

Facilitate grassroots action: Aotea/Great Barrier Learning Hub Project

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Aotea Learning Hub is a physical space for Aotea/Great Barrier Island's Te Kura school students to go for supervised learning, study support and internet access.

Launched in 2017, it is a joint community/ Local Board/ Ministry of Education initiative. The initiative was established due to lack of educational support and facilities for Te Kura students in the Aotea/Great Barrier region.

The **approach** adopted by this project was facilitating a grassroots and community-led approach.

IMPLEMENTATION INSIGHTS

- Just jump in: no model but to jump in and do something that has never been done before
- Run with community ideas: a project that is community-founded and managed
- Critical communication: early buy-in is crucial for project development and support
- Local support: support from the Local Board and CEU/LBS staff was key to the success of the project. The Hub needs to be more embedded in the community.



CHALLENGES

Governance

- The Aotea Education Trust set up to oversee the Hub project was a brand-new trust with inexperienced volunteer trustees who threw their all into it but were not always equipped to face the myriad challenges.

Facility and Funding

- Difficult to find the right venue and location
- The Hub did not fit with any mainstream funding streams. Ministry had to reconsider the project's value. Through advocacy from the local MP Nikki Kaye, the hub attained funding.

Sustainability

- The hub was forced to apply annually for funding for the first two years, viability was uncertain

Student and community buy-in

- Difficult to motivate students who had lost faith in education
- Parents were sceptical of the hub.

REFLECTIONS

- *"Before the Hub, I never did my correspondence schoolwork then I would get told off. Eventually I had the cops to come in. Now I am at the Hub I am doing my schoolwork and it's quite fun"* – Alexis, Hub student
- *"I'm so proud of the Learning Hub. I really felt like young people on Great Barrier deserved the chance to shine We under-estimated how much hard work it would take, but we held onto the dream. Success came through great effort, determination and teamwork of some wonderful people."* – Local Board member Shirley Johnson
- *"It was hard to get motivated before, because there was no teacher standing behind you. It was you trying to do it yourself, which was hard for me. Now I feel more motivated."* Grayson, Hub student

OUTCOMES

- The Aotea Learning Hub has transformed the lives of Great Barrier's correspondence school students. Literacy and numeracy rates have improved.
- Hub teachers encourage and support the students to get involved in various on-island activities like hosting radio shows, entering creative writing competitions and contributing to art exhibitions.
- The students increased social confidence and a renewed love of learning.
- The Ministry of Education has been impressed by the Hub's success that it views it as a model for other rural areas.
- In 2019, the Ministry committed to funding the Hub for the next five years with additional funding support from the local board.

Enable social innovation and social enterprise: Zero Waste Project

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Since 2012, the Zero Waste Network has worked closely with Auckland Council's Waste Solutions Department to address Auckland's waste issues.

Approaches adopted by this project and partnership were as follows: Engaging with communities to set a vision | Investing in community led change | A social procurement approach | Investing in relationships, capacity building and recognition



CHALLENGES

Community needs

- Council's Waste Minimizations team worked proactively with community organizations to understand what communities wanted from council and support community submissions.

Community led

- Ensuring a bottom-up approach not top down as it was ineffective.

Building relationships

- It was important to discuss issues, opportunities and build relationships hence the establishment of the funded quarterly resource recovery network hui.

IMPLEMENTATION INSIGHTS

- Engaging with communities to set a vision
- Investing in community led change
- A social procurement approach
- Investing in relationships
- Investing in capacity building
- Investing in recognition

REFLECTIONS

"Auckland Council has been the biggest influence on the zero waste community sector in years. They have been looking for a group like ours (Zero Waste Network) to help lead the way in Auckland and we have been looking for growth in the sector that we could assist with. Council are coming from across Australasia to Auckland to see what is happening here."

OUTCOMES

- This has contributed to a 10% drop in household waste to landfill in the last ten years, despite an escalating population (commercial and industrial waste however is increasing). It is also creating local employment, social connection, community enterprises and the seeds of a circular economy approach as the inorganic collection gets redistributed in ways that support local community organizations, charities and households.
- This approach has been recognized internationally through Waste Solutions receiving the C40 Solid Waste Award in 2017. The approach is constantly evolving as communities and council change, and as new zero waste ideas and opportunities emerge.

Strengthen support to the voluntary and community sector: **Te Kakano Project**

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Te Kakano is a programme initiated by Auckland Council to support the creation of better services for tamariki and whanau Maori.

The Te Kakano framework has been developed to improve the council's services for tamariki Maori under five and their whanau.

The **approach** adopted by this project was Kaupapa Maori.



REFLECTIONS

- *'The best part of our job is having the privilege to make a difference in people's lives'.*
- *'Make whanaungatanga the objective, manaakitanga and whanaungatanga are the cornerstones to having whanau return time and again'.*
- *'This programme means a lot to us. If we want to deliver these programmes, we need to invest in them and we need to be really clear about what financial investment is on the table, right from the word go, so we can design the programme around that. I believe that Maori in our service delivery spaces are missing out'.*
- *'If you have good relationships with community members, then the project will work better, the outcomes are better, because they feel comfortable and they have faith in you and they can communicate with you. I didn't think it's something we are necessarily resourced to do or it's not necessarily part of our job, to maintain those relationships but I think it is really important'.*

IMPLEMENTATION INSIGHTS

- The framework uses a Kaupapa Maori approach and is being tested through five pilots across the region.
- Over three years, Te Kakano was coordinated through partnership between the Community Services and Community and Social Policy departments – this collaboration across two departments represented a new way of working with the council.
- It was developed by council staff in close collaboration with mana whenua and mataawaka.

CHALLENGES

Time pressures

- Te Kakano co-design process was conducted under significant time pressures including three sites being co-designed concurrently within approximately three months.

Under resourced

- Te Kakano was meant to be integrated into 'business as usual' operations; however, pilots were being asked to create something new and unique that reflected the needs of their community. So while the intention was to create 'better business as usual', pilots felt they were not adequately resourced to do so.

OUTCOMES

- Te Kakano was successful in providing culturally responsive services but struggled to reach the target demographic of undeserved tamariki Maori under five.
- However, Te Kakano is proving to be very popular with more than 180 children involved in the Howick pilot.