

FINAL
Evaluation Report
For
Gisborne Voter Participation Project



Document Control

Version History

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
0.1	21/02/2011	Justine Crawford	Minor changes. Add survey results to appendices.
0.2	14/03/2011	Justine Crawford	Add updates from Sarah Pohatu, Mere Pohatu, Na Raihania, Manu Caddie. Add Key Project Recommendations section.
1.0	30/03/2011	Justine Crawford	Add paragraph on page 7, minor tweaks, add Local Government New Zealand presentation to appendices.
2.0	02/05/2011	Justine Crawford	Recalculate voter turnout average. Average totals rather than averages. Update average statistics on pages 6-11, 16.
3.0	06/05/2011	Justine Crawford	

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Organisation	Date of Issue	Version
Iris Pahau	Community Sector Taskforce	02/05/2011	V2.0
Manu Caddie	Ka Pai Kaiti Trust	02/05/2011	V2.0
Sarah Pohatu	TRONP	02/05/2011	V2.0
Ronald Nepe	TROTAK	02/05/2011	V2.0
Mere Pohatu	Te Puni Kokiri	02/05/2011	V2.0
Nedine Thatcher-Swann	GDC	02/05/2011	V2.0
Na Raihania	TDHB	02/05/2011	V2.0
Richard Kingi	Statistics NZ	02/05/2011	V2.0

Approvals

This document requires the following approvals. A signed copy should be placed in the project files.

Name	Signature	Role, Organisation	Date of Issue	Version
Sarah Pohatu		Executive Assistant to CEO, TRONP	06/05/2011	V3.0
Ronald Nepe		CEO, TROTAK	06/05/2011	V3.0
Mere Pohatu		Regional Director, Te Puni Kokiri	06/05/2011	V3.0
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Na Raihania		Chairperson Maori Relationship Board, TDHB	06/05/2011	V3.0
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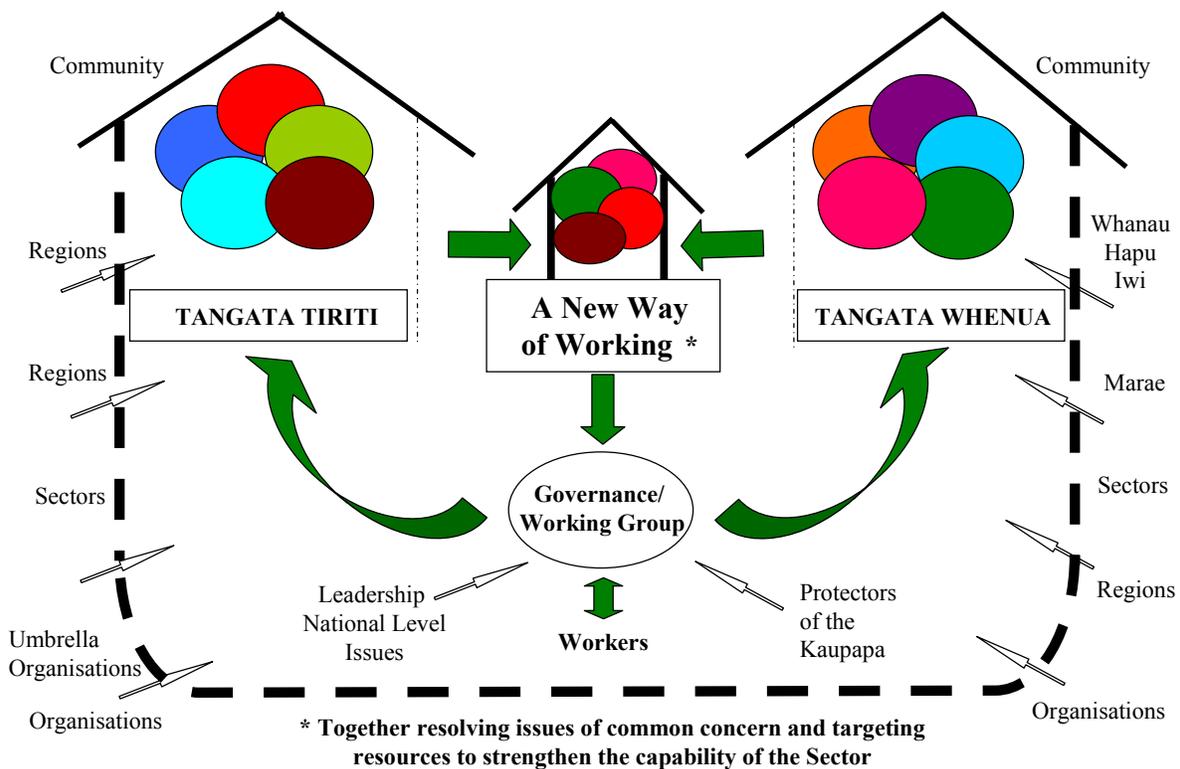
Project Background

In 2009 Ka Pai Kaiti applied for funding from Community Sector Taskforce to facilitate a project to increase voter turnout and participation in the local council and district health board elections in Gisborne 2010.

The key objectives of the Community Sector Taskforce funding are to improve the power of communities to:

- Engage with local issues/aspirations
- Act independently in terms of community aspirations
- Lead positive change
- Connect people to achieve a greater voice and visibility

Additionally, the project must connect with 'Hard to Reach' communities. The objectives of the Gisborne Voter Participation Project clearly met the Community Sector Taskforce criteria and \$40,000 was granted.



The relationship between the Project Team and Taskforce is one of good faith and no surprises. The Project Team agreed to act according to Te Tiriti/Treaty of Waitangi and incorporate the Te Tiriti/Treaty Relationship model into our work, decision making and evaluation.

Research Findings

The first phase of this project was to review existing research and literature for effective strategies on registering, mobilising and educating citizens from communities with low participation in local body elections. We know that:

- voting is lower in communities experiencing higher levels of deprivation
- Maori have lower rates of voter participation than non Maori
- voting is lower amongst Maori in provincial areas than it is in metropolitan areas [but the opposite is true for non-Maori]
- younger people have lower rates of voting than older people
- Maori have a younger age profile than non-Maori [30% Maori aged 10-24]
- voting habits are formed young and influenced by previous generation
- someone who votes in one election is more likely to vote in the next election
- someone who skips an election is less likely to vote in the future
- attitudes suggest disengagement rather than dissatisfaction
- face to face non-partisan voter engagement can increase participation
- efforts led by locals are more effective in encouraging voter turn-out

Project Scope

The Gisborne Voter Participation Project [GVPP] focussed its effort and resources on increasing the overall voter turn out and participation of 1000 Gisborne households in the four neighbourhoods of Outer Kaiti, Kaiti South, Gisborne Airport [Elgin] and Mangapapa. These areas are also recognised as having high deprivation and regarded as 'hard to reach'.

In Scope

The project focussed on people and households within specific meshblock areas. To protect people's right to privacy, a meshblock is the smallest geographic unit for which statistical data is available from Statistics NZ. Meshblocks vary in size, from part of a city block to large areas of rural land. They combine to form the other areas used in Interactive Boundary Maps, i.e. area units, territorial authority areas and regional council areas.

Out of Scope

While it was a desirable objective for the project to positively influence people who lived outside of the targeted meshblock areas, they were deemed out of scope. The project was politically neutral and did not endorse any particular candidate[s]. Our flyers had a photograph of all candidates and candidates who attended community election events were not allowed to campaign. The project was about getting people out to vote rather than telling them who and what to vote for. Also out of scope, was encouraging candidates to stand.

Delivery Approach

The most effective and reliable method of increasing turnout among low-propensity voters is personal contact or a kanohi ki te kanohi approach. Research by the James

Irvine Foundation has found that indirect methods such as mailers, leaflets and robotic calls were largely ineffective, despite including a number of innovations designed to make those indirect methods more personal.

Get out the vote campaign timing is crucial. Campaigns that enter the field closer to Election Day are more effective than those that enter too early. The optimal four week period for this project was Wednesday 8th September to Wednesday 6th October 2010.

In New Zealand, the Maori Party adopted a *kanohi ki te kanohi* approach and visited households on three occasions to familiarise, listen and then talk.

The Gisborne VPP implemented a similar strategy. A voter canvasser visited each target household on two occasions. The first visit focussed on ensuring that everyone who was eligible to vote was enrolled to vote. During the second visit voter canvasser's talked about the three distinct elections for Mayor, Councillors and DHB members, the two different voting methods of first past the post and single transferable vote and finally where to find out more information. A community election event was also held in each neighbourhood during the actual election period. NZ Post provided a secure street receiver or post box at each event so that people could bring their completed voting papers along and post them.

Finally, the GVPP used all media channels to promote the "get out to vote" message. We advertised on Radio Ngati Porou, Turanga FM and Switch FM radio stations; had a segment on TVNZ's Te Karere show; created a facebook page; displayed flyers in shops, cafes, educational institutions and medical centres; had numerous articles printed in The Gisborne Herald and other publications.

Success Criteria

From the outset, the project team set extremely ambitious targets for this project. The project plan stated that this project will be considered a success if voter participation in the following areas is increased by 50%. The project would be an outstanding success if it achieved better results than that.

Area Unit	07 Voter Turnout	Bronze target +25%	Silver target +50%	Gold target +75%	Platinum target +100%
Outer Kaiti	26%	33%	39%	46%	52%
Kaiti South	27%	34%	41%	47%	54%
Gis Airport [Elgin]	27%	34%	41%	47%	54%
Mangapapa	29%	36%	44%	51%	58%

The actual results were more modest than we had hoped for, but we did see positive movement in the right direction. The increase in voter turnout varied from an average 3.7% in Mangapapa to 6.6% in Kaiti South. It was pleasing to see an increase in voter turnout in 24 of the 30 meshblock areas targeted. There were a total of 99 additional voters enrolled in our target areas and 138 more people voted in 2010 compared to 2007.

Overall, in 2010 a total of 16,681 votes were returned, a voter turnout of 55% which was an increase of 2.9% over 2007. It is pleasing that the increases in all of our four target neighbourhoods of 6.6%, 5.5%, 5.3% and 3.7 was greater than the increase in regional turnout.

The appendices include a Local Government New Zealand presentation which shows Gisborne's 2010 voter turnout of 55% is above the New Zealand average of 49%. Chatham Islands have the highest voter turnout 71% and Waikato has the lowest 32%. Interestingly, the biggest increases in voter turnout were achieved by Mackenzie (15%), Opotiki (13%), Auckland (12%) and Westland (11%). These statistics suggest that the original targets set by the project team were too optimistic and ambitious. The lowest changes in turnout were recorded in South Taranaki (-9%), Grey (-9%), Waimate (-10%) and Gore (-12%). Gisborne's turnout was greater than the cities of Auckland (50%), Christchurch (52%), Wellington (40%), Hamilton (37%), Dunedin (52%) and Tauranga (43%).

Detailed results for the project's target areas can be viewed in the tables below.