14] have also widely impacted learners, with each project identifying that 300-plus learners have been impacted because of the projects.

Impact on learners is considered in relation to the following five themes that come within Ako Aotearoa's IEF:

- Academic enhancement: improved academic outcomes and contributions to learner's academic development.
- Enhanced learning environment and / or resources.
- Improved relationships within a learning environment (with peers, between learners and staff).
- Personal development (e.g. increased confidence).
- Pathways and progression.

Figure 2 shows the different ways that the 15 RHFP projects have been identified as impacting learners.

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[14] 'Motivation and engagement of Māori and Pasifika students at PTEs: Lessons for improved teaching and learning techniques' led by Dr David Lillis, 'Informing the development of a student profile for LLB degrees taught at NZ universities' Led by Professor Cheer, 'Teaching for Numeracy and Mathematics Transfer in Tertiary Science' led by Dr Erik Brogt, and 'Evaluating a mentoring scheme for trainees in the Primary ITO' led by Mike Styles.
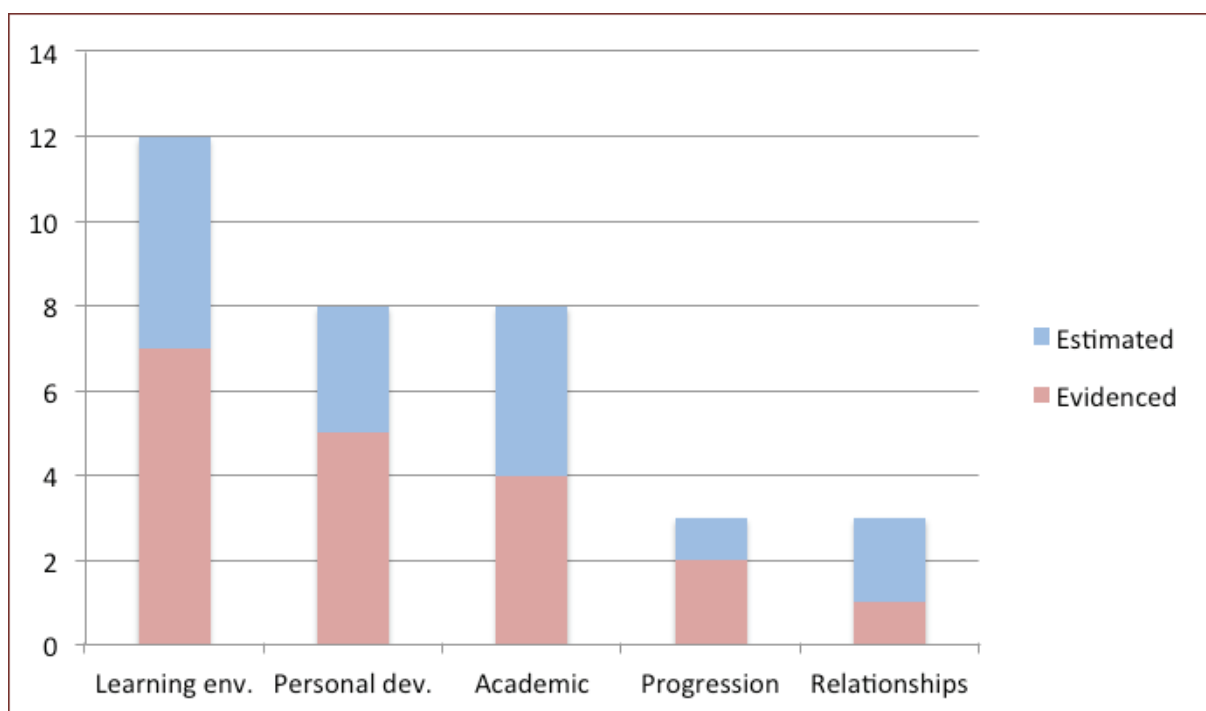
Figure 2: Nature of Benefits to Learners

Of the 15 projects, 12 identified that learners have benefited through enhanced learning environments and resources. Project teams seem more easily able to directly evidence this aspect, through for example student survey feedback.

Eight projects indicated that learners had improved their personal development, and commonly this related to improved confidence, self-esteem, and personal aspects supporting enhanced learning.

Eight projects identified that learners had enhanced academic development and outcomes, including references to improved learner retention, assessment completions, pass rates, and course and qualification completions. However, only a small number of projects have data available to demonstrate the extent of these benefits. The exception is where projects have specifically incorporated methods to collect evidence of change within the framework of their projects.

Commonly, projects benefit learners in several key ways with learner benefit identified through a mix of direct evidence, anecdotal information, and / or observation. The following six projects have collectively benefitted nearly 800 learners in multiple ways:

■ *'Review of Medicines Clinic - a novel opportunity for understanding health literacy'* led by Professor Stephen Duffull – approximately 145 learners identified as having benefitted at the six-month impact evaluation conversation;

■ *'Evaluating the effectiveness of Immersive Learning in Nurse Education. Go over it, see it, get it!'* led by Elizabeth Ditzel – 268 learners having benefitted six months post project completion;

- *'Mā pango mā whero ka oti te mahi: Digging for Māori Values at Te Tai o Poutini Polytechnic'* led by Tonga Karena – 50 learners had benefitted at the point of the six-month IE conversation;

- *'Where do they go? The post-classroom journeys of our youth guarantee graduates* led by Donna Waterson – 137 learners benefitted six months post project completion.

- Completed in January 2015, the Eastern Institute of Technology central hub co-funded project *'Project-based Learning in Arts and Design: What makes it works?'* by Dr Suzette Major and Dr Elly Govers (Govers Education Consultancy and Research) featured in Ako Aotearoa's 2015 annual report and highlighted different benefits to learners, including improved learner retention, learning, and quality of work, and increased internship opportunities. At the 12-month impact evaluation conversation, the project has continued to demonstrate positive benefits for around 100 learners including:
  - Māori and Pacific completion rates noted to be higher than under the old programme.
  - Students having greater confidence to engage with business. They are more prepared for 'real life' as projects progressively require aspects of marketing, promotion, and business planning as integral components.
  - Learners are benefitting from the different expertise of team teaching and staff having greater flexibility to incorporate student choice into the projects.
  - Learner projects and outputs are more diverse and relevant to individual's talents and interests.
  - Several local council initiatives have been informed by student-led design inputs, thus benefitting both learners and the council.[15]

- *'Project Based Learning Focused on Numeracy and Literacy Skills with Māori Second Chance Learners'* by Anwyl Minaar and Jodie Cook, is another example of a project benefitting learners in different ways – 84 learners had benefitted at the time of the six-month impact evaluation.

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[15] Information taken from 12 month IE conversation.

Completed in November 2015, the Matapuna Training Centre co-funded central hub project *Project Based Learning Focused on Numeracy and Literacy Skills with Māori Second Chance Learners,* is an example of a project that has supported a key curriculum change through the implementation of project-based learning and which has contributed to an improved learning environment and learner outcomes.[16]

The project commenced in 2014 and focused on creating two student-learning projects and accompanying teaching and learning materials established to target and empower disengaged Māori youth with numeracy and literacy issues.

The shift to project-based learning has enhanced the learning environment at Matapuna for the benefit of learners and staff. The project was timely as it aligned with an immediate need to make key changes to improved educational performance. The project funding contributed to enabling Matapuna to bring on a numeracy and literacy specialist earlier than otherwise would have been possible.

Benefits for learners due to enhanced learning environment

Academic enhancement

Gain reports in numeracy and literacy for the learners involved in the two projects surpassed Centre-wide results and showed improvements in learner's numeracy and literacy (previously reported in Ako Aotearoa's 2015 annual report).

The project and the embedding of project-based learning has contributed to Matapuna's course completion results having improved each year since 2013 from 28 % to 47 % in 2015[17].

Personal development

Learners engaged in project-based learning have been observed as developing in confidence and self-esteem. Their motivation was enhanced by the integrated 'real life' aspects of project work and they became more willing to attempt and complete tasks. Student attendance is noted to have improved.

Learners' ability to self-direct their learning has increased. They have used their literacy and numeracy results to direct their own learning and to self-identify their own learning needs. Learners have been observed to have more frequently approached the specialist literacy and numeracy tutor for help.

"The students are more confident, happy and self-esteem has developed positively as they see their and goals set and achieved. They voice the fact that they now understand maths better". (Matapuna Staff member)

Learners have taken on leadership roles through the projects and which has been observed to contribute positively to their learning, well-being, and self-esteem.

Progression

Since project-based learning has been embedded, 59 % of students at Matapuna have progressed to further tertiary study.

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[16] Information from budget-holder / project lead interview undertaken by Helen Lomax (November 2016) and six-month IE conversation.

[17] Tertiary Education Commission reported Educational Performance Indicator information.

Benefits for Teachers

The successful trial and implementation of project-based integrated learning at Matapuna has seen a Centre-wide move to use project-based integrated learning in as many topics as possible and seen a change in teaching practices and curriculum design, including an increased focus on numeracy achievement.

The success of the project-based approach, coupled with ongoing professional development, has enhanced the confidence of staff in their teaching skills and practice. Staff are considered to be much more confident about teaching literacy and numeracy and developing project based teaching resources.

Staff have moved away from a 'silo' view of their subject specialty to taking a more integrated view of how their subject fits within student's overall learning and achievement.

Teachers are now skilled and confident at looking for and finding "achievement evidence" from multiple sources rather than creating "one-off" contrived exercises for unit standard achievement (and integrating learning with community events).

It is observed that staff morale and collegial engagement is higher than it has ever been with greater levels of involvement in discussion of educational matters.

The project report can be accessed at:
https://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/ako-hub/ako-aotearoa-central-hub/resources/pages/project-based-learning-focused-numeracy-and-literacy-skills-Māori-second-chance

It was common for project team members to comment that it was difficult or not possible to identify impact on learners. Reasons included that it was too early to see impact, the impact on learners was unknown, and / or there were capacity and / or capability limitations.

For some projects, it would be very difficult to track and attribute benefits to learners over time. In some other projects, the identification of learner benefit is based on the expectation or presumption that through the identification, sharing and implementation of project findings, learners have benefited, or will benefit from changes to teaching, processes, and systems. However, there is not always a process in place, nor identified future intention, to seek to quantify or understand impact for learners.

The companion document to this report, 'Understanding project value and impact and the co-funding approach from the budget-holder perspective', considers further the different potential impacts of projects in relation to their aims and implementation of project findings.

Impact on project teams

Seventeen (17) of the 22 projects described benefits for one or more team members because of the RHPF projects across all impact evaluation conversations.

For the 17 projects, impact on project teams was mostly identified at the six-month impact evaluation conversations, with benefits continuing to be observed for the projects that also had their 12 and 24-month impact evaluation conversations.

Impact on project teams is considered in relation to the following four themes that come within Ako Aotearoa's IEF:

- Developing careers or capability.
- Developing reputations and / or reputation in a field.
- Enabling the development of further work.
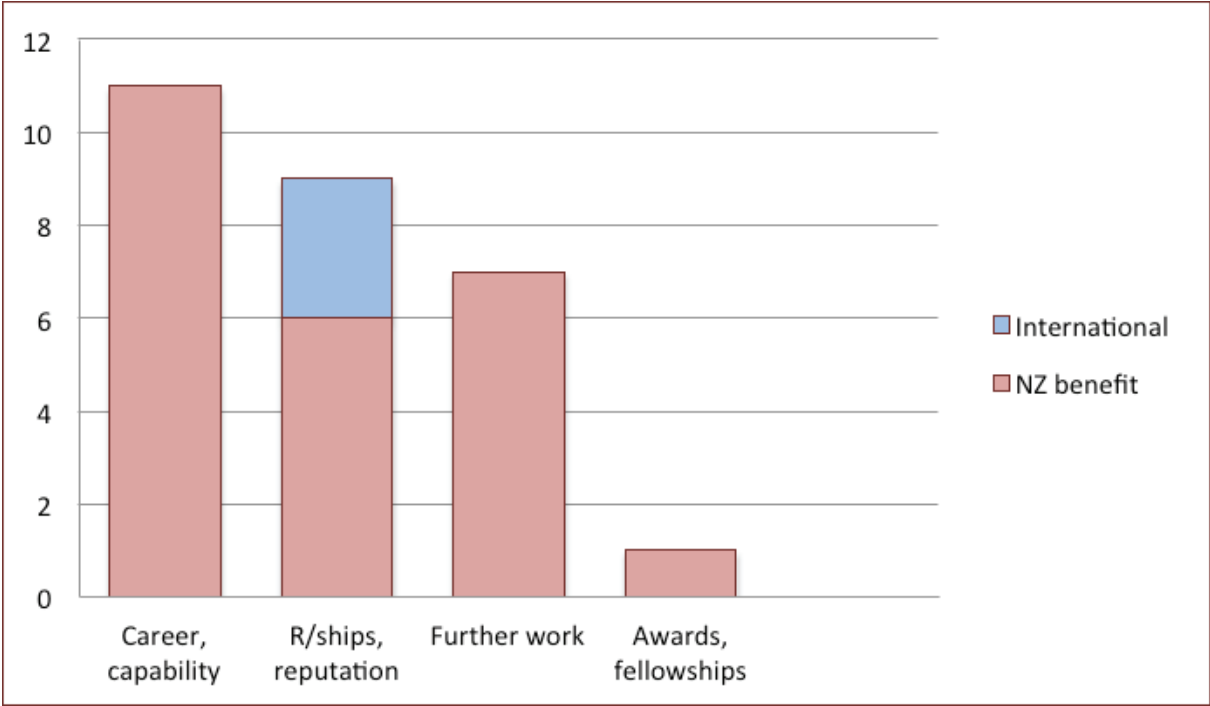- Receiving awards or fellowships.

Figure 3: Nature of Impact on project teams

Figure 3 shows that 11 of the projects have contributed to developing project team member's career and / or capability. This has included team members enhancing their research capability and understanding of the linkages between research, teaching and learning, specialist knowledge, and understanding of good practice.

At least three projects[18] have inspired and / or contributed to project member's engagement in post-graduate study. Three projects have facilitated the development of international relationships.

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[18] *'Change Strategies to Enhance Pasifika Student Success at Canterbury Tertiary Institutions'* led by Pauline Luafutu-Simpson, 'Evaluation of Pasifika Learner Success in the Trades led by Reverend Tavita Filemoni, and 'Immersive Learning in Health Education' led by Elizabeth Ditzel.

- The six-month impact evaluation story for the project *'Change Strategies to Enhance Pasifika Student Success at Canterbury Tertiary Institutions'* identifies that the project has added knowledgeable and tangible, evidenced-based research that supports project member's work and positions. Team members have developed confidence in themselves and their work, to the extent that they felt by sharing, they could add benefit to institutions nationwide. This increased confidence led them to successfully secure Ako Aotearoa national project funding for a new project focused on the implementation and evaluation of the toolkit developed from their project findings[19].

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[19] Information taken from six month IE conversation.

Benefitting multiple stakeholders including communities, organisations and industry

A number of the RHFP projects have demonstrated multiple benefits to teaching practices, learners, and project teams, but also to their organisation, communities, sub-sectors, and industry.

Projects are contributing, or have the potential to contribute, benefits to:

- industry and their subsectors (for example, through models and principles of good practice);
- project organisations (for example, improved educational performance outcomes); and
- to communities.

While this type of impact is outside the parameters of the IEF, several recently completed RHPF and NPF projects are, or will, potentially contribute positively in these areas.

■ The University of Otago co-funded southern hub project *'Medicines Clinic – a novel opportunity for understanding health literacy,'* is one such project that is demonstrating benefits to learners, teaching practice, and the local community.

The project introduced new, relevant learning opportunities for final year undergraduate students through the School of Pharmacy running monthly Medicines and Health Literacy Clinics (MHLC) within the Dunedin community and attended by final year pharmacy students. The clinics have educated patients, including to support them to better understand their medicines, to optimise their medicine use, and to address their doubts or misunderstandings. As one student observed:

> *"It was clear that both patients I had talked to had some misunderstandings about their medications, which in the case of paracetamol could have been dangerous to the patient, so it is important to have clinics like these to clear up these sorts of issues."*

In the year that the project was piloted, 65 patients plus some supporting whānau received free consultations with academic staff pharmacists and final year students.

For final year Pharmacy students, the pilot provided them the opportunity to engage with academic staff in a professional setting where situated learning took place by observation and participation.

The project has positively contributed to staff professional development, including formalising staff members' own learning objectives around adult health literacy for their own continuing professional development that contributes to registration requirements for the Pharmacy Council of New Zealand.[20]

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[20] Information taken from six month IE conversation and the published project report.

Completed in December 2015, the University of Otago southern hub co-funded project *Medicines Clinic – A novel opportunity for understanding health literacy* led by Stephen Duffull, is an example of a project contributing multiple benefits in the relatively short timeframe of it being piloted. The project has benefited members of the community, enhanced student's learning experiences and outcomes, has contributed to curriculum design and benefited teaching practice.

The project presents the results from a pilot of community-based *Medicines and Health Literacy Clinics* (HLMC) with final-year pharmacy students at the University of Otago. The pilot represented a new teaching and learning approach and commenced mid-2014.

The HLMC encourages patients to bring all their medicines and supplements to a community setting without appointment or cost.

The three aims of the project were to provide:
- a community based patient-centred placement opportunity for final year students to better understand adult health literacy;
- a complimentary service providing medicines information for Dunedin residents led by the School of Pharmacy
- an environment where students and academic pharmacists could interact, while illustrating a new example of activities possible in clinical care settings.

Benefits for Learners
At the six-month impact evaluation conversation, approximately 145 students were identified as likely benefitting from the project. It is hoped that all final year pharmacy students will have the opportunity to attend and benefit from at least one clinic – approximately 150 students each year.

The project facilitated student experiential learning on health literacy, patient communication, and clinical reasoning, in a safe environment with professional guidance. The enhanced learning environment meant students received unique and valuable clinical tuition from academic pharmacists over the clinic time, felt supported in their own conversations with the patients, and appreciated discussions drawing connections made from classroom learning to their patient experience (student reflections).

"Quite often we as students were not familiar about health literacy and by having supervising pharmacists, they definitely assisted us to apply the concepts in clinical context. The supervising pharmacist also required us to prepare for the clinic sessions by reading some articles about health literacy in NZ. This preparation was indeed helpful as the principles were applied during the consultation with the patient." (Student comment[21])

Students experienced increased self-confidence in communicating directly with patients and improved their knowledge of health literacy. The importance students are now placing on health literacy has been observed as they incorporate this aspect into their presentations in courses where health literacy is not part of course requirements.

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[21]Windle. J, Peterson. A, Braund. R, Duffull. S (2015) Medicines Clinic. A novel learning opportunity for understanding health literacy. Ako Aotearoa, Wellington. P.36 (Project report)

Benefits for Teachers
The project enabled teaching staff to apply their knowledge in the community and to take back learnings to their teaching. They have been able to share clinical knowledge and experience from past teaching, research, and practice, with both patients and students in a new forum that encourages three-way learning opportunities.

Contribution to curriculum design

The report's recommendations are feeding into changes occurring in the Bachelor of Pharmacy and the School of Pharmacy's curriculum review in 2016. Health literacy is now being taught beyond the Medicines and Health Literacy Clinics.

The project has provided staff with the opportunity to contribute directly and immediately to positive health outcomes for patients in the local community.

Benefits to Community
The clinics have educated patients, including to support them to better understand their medicine, to optimise their medicine use and to address their doubts or misunderstandings. Different student comments[22] highlight the difference that the project is perceived to have made to community members engaged:

"Overall, I believe that each patient we spoke to gained a better understanding of their medicine and health. Unlike consultations with GPs, there was no perceived time constraint for each patient. We could afford to take time ensuring information was passed on correctly and explore ways to help retaining that knowledge about their health."

Overall, the project has contributed to addressing growing demands that all health professionals identify the impact health literacy has on the public and address the responsibility to train the health workforce (including undergraduates) to improve health outcomes using evidenced based methods.

The project report can be accessed at:
https://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/download/ng/file/group-7/medicines-clinic-a-novel-learning-opportunity-for-understanding-health-literacy--summary.pdf

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[22]Ibid.

3. Summary observations

This report provides a snapshot of project reach and impact over time for 22 completed co-funded RHPF projects. Some general observations follow from the review of the data collected across the 22 projects from using the IEF dimensions.

Information on dissemination and reach

Data collected on project page views and downloads provides a useful indicator of the relevance of the projects to the sector. The significant increase in the numbers of page views and downloads observed when including data from projects that had 12 and 24-month post project interviews, demonstrates the importance of that factor when considering this information, and the limitations of looking just at the data from six-month impact evaluation conversations.

In the absence of any benchmarks or desirable targets, it is not possible to assess the 'so what?' question in terms of what the total page view results mean when collectively pooled. For example, how strong a result is 2,613 page views or a mean of nearly 120 page views per project? What does it mean if projects do not receive many page views or downloads? Is that information used? Does it matter? These are possible key questions that could frame Ako Aotearoa's ongoing use of IEF data.

Information on project team's dissemination of their work identifies that considerable activity is observed to have occurred at the six-month post project period. From a limited examination of dissemination at the 12 and 24 months post project timeframe for nine of the projects, it appears that little additional dissemination activity occurs. If analysis of a greater number of projects shows a similar trend in the future, possibly that may signal a need to consider the expected purposes of dissemination, whether this expectation is ongoing, and if so, how ongoing dissemination could be supported. However, it may be that data on dissemination is most relevant at six months? For example, presumably dissemination activities six months after a project is completed would be important to promoting the publication of the work. However, one year after a project completes, dissemination may no longer be a primary focus. Rather, information about implementation of findings and use of the findings by other institutions may be of more relevance to understanding project impact.

Change takes time

Data collected about project interest and reach, and impact on teachers and learners, shows that project impact is more widespread after projects have been completed for one year or longer. The exception was impact on teaching practice external to the project organisations and the number of dissemination activities undertaken by the project teams. Little difference was seen in those two areas by the inclusion of data from the 12 and 24-month impact evaluation conversations.

As such, the data in this report is limited by the fact that more of the projects have just had six-month impact evaluation conversations (13), with just eight having had 12 and / or 24-month impact evaluation conversations. Therefore, for over half of the projects, there has been only a short-period of time for change to occur.

The IEF appears to expect that all projects will be able to demonstrate impact on both teaching and learning practice at six, 12 and 24 months post project completion. However, because some projects have been specifically designed to collect information on good practice with a

view to future use and change in practice, or are focused on shifting and influence teaching practice in the short or medium term, this may mean that impact on learners will not be observed during the timeframe of the impact evaluation conversations. These contextual considerations are difficult to take into account when reporting impact data from across projects.

Projects have achieved multiple benefits and sustainable change

Several projects have demonstrated multiple benefits to teachers and learners and have achieved sustainable change through organisational changes made to teaching and learning practices. Some projects have resulted in improved learning experiences and learner's engagement in learning, and have improved learner achievement and outcomes.

Individual projects significantly influence estimated impact

Individual projects have generated significant interest and have a significant influence on total numbers of teachers and learners identified as having been impacted. For projects identified as having achieved wide-scale impact, they have influenced practices within large organisations or project findings have been adopted widely within project organisations.

Estimating impact and related challenges

Changed teaching practices and subsequent benefits to learners were mostly observed internally within project organisations, or presupposed because of evidence-based changes made. For example, benefits are presumed where changed practice is based on the need for change or has occurred using evidence of good practice. There is not necessarily a distinction made between 'benefit' and 'impact'.

While the projects identify wide scale benefits to teaching practice and learners, comparing projects by estimated numbers of teachers and learners impacted is difficult, given estimates are subjective, and are accompanied by variable evidence. Estimates may be conservative, or not, teams may be reluctant to propose numbers in the absence of evidence, or some projects have found it difficult to estimate impact.

Synthesis of information from the impact evaluation conversations shows variable levels of information being provided by project teams on impact. It is common for project team members to comment that it was difficult or not possible to identify impact on learners, and to a lesser extent teachers.

Some project teams appear to have been more easily able to identify or estimate the impact of their projects than others, and this can depend on the tools in place to measure impact, or even that some project teams may be more willing than others to estimate or presume impact.

Projects that have built in pre-determined indicators of change and evidence-gathering methods within the context of their projects to identify change, are better able to demonstrate direct impact on learners.

Possibly specific guidance from Ako Aotearoa on appropriate and possible evidence of impact would assist projects to plan for and undertake the collection of evidence to demonstrate impact, and could also guide impact evaluation conversations. It would also help with a consistent approach. Guidance could be in relation to evidence of direct, indirect, and estimated or presumed impact, as shown in the following diagram.
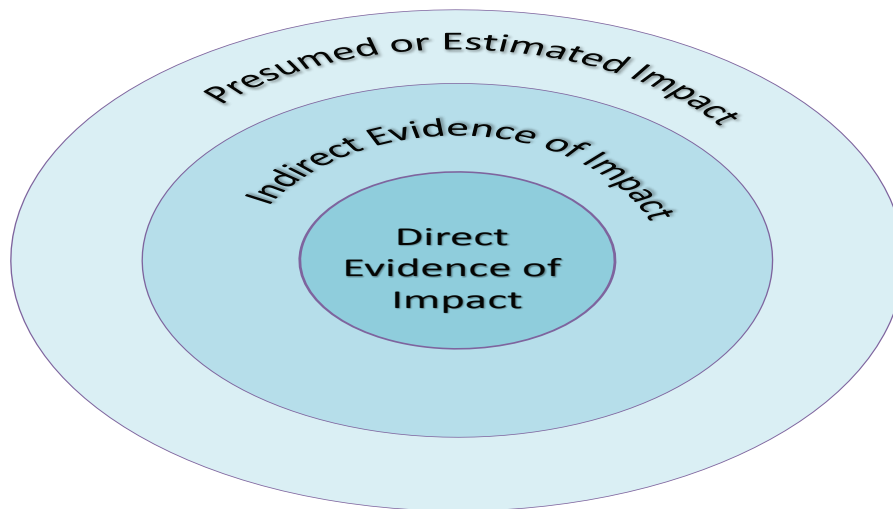
Figure 4: Considering evidence of impact

Collecting evidence of learner impact

Only a small number of projects have data demonstrating shifts in learner achievement and progression over time. This could reflect that:

- over half of the projects had only had impact evaluation conversations six-months post-project completion;
- the implementation of findings is expected to take time;
- processes may not have been put in place to gather such information; or
- the main project focus was about knowledge creation or changing policies, guidelines, or practices, rather than learner experiences and outcomes.

For some projects, it would be very difficult to track and attribute benefits to learners over time. In some other projects, the identification of learner benefit is based on the expectation or presumption that through the identification, sharing and implementation of project findings, learners have benefited, or will benefit from changes to teaching, processes, and systems. However, there is not always a process in place, nor identified future intention, to seek to quantify or understand impact for learners.

Given a recent recommendation to Ako Aotearoa from BERL[23] about recording more and better information on how projects affect qualification completions to support an estimation of economic contribution, Ako Aotearoa may wish to consider how it can encourage and support projects to devise ways to track project impact on learner achievement and outcomes to ensure that the collection of such information is built into projects from the outset.

Data collection is predominantly within the parameters of individual projects. Some project information contained examples of feedback provided by other practitioners external to the projects showing how the project has been valued and used in their work. This has the potential to provide valuable insights but was only seen on a very small scale. Some projects may be contributing to enhance outcomes for their wider sectors and communities, but this is not currently a focus of the IEF.

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[23] "Estimating Ako's economic impact", BERL, March 2016.

Overall, it is not evident to what extent project teams plan for and collect evidence of impact in advance of the impact evaluation conversations, or themselves follow-up on work with other practitioners and organisations to understand subsequent impact. It is not clear if this is or should be an expectation. Possibly Ako Aotearoa may wish to further define and clarify its expectations about how impact is demonstrated and understood by project teams, and as part of the project and impact evaluation process.

Overall contribution to significant change

Despite challenges and limitations collecting direct evidence of change, several projects have clearly contributed far-reaching benefits to teaching and learning and co-funding project organisations, including:

- influencing programme and curriculum design in programmes external to the project;
- shaping cultural competence and responsiveness;
- enhancing teacher education and professional development;
- transforming organisation assessment policy and practices; and
- contributing to a turn-around in educational performance data.

Appendix A: Completed Co-funded Projects

Completed co-funded RHPF projects that have had IE conversations by end of October 2016

ID/ code	Project title	Host organisation	Org. type	Project contact leader	Co-funding	Start (S) and completion (C)	Completed IEF interviews (time points)
S1203	Contemporary Assessment practices in University: Impact on teachers and students	University of Otago	Uni	Professor Tony Harland	AA:$9,865 Org:$9,865	S: January 2013 C: May 2014	6 month: March 2016 12 month: Sept 2015
S1204	Work-based learning (WBL) -A new learning paradigm: The learner, employer, and facilitator experience	Otago Polytechnic	ITP	Glenys Ker	AA: $10,000 Org: $12,850	S: December 2012 C: March 2014	6 month: skipped 12 month: Sept 2015
S1205	Teaching for numeracy and mathematics transfer in tertiary science	University of Canterbury	Uni	Erik Brogt	AA: $10,000 Org: $10,000	S: November 2012 C: 3 June 2014	6 month: March 2015 12 month: Sept 2015 24 month: June 2016
S1301	Learning a Trade: Becoming a Tradesperson Through Apprenticeship	Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology	ITP	Selena Chan	AA:$11,100 Org: $15,100	S: February 2013 C: July 2013	6 month: Aug 2014 12 month: May 2015 24-month: March 2016
S1302	Learning in Today's Academic Environment	University of Otago	Uni	Dr Kate Wynn-Williams	AA: $10,000 Org: $12,000	S: March 2013 C: June 2015	6 month: Feb 16
S1303	Implementing tikanga and mātauranga for effective learner outcomes & institutional change with a focus on Allied Trades	Tai Poutini Polytechnic	ITP	Tonga Karena	AA: $20,000 Org: $65,000	S: July 13 C: July 15	6 month: Feb 2016

ID/code	Project title	Host organisation	Org. type	Project contact leader	Co-funding	Start (S) and completion (C)	Completed IEF interviews (time points)
S1307	Change Strategies to Enhance Pasifika Student Success at Canterbury Tertiary Institutions. A Collaborative Research Project Between the University of Canterbury, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, and Lincoln University	University of Canterbury	Uni	Pauline Luafutu-Simpson	AA: $15,000 Org: $38,780	S: February 2014 C: December 2015	6 month: Sept 2016
S1402	Facilitating Critical Thinking in Initial Teacher Education (ITE)	Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood NZ	PTE	Tui Summers	AA: $10,000 Org:$20,735	S: February 2014	6 month: Aug 2016
S1403	Informing the development of a student profile for LLB degrees taught at NZ universities	University of Canterbury	Uni	Professor Ursula Cheer and Associate Professor Lynne Taylor	AA: $17,600 Org: $18,910	S: January 2014 C: July 2015	6 month: Feb 2016
S1404	Brown Paper Bag Clinics: Community Pharmacy Education	University of Otago	Uni	Stephen Duffull	AA:$10,000 Org: $29,360	S: June 2014 C: December 2015	6 month: June 16
S1405	Immersive Learning in Health Education	Otago Polytechnic	ITP	Elizabeth Ditzel	AA:$10,000 Org: $67,563	S: April 2014 C: December 2015	6 month: June 2016
S1409	Developing Critical Thinking Skills for Industry Trainees in the Health and Community Support Sector	Careerforce	ITO	Was Nicky Murray but she has left Careerforce	AA: $10,000 Org: $27,800	S: September 2014 C: December 2015	6 month: Oct 2016
S1411	Alternative Assessment Arrangements Policy for Students with Disabilities in Tertiary Education	ACHIEVE		Rachel 'Aluesi	AA:$3378 Org:$3378	S: November 2014 C: April 15	6 month: March 16

Code	Title	Institution	Type	Contact	Funding	Start/Complete	Milestones
N56	Where do they go? The post-classroom journeys of our Youth Guarantee graduates	Hair to Train, Tauranga	PTE	Donna Waterson, General Manager	AA: $9,900 Org: $10,800	S: June 2013 C: March 2014	6 month: Sept 2014 12 month: May 2015
N58	The Development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in NZ	University of Waikato	Uni	Professor Michael Peters	AA: $10000 Org:$10000	S: November 2013	6 month: Jan 2015 12 month: Aug 2015 24 month: Aug 2016
C52	Project based learning in arts and design. What makes it work?	Eastern Institute of Technology	ITP	Chris Verberg, Head of School, ideaschool	AA: $10,000 Org: $21,750	S: November 2013 C: November 2014	6 month: June 2015 12 month: March 2016
C55	Evaluation of Pacific Learner Success in the Trades	Wellington Institute of Technology	ITP	Tavita Filemoni	AA:$10,000 Org:$10,286	S: October 2013 C: December 2014	6 month: April 2015 12 month: Feb 2016
C56	Evaluating a Mentoring Scheme for Trainees in the Primary ITO	Primary ITO	ITO	Mike Styles	AA:$10,000 Org:$10,000	S: December 2013 C: September 2014	6 month: April 2015 12 month: Oct 2015
C57	A beginners guide to plagiarism	Whanganui Learning Centre	PTE	Dr Deb Hill	AA: $10,000 Org: $16,657	S: November 2013 C: May 2015	6 month: March 2016
C58	Strategies for Co-constructing learning in an initial teacher education programme	Massey University	Uni	Alison Sewell	AA:$10,000 Org: $10,248	S: Early 2014 C: October 2015	6 month: May 2016
C59	Māori and Pasifika Students at PTEs: motivation and engagement	The New Zealand Institute of Sport	PTE	Dr David Lillis	AA:$10,000 Org:$20,000	S: 2014 C: Sept 2015	6 month: March 2016
C63	Resources for Māori Second Chance Learners with a Numeracy and Literacy Focus	Matapuna Training Centre	PTE	Peter Howarth-Jarratt - Changed to Anwyl Minaar	AA: $10,000 Org:$12,575	S: June 2014 C: November 2015	6 month: May 2016