

Ako Aotearoa's Impact Evaluation Framework

November 2020

Contents

Ako Aotearoa’s Impact Evaluation Framework	3
Section A - Setting the scene	3
Section B - How Ako Aotearoa operationalises the Impact Evaluation Framework	5
Section C - Proposed Implementation timeline for the Impact Tracker	8
APPENDIX 1	9
APPENDIX 2	10

Ako Aotearoa's Impact Evaluation Framework

Section A - Setting the scene

Ako Aotearoa has been consistent in reporting the organisational accountability as an important activity in maintaining partnerships, relationships and trust between funders and stakeholders. This impact evaluation framework (IEF) is a tool developed to measure Ako Aotearoa's impact on the tertiary education system of New Zealand.

The IEF has been in existence since 2012, and a review was undertaken to broaden its scope (via extension of its evaluation rubrics); consider Ako Aotearoa's wider services; to align it better with Ako Aotearoa's future objectives and the national and international context for the global tertiary sector and their evaluation systems, as explained below. It is also an opportunity to:

- extend project work and outcomes, and to further support the project team to maximise reach and positive reach impact
- collect impact stories about the transformative potential of improved individual, group and learner experience, and influence on the external and other contexts
- be able to show both our government funders and our co-funders (our tertiary sector partners) the return on their investment
- better understand how we can more effectively leverage off the good work that has already been done and identify when and how it can be applied in different contexts
- improve and refine existing Professional Learning and Development (PLD) offerings and inform content development of future offerings
- better ensure a process of continuous improvement
- identify PLD needs in the tertiary sector.

The IEF consists of two core components which help demonstrate Ako Aotearoa's achievements against desired objectives:

- a) an indicator framework which captures quantitative information
- b) narratives and case studies that provide qualitative information.

The impact is tracked with the aid of the Vertigo Ventures Impact Tracking tool¹, which analyses these outcomes with respect to the goals and objectives to be reached.

Ako Aotearoa's Shared Strategic Agenda (SSA), Koronga Rautaki Mahitahi, guides the primary purpose and aims of the IEF. This guidance provides culturally enhanced educational capability, amongst other goals, which have potential to strengthen New Zealand's tertiary educational system whereby we seek:

- to be Tiriti o Waitangi-led and to champion Māori and Pacific Peoples and diversity while tackling systemic and unconscious bias
- to be relentlessly leading the change agenda for professional standards in teaching and learning

¹ <https://vvimpaacttracker.com.au>

- to be recognised as change agents in the education space, by being agile and adaptable
- to be champions at transforming the lives of learners, their whānau and their communities.

In undertaking the review of Ako Aotearoa’s Impact Evaluation Framework, Ako Aotearoa also took into consideration, other overarching international and national tertiary educational strategies, as well as recommendations made by previous evaluations of project funding (Chauvel, 2017; BERL 2017).

In building the IEF, at the national level, Ako Aotearoa considered the Ministry of Education’s “Education Counts²” initiative and its indicator system and the recommendations made by Chauvel, 2017; and BERL 2017:

“The report recommends that Ako Aotearoa should explore how it can improve its IEF, so that it records more and better information on how NPF and RHPF projects affect qualification completions. However, it also acknowledges that a more complete understanding of how Ako Aotearoa contributes to economic outcomes will also depend on better external evidence on how more effective teaching and learning practices contribute to increased individual productivity, once learners join the workforce. The contribution to reduced welfare payments also needs to be better understood (BERL, 2017)”.

“Variable impact information across 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 evaluation 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 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 (Chauvel, 2017).”

At an international level, New Zealand is signatory to the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals³, established and globally adopted and confirmed in January, 2020. Statistics New Zealand collates all data across New Zealand on measures on the identified goals, targets and their contributory indicators for reporting on these national goals on behalf of New Zealand. Of these, there are several goals and targets that are relevant to Ako Aotearoa’s remit:

Goal 4 directs that we need to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. In particular, Ako Aotearoa needs to consider Targets 4.3 and 4.6:

- *Target 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.*
- *Target 4.6: By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.*

² Education Counts 2020 - <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/home>

³ Sustainable Development Goals - <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

Additionally, the SDG 8 directs that we need to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

Ako Aotearoa therefore needs to consider Targets 8.5 and 8.6:

- *Target 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.*
- *Target 8.6: By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.*

The context of these evaluation systems and their indicators were well considered in developing Ako Aotearoa’s impact evaluation indicators for incorporation into the Vertigo Ventures Impact tracker.

Section B - How Ako Aotearoa operationalises the Impact Evaluation Framework

Ako Aotearoa’s IEF was first developed in 2010, covering only projects it funded and which were underpinned by rubrics and evaluation tools that guided and supported evaluation activities.

However, the IEF will now encompass the following activities of Ako Aotearoa:

- projects (and initiatives) it has funded
- Regional Hub-managed Professional Learning and Development (PLD)
- Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Cultural Capability (ALNACC) courses
- events
- professional standards activities, including the Tapatoru (Foundation Learning Professional Standards Framework).

Ako Aotearoa’s Approach to Impact Evaluation

The Rubrics

The following four interlinked rubrics are at the core of the evaluation process and are applied as relevant to the respective activity under consideration:

1. Reach – *customisation and dissemination of project outputs/generation and sustainability of professional learning and development, generation and sustainability of communities of practice, networks of learning).*

2. Impact on learners *(educational, social, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes).*

3. Impact on teaching professionals, *including enhanced knowledge, behaviour, motivation, attitude to teaching and beliefs.*

4. Impact on external environment and stakeholders *(whole-of-organisation change, impact on other organisations and across sectors, impact on policy development and implementation, international context).*

The Process

1. Funded projects

a) Completed projects

Project teams are asked to select the indicators they would use to monitor the impact of their projects. Ako Aotearoa staff will work with the project teams, budget holder (or representative) and conduct evaluative interviews, at 6 and 24 months after a project has been completed. At 12 months there will be a “check-in” conversation. The four impact rubrics are explored in a process that seeks to distinguish between independent evidence and that attributed by practitioners.

Interview conversations focus on positive impact and are conducted in the context of the original project goals. Results from the conversations are developed into a project ‘story’ by Ako Aotearoa staff. The story summarises the key achievements of the project to date, and the future focus of activities. These ‘stories’ are updated at each interview point, and act as a comprehensive account of the impact of an individual project over the two years after the work has been completed.

Ako Aotearoa’s in-house impact evaluation tools (including Ako Aotearoa’s indicators and narratives) and templates for evaluating impact and the results are mapped into the impact tracker.

2. Professional Learning and Development

The IEF can help enhance promotion and marketing strategies. For example, data will be collected on how well workshop participants (mainly educators) understood the purpose of the PLD prior to delivery and how well they fared, after the delivery.

The ALNACC PLD and Ako Aotearoa PLD impact evaluation process involves measuring the impact of PLD at four levels:

1. participant satisfaction
2. enhanced participant knowledge and levels of motivation, changed beliefs and/or attitudes
3. enhanced participant behaviour: their application of new knowledge
4. improved learner outcomes.

Impact at level 1 is the easiest to measure, with each subsequent level adding a layer of complexity in the implementation of the evaluation, so level 4 is the most complex to measure. Level 1 yields the lowest degree of evidence, with each subsequent level providing a higher degree of evidence, so level 4 yields the highest degree of evidence of impact.

The purpose of evaluating the impact of PLD offerings is to facilitate data-driven decision-making, particularly in the following areas:

- to measure the effectiveness of PLD offerings
- to measure the relevance of PLD offerings to participants’ daily practice
- to improve and refine existing PLD offerings
- to ensure a process of continuous improvement
- to ensure PLD meets the needs of the target audience
- to ensure PLD meets the expectations of the funding body, where applicable

- to inform reporting to TEC, the Ako Aotearoa Board, Te Rūnanga Māori Caucus, and Pacific Peoples' Caucus
- to identify PLD needs and demands in the sector
- to inform content development of future PLD offerings
- to inform the review of Ako Aotearoa's Capability Building model
- to enhance PLD promotion and marketing strategies.

To collect the data, three SurveyMonkey surveys are sent out, two to participants (a pre-workshop survey and a post-workshop survey), the collated results of which are sent to the facilitator. The Administrator files and records all data, including an evaluation summary, in the Impact Tracker.

3. Marketing and Communications and Events

Measuring and understanding the impact Ako Aotearoa makes in the work we do is a critical part of how we know, and how we inform others about our success. With the collection of impact data through our Impact Evaluation Framework, supported by the Vertigo Ventures tool, we are in a stronger position to tell our stories of success.

4. Professional Standards

A Foundation Learning Professional Standards Framework, the Tapatoru, is currently being trialled. It is envisaged that the IEF will also be used to measure the impact of Tapatoru evidence collection and assessment processes, once these have been finalised.

Section C - Proposed Implementation timeline for the Impact Tracker

	Task	Date	Progress
1.	Tracker introduced to staff and stakeholders	March 2020	On target
2.	Tracker actively used by internal and external teams	April 2020	Ongoing, as training support and one-to-one conversations are needed
3.	Letters of Agreement developed and signed off by external stakeholders	August 2020	On target
4.	User guidelines developed	September 2020	Ongoing
5.	PLD incorporated into tracker	October 2020	Under testing
6.	Selected events incorporated into tracker	February 2021	
7.	Professional Standards related activities mapped into impact tracker	2022	

References

Berl (2017) Estimating Ako Aotearoa's economic impact; Wellington, New Zealand

Chauvel, F (2017) *Measuring the impact of Ako Aotearoa's contribution to the tertiary sector: A summary of two impact evaluation reports. Ako Aotearoa, Wellington, New Zealand*

Chauvel, F (2017 March) *Contributing to better tertiary teaching – The full reports. Ako Aotearoa, Wellington, New Zealand*

Coolbear., P. and Hinton, T. (2013 July). *Evaluating the impact of research projects in tertiary learning and teaching: exploring the geography of change*. Plenary address HERDSA Conference, Auckland, New Zealand

Weir, K. (2014). *Enhancing tertiary teaching and learning through Ako Aotearoa-funded project work: Part 1. Collated results of Impact Evaluation Framework conversations about National Project Fund projects completed from November 2009 to November 2013*. Wellington: Ako Aotearoa

Weir, K., Thomson, R. and Coolbear, P. (2014). *Enhancing tertiary teaching and learning through Ako Aotearoa-funded project work: Part 2. Collated results of Impact Evaluation Framework conversations about Regional Hub Project Fund projects completed from June 2008 to November 2013*. Wellington: Ako Aotearoa.

APPENDIX 1

UN's Sustainable Development Goals Relevant to Ako Aotearoa

GOAL 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

TARGET 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

TARGET 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

TARGET 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

5. Indicator 4.3.1. Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex

TARGET 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

- Indicator 4.4.1. Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill
- Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by sex and type of skill (%)

TARGET 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

- Indicator 4.5.1. Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated

TARGET 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

TARGET 4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

TARGET 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

TARGET 4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing c

GOAL 8

TARGET 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

- Indicator 8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of employees, by sex, age, occupation and persons with disabilities
- Indicator 8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities

TARGET 8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.

- Indicator 8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training

APPENDIX 2

The indicators are integrated into the VV impact tracker.