Tangata Whenua, Community & Voluntary Sector Research Centre

2010 Community Researcher Awards

Te Rarawa community research

Te Rarawa Iwi Research and Development Group
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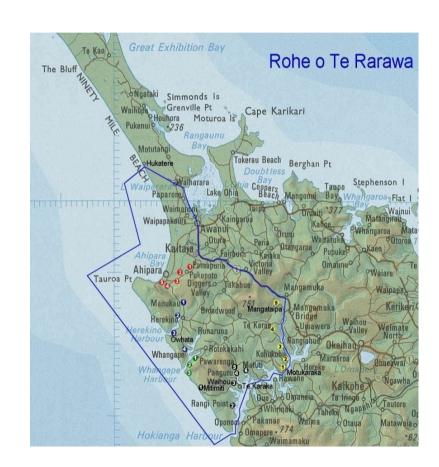
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Introduction

Te Runanga o Te Rarawa; the iwi body that represents the interests of 23 marae in the Far North

Whanau, hapu, marae and iwi development is the basis for Runanga work

Iwi Research and Development (IRD) group established and sits within the Runanga

Iwi Research and Development group

Previously:

• Ad hoc approaches to research

• Opportunities responded to and undertaken in isolation of other mahi and knowledge

• Research was not clearly linked to Runanga direction – generally funder driven

• There were no mechanisms to make use of research findings

Now:

• IRD positioned to prioritise, guide and support research

• More proactive, integrated approach

• Guided by Te Rarawa values, ethics and aspirations

Research projects

- ***Te Mauri o te Ukaipō*** – the intersections between Te Rarawa environments and notions and expressions of well-being;

- ***Te Rarawa Whānau (family, extended family) Development*** – a comprehensive whānau and hāpu development project;

- ***He Kōrero Whanau*** - supporting whānau and hāpu to record their own histories;

- ***Te Rarawa Customary Fisheries and Fishing Practices*** - people's changing customary fishing practices and experiences;

- ***Nga Taonga o Te Rarawa*** – data about taonga held privately by Te Rarawa marae and whanau, the Runanga, and externally by libraries and museums;

- ***Interconnections: Te Rarawa Whānau and Marae, Assets and Knowledge*** – the practical, daily and lived interconnections between Te Rarawa marae and whānau;

- ***Te Rarawa Publications*** – photographs and images depicting Te Rarawa's social history;

- ***Takutaimoana; Foreshore and Seabed*** - hapu and iwi interests and life experiences in relation to fishing, gathering kaimoana, and general use and control of the takutaimoana and its resources.

A collective approach

The mix, the combo, the team working together:

- Community – variously involved, local knowledge

- Researchers – external and community

- Academic institutions – access to research

- Specific expertise and resources e.g. GIS mapping, demography

Basis of research relationship

- Responsive to local needs and aspirations
- Useful/ beneficial outcomes – making a difference for the community
- Community perspectives included
- Designed to strengthen and add value to existing initiatives e.g. hapu plans
- Build capacity and capability e.g. interview training

The important bits

- Demystifying research
- Maintaining relationships beyond contracts
- Building on projects and community interests
- Sharing knowledge
- Including communities in:
  - Tailored research skill-based training
  - Conferences and research hui

Challenges

Processes:

1. Building in time and resource for the start-up/planning stage. It takes time:
   - to bring people together
   - for people to think about the research idea and their aspirations for it

3. Aligning rigid funding contracts with local realities and expectations

3. Getting research findings used (action, informing planning, policy & practice)

Challenges cont

Relationships:

4. Establishing new relationships

5. Reworking existing relationships

Issues

- Previous poor research experiences (duplication, repeat interviews for different purposes)
- Communities who are suspicious of research – will it make a difference? What will they get out of it?
- Research fatigue
- Convincing people that the research is worthwhile, their experiences are valid and valuable
- Competing priorities and attention

Positive outcomes of holistic approach to research

- Research is iwi driven and based on own principles and values
- Research has a purpose - it is relevant and aligned with Rünanga direction, whanau, hapü, iwi needs & aspirations
- Research findings now available to inform policy & practice, & build the local evidence base
- Ability to stretch limited resources
- Development of our own research ethics & processes

More positive outcomes …

- Increased:
  - Community research capacity & skills (interviewer pool)
  - Interest in research
  - Rünanga understanding of issues & expectations
  - Use of local knowledge

- Flexibility to fit better with local realities
- Participants and their stories are valued
- Research is an enjoyable experience for participants