

Prospectus

NEW ZEALAND/HAWAII INVITATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EVALUATION IN THE MAORI/KANAKA MAOLI CONTEXT

* To host a New Zealand/Hawaii invitational conference [a small working group or hui] on evaluation in the Maori/Kanaka Maoli context in the later part of 2003.

The purpose of the conference is furthering strength-focused evaluation practice in the service of policies and programs. The objective is to share experiences, learning, models, and approaches from evaluation in New Zealand and in Hawaii. The goal is to support and disseminate strategies for culturally integrated evaluation activities. The Kohala Center of Hawaii and the Australasian Evaluation Association will jointly organize the conference.

Background

In both New Zealand and Hawaii, a central policy and program purpose is to close the gaps between Maori/Maoli peoples and Pakeha/Haole groups in areas such as employment, housing, health, education and other areas of well-being.

A central evaluation purpose is to support policy development, planning, resource allocation and the accountability of programs designed to enhance the well-being of groups with fewer resources. The road to such evaluation is fraught, however, with notable hazards associated with circumstances common to many lower-income or more marginalized groups but also with circumstances unique to the histories, cultures, traditions, values and strengths of the Maori/Maoli peoples.

While there are many general advice books and exhortations on culturally sensitive evaluation, very little exists that has been grounded thoroughly in a cross-national review such as that being proposed.

Benefits

Two key outcomes of the conference will be guidelines for indigenous evaluation practice and a greatly enriched tool-box of approaches specific to Maori/Maoli peoples. We plan to disseminate the information in ways appropriate for the New Zealand and Hawaii situation. These will include but not be limited to (1) protocol development and (2) training. The approaches probably would include videos, tapes, Powerpoint materials, kits such as those developed by Lifeworks in New Zealand in addition to print forms.

Background

Although each country has unique circumstances, there are some relevant notable commonalities in the situations of Maori/Kanaka Maoli:

- both groups historically have been marginalized economically by a colonial government
- both groups continue to work to improve the cultural and socioeconomic position of their people and to learn from each other in doing so
- many members of both groups, however, continue to be over-represented in the statistics describing poor education, marginal employment, welfare dependency, alcohol and substance abuse, family violence and poor health, among other indicators

- both groups receive assistance from programs aimed at helping close the gap between Maori/Pakeha and Kanaka Maoli/Haole are part of much social planning
- much current policy and programme funding practice is to support demonstration and/or pilot programs aimed at assisting both groups
- many evaluations are tasked with helping fully in the planning and program implementation process as well as outcome determinations
- there has been a long standing but challenging effort to develop a strong cadre of Maori/Maoli evaluators and a toolkit that can help assure meaningful and sensitive data collection, analysis and reporting.

Over the past five years there have been exchanges and discussions on evaluation between researchers and policy analysts in New Zealand and Hawaii. Evaluators from Hawaii have been invited to speak and consult in New Zealand. Evaluators from New Zealand have been invited to give workshops, training, speak and consult in Hawaii. In these exchanges, participants have discussed ideas and concepts that could “leapfrog” and accelerate mutual learning with regard to Maori focused evaluation and Mali focused evaluation.

Examples include:

- when working with indigenous communities, evaluators should be informed about and understand cultural protocols and practices. This general expectation has to become meaningful through specifics. For instance, in both cultures, it is possible that one begins with re-affirming the community and fellowship, often through sharing food and discussing other matters before any policy or technical issues are raised. In both, the kupauna, the elders, are deeply respected, and socially esteemed. Younger community members may wait for permission from the elders to express themselves. In addition, the evaluator does not stand at a podium and speak but listens as the discussion evolves. In both cultures, oral tradition may be the more authentic mode of communication. Hence, surveys and questionnaires may be notably less well-adapted for evaluation than techniques such as focus groups.
- frameworks for evaluation range from participatory democracy to randomized experiments. All have their purposes; all provide rich valid data when appropriately used. All have their limitations. The trade-offs among these frameworks particularly for Maori/Maoli studies need careful attention. The very notion of possibly using different frameworks for different contexts raises its own questions about comparability of conclusions and fairness, as well as susceptibility to biases.

Proposal

We propose a New Zealand/Hawaii invitational conference on evaluation in the Maori/Kanaka Maoli context. The key sectors to be involved would include human services areas such as health, education, income security, and housing as they have the richest background and experiences with service delivery and evaluation.

Areas such as energy policy and the environment have received somewhat less attention in the context of Maori/Maoli focused programs, although evaluations are expanding for such initiatives and culturally appropriate methods by extrapolation could be very valuable. The

possibilities of including these areas in this evaluation conference would be explored during initial planning and in conversations with the supporting organizations.

We propose a four step activity, the first two steps of which could be conducted concurrently.

1. Identifying the substantive evaluation issues and possibilities is the responsibility of an evaluators' group (persons trained in evaluation whose primary responsibilities include evaluation). Building on the October 22-24th landmark conference in New Zealand on Maori-Focused Evaluation and on meetings among Hawaii evaluators, two or three evaluators from New Zealand and two or three from Hawaii would get together to (a) share information on what is already known on which we can build, both what works and lessons learned on what to avoid; (b) develop a framework (panui) for the conference or hui; (c) develop criteria/tentative pool of speakers, facilitators, invitees; and (d) tentatively identify appropriate action channels for product use. At this time, tentative criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the effort would be identified.
2. Helping assured utilization of the results of the Hui is the responsibility of a larger group of persons concerned with evaluation, with research-based program development, with programs for Maori/Maoli peoples. The Steering Group would help to (a) refine the knowledge base; (b) review from a utilization perspective, the framework of organizing questions and appropriate approaches (as the conference should model the lessons learned to date including assuring rich, authentic participation) for the conference; (c) identify invitees and clarify their roles; and (d) establish requirements and a plan for follow-up and dissemination of conference results. These would be reviewed prior to finalization by appropriate decision-makers in New Zealand and Hawaii.
3. To have the biggest impact, we seek to partner with universities, NGOs, government organizations, community based organizations and others.
4. The invitational conference is held in Hawaii under the aegis of the Kohala Center. The Kohala Center would handle conference arrangements, including travel for participants from New Zealand.
5. Follow-up activity is initiated and completed, and the effectiveness of the initiative is evaluated. The Kohala Center, in partnership with other organizations and the Australasian Evaluation Society, would provide logistical support for follow up and dissemination.

Time and Costs

We anticipate a **12 month period** including planning and the conference itself. Planning could begin in February 2003 depending on funding. As much as possible, we would use meetings within New Zealand and within Hawaii, supplemented by e-mails and conference calls, for the planning effort. To help assure that travel expenses would not be a barrier for the people who might have the best knowledge and experience, the budget would pay for all travel, lodging and meals for the planning meeting and for the Hui event itself.

At this stage a rough estimate of costs including costs for management by the Kohala Center) - about **\$40K in US dollars** which include:

1. Evaluators planning, 3 days, travel to New Zealand or to Hawaii by two or three people; lodging; meals; materials preparation - about \$5,000

2. Conference, 3 days, travel to Hawaii by 10-15 people from New Zealand, local travel for 10 -15 people; lodging; meals, materials - about \$25,000
3. Follow-up materials preparation and other support: rough estimates - about \$10,000 with additional support, from the conference partners.

As noted, much of the work would be conducted via e-mail but the in-person planning sessions would be exceptionally valuable. It also is assumed in this that the time of New Zealand and Hawaii evaluation experts would be considered part of their responsibilities by sponsoring/partnership organizations and that any honoraria would be modest and for a very few selected experts if necessary. Part of the cultural context is a “commitment, ownership, buy-in” rather than a payment for attending a conference.

Conference Organizers:

The proposed Planning Team members are:

New Zealand:

Nan Weheipana
Brenda Smith
Kate McKegg

Hawaii:

Shawn Kanaiaupuniu
Lois-ellin Datta
To Be Determined