

25 November 2016

ACE Aotearoa Submission to:

The Productivity Commission-: New Models of tertiary education

Overview

ACE Aotearoa welcomes the findings in the report related to Equity and Social Inclusion (Chapter Three and Nine). ACE Aotearoa is seeking some clarification about the comments on funding (Chapter Six, Nine and Chapter Seven) and is interested in the suggested Student Education Account (Chapter Twelve). Ace has a number of innovative providers and has provided two examples for you to consider for publication in your final report.

Equity and Social Inclusion

The report notes that the commission was unable to find good data on who is not participating in tertiary education that might benefit, why they are not participating and what the implications are for equity of access (p65). There is no question or recommendation related to the equity of access issue. Ace Aotearoa recommends that the commission include a recommendation related to this area. Perhaps this is an area that the Tertiary Education Commission could be responsible for.

This is also related to the comment in Chapter Nine (page 237) about the Adult and Community Education sector's role in promoting social inclusion and well being. ACE Aotearoa welcomes the fact that the confidence and achievement measures are quoted and notes the lack of research on the impact of government cuts on participation by different types of learners. Such research would be welcomed. Whilst the numbers of learners participating in ACE programmes has dropped from around 75,500 in 2010 (Tobias, R: Fifty Years of Learning: A History of Adult and Community Education from the 1960s to the present day) to around 35,500 in 2015 (ACE Aotearoa Annual Report 2015), there is a lack of information about those learners who no longer participate in adult and community education.

We like the question 9.1 on "What evidence is there about the impact of New Zealand Tertiary education on participants or graduates well being, separate from their labour market outcomes?"

Funding and Student Education Account

As noted above the impact of funding reductions was significant for learners and providers. The Ace sector's strength is the knowledge of how to progress learners, generally from a low skill base to contributing and productive members of society. As previously stated ACE Aotearoa submits that there is an urgent need for recognising that the tertiary system is much wider than what is offered at level 4 or above and that attention to the whole system is essential to maintain or increase productivity and well being for New Zealanders into the future.

Ace Aotearoa acknowledges and sees potential in the Student Education Account model but such a model would benefit from design which takes account of the experience of clients and those at the front line of the ACE sector. Any system design for ACE needs to start with the client rather than designed from a top down policy perspective to "fit" a tidy system.

Up scaling

One further suggestion relates to scaling up good provision of service. ACE Aotearoa has a number of tools developed to ensure quality delivery- including Quality Assurance/External Evaluation and Review training, ACE Outcomes model and ACE Learner Pathways and Standards for the ACE Sector. ACE Aotearoa cannot mandate use of the tools and individual members have their own tools and processes. What ACE can do however is promote the tools, provide training and assistance in their use and encourage and share good practice. Whilst this may mean a slow upscaling of good models it does ensure buy in and sustainability. ACE measures of hope and confidence provide useful outcomes measures in the interim and as new learners who have a National Student Number enrol on Adult learning courses outcomes can be measured and related to past learning.

For upscaling to succeed the view of ACE Aotearoa is that providers have the tools and buy into the use of the tools.

Innovative Providers

What follows are two examples of innovative practice in the ACE sector. These were selected from stories in our quarterly newsletter to the sector. We are comfortable with you editing these stories but would like to see the edit prior to any inclusion in your final report.

Innovative Practice One:

ĀKAU - 'a place of transition' in Kaikohe

ĀKAU means where the land meets the water - a place of transition.

Adult and community education is often about a transition or change. The three young women who established ĀKAU in Kaikohe have created a model of ACE that while ticking all the boxes in terms of good practice, is operating in an entirely new context: a professional architectural and interior design studio that provides disengaged young people with a no cost opportunity to learn, using a hands-on approach to design real projects. The pilot programme proved that the studio is a great place of transition.

The three women are: **Ana Heremaia**, Ngapuhi, an interior architect; **Ruby Watson**, an architectural designer and artist; and **Felicity Brenchley**, a registered architect. **The three friends came to Ana's father's home town with the express purpose of putting their architectural and design skills to use for the community. The cost of their teaching comes out of the architectural fees.** ĀKAU, as their website explains, is a design studio 'with a social conscience'.

The story starts back in September 2013 when Ana and Ruby starting discussing the possibility of working with their skills and experience in design and the Kaikohe community. ĀKAU developed into its current business model when Felicity Brenchley joined the group and ĀKAU was one of the eleven teams that were selected from around New Zealand as part of the Ākina Launchpad social enterprise mentoring programme. They then established the ĀKAU Pop-Up! in Kaikohe to test the assumption that if youth are involved in real projects they really do engage.

So when the Ministry for Primary Industry convened three community workshops in March 2015 under the banner of Grow Kaikohe, AKAU along with organisations such as the Far North District Council and Ngapuhi attended. Unemployment was the driver. The workshops came up with a vision and a map of what a positive community spirit and image looks like in Kaikohe. That included (along with all the social and environmental factors) opportunities to learn and grow and get a job;

employers who offer educational internships; skill mentoring and swapping between generations; and hope. They also came up with several start-up projects including a Master Plan.

Three months later ĀKAU had their pilot programme for seven unemployed young people up and running. In was a twenty-hour a week programme (plus homework), it ran for six months, and was in partnership with NorthTec which provided the unit standards and moderation for sixty L2 credits.

We spoke just to Ruby (because she was there), about how it worked and what their plans are. Ruby:

“We rent a small place, just about 120 square metres, with a small office and kitchen. And before we started we made it look great. We painted it, it’s fresh and fun, with a lot of plants and pictures: a bit different from what is usual in Kaikohe. It’s very central. Right opposite the library.

“We recruited most of our first students by just going up to young people about the town and asking them whether they’d like to come to the studio and have a look around and see whether they were interested in being part of the programme. At the beginning we had seven, but in the end four graduated: one had big behavioural issues that we weren’t able to deal with, one went back to school (and we saw that as a great result), and one had big things happening in their family life.

“All of them were Māori and all had left school at fifteen or sixteen.

“Every day is slightly different. We always start with a check in at nine o’clock, so people can say how they are feeling and what’s going on in the family. One weekend there were five suicides, really heavy stuff... So we need to know what’s winding them up and what is working for them – and also let them know what we are aiming for that day.

“Every student has their education action plan, and we look at that every two weeks. They come to realise what they are really passionate about, what they’re good at and what they want, and so their goals change. We don’t use a work book. We look at the unit standards and work out how we can teach these with a bit of theory (and a handout), but mostly by doing. Our students prefer oral information and practical learning, so that’s the way we teach. We let them work things out for themselves as much as possible. I think this year we might standardise the approach a bit more, start with the theory and the handout and then go onto to the practical stuff...

“Most of them hadn’t used computers much so we did a 101 computing paper...but there was one young woman who ended up being great at Sketch up and she ended up teaching us a lot...

“During the six months we worked on several real design projects. The first was a Paddle Stool. The students worked together and came up with a concept. We helped with the detail, and showed how we were doing it so they could see the documentation. You can see the stool on our website. Then we got a contract to redesign the local marae. The marae has been a great project for them because they had all grown up on marae, they have the experience, so they really got it. Their design involved shifting the wharenui and building a new wharekai and wharepaku. The youth did the concept drawings and models and then presented them to the marae committee, just like any architectural company would do. The clients loved it and the youth loved it...

“Towards the end of the programme we did a two day hiko to Auckland. The youth organised it all and we got a big van and drove down... We went to Jasmx Architects, Material Creative Interior Design, designer furniture shops, the art gallery (they had never seen anything like it), and to AUT. We went into an architectural workshop there and they had a look at what the students made that year. They had a look at three-D printers and made a jelly mould...that blew their minds!

“As a result of visting Jasmax Te Teira who had originally wanted to become a builder, changed his goal. He thought, I could be that guy that talked to us! So now he is off to Unitec to start a Bachelor of Architectural Design...

“The others all ended up with more confidence and ideas for their future, too. The youngest, Rakky, who was just fifteen wants to be a businesswoman. She is looking at a L3 course, and in the future hopes to do a co-joined degree in business and design.

Honey, was looking forward to going to university too. She has got what it takes but whānau is pretty important and that is keeping her in Kaikohe. We will hopefully have a lot to do with her this year, perhaps she will come back and work with the next generation of ĀKAU designers.

Jayden is going to work on his uncle’s farm or start a building apprenticeship. He likes the hands-on stuff. The course gave him a lot of confidence, design is not for everyone, but we can help by making sure he is making good decisions and thinking outside the box for the future. He is awesome. We see all of their decisions as a success: our goal is to give them confidence, find out where their skills are and help them start dreaming... Positive role models are important too.

Sustainable

This year (2016) ĀKAU has seventeen enrolments and as we went to print their new course was about to start. It will be a full year course this time, and the students will be able to gain 120 credits. The big addition is a community component which will allow the students to initiate their own project.

With seventeen students ĀKAU more than meets NorthTec funding requirements and the three women will get paid for their tutoring. It is all part of their plan to become sustainable in every way.

Ruby again: “Our kaupapa includes sustainability, and there are three prongs to that: one, environmental, using materials of the earth and caring for papatuanuku; two, making sure that ĀKAU can sustain itself as a business; and three, that the youth that we work with can create a sustainable business for themselves. We help them create a pathway so they can care for themselves and their whānau.”

Innovative Practice 2:

WISE Collective: supporting income generation for refugee women

The WISE Collective (Women - Inspired - Strong - Empowered and Enterprising) project supports women from a refugee background to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to start-up or contribute to activities so that they can generate income for their families.

Funded by first the JR McKenzie Trust and now Foundation North, this is one of several community projects run in partnership between the Auckland Regional Migrant Services Trust (ARMS) and the Auckland Refugee Community Coalition (ARCC).

Former refugee women meet each week in two WISE Hubs - one at Henderson Massey, another at Mt Roskill. During the two hourly session women are linked to free support, information, mentoring, wellbeing, and training and social enterprising opportunities, while enjoying the friendship of women from other cultures.

The WISE Collective Project has been active for almost four years. Over that time more than 200 women have been involved. They come from sixteen countries of origin including Iraq, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burma.

Mary Dawson, the CE at ARMS says that the WISE Collective Project suits different women in different ways and not all women attend all activities. Some may participate only in WISE Hub meetings where they can get information and support, while others also come to the various training programmes that are offered.

Training for Catering

One of the main income generating activities is providing food - either through a catering service or running food stalls at the New Lynn Ethnic Food Market or sometimes at other markets and community events.

The WISE Catering Team, which has about forty members, has a Facebook menu offering eleven different cuisines. Word of mouth means the service is popular. But there is a real need to make sure that the women are meeting all the food safety handling requirements. So all the women who are working in food-based social enterprise have completed training in the new Food Control Plan System. They also have had training in food presentation, IRD requirements, customer service, business skills, budgeting and record keeping, be your own boss, and tips on all the things they need to know when running a stall at a market - like proactively approaching people to try food, or understanding what 'vegan' (no fish sauce!) or 'gluten free' food is, so they can cater for those growing sectors of the market. Some of the training is provided by specialist agencies such as NZ Food Safety, other sessions are run by the two project workers - both of whom (like others before them) originally came to the hubs as participants.

Now most of the women are more than capable of setting up and running their own stalls at different local festivals, with just minimal help from the WISE Collective project staff.

The catering service and the food stalls are all done through the WISE Collective and a percentage of the earnings are returned to the project. Being a collective was a decision made by the women themselves when the project was first established.

The other income-generating activity facilitated by the WISE Hubs is crafts. It's a more challenging business because, unlike catering, it is not client-driven. The women have to make goods that are attractive to the New Zealand market. So while woollen heritage blankets, for example, are popular products to make, the women also need to learn about the items, designs and colours that will sell.

One of the outcomes of generating their own income is that the women have an incentive to keep on training and learning. Many may have done some basic English Language courses when they arrived in New Zealand, now they need to learn more.

Mary Dawson: "We are helping women to get out of their homes, become less isolated and feel more comfortable interacting with the wider society. It is a kind of spiral process: we support them to build up their confidence and skills and often we encourage them to go back for more English training or to gain computer skills or get their driving licence. Our hope is that over time they will use their earnings to buy their own equipment. Some are then ready to fly on their own but at the moment many of the women still want to work as part of the WISE Collective.

Other training and activities

One of the main barriers for women to become more independent is not being able to drive, so the WISE project helps the women get their licence (and then provides informal training on issues as they emerge, like map reading and what to do if you have an accident). Other courses have included Healthy Eating Healthy Living and Basic First Aid.

The Hub meetings also include information sessions on subjects like growing micro greens or Immigration and WINZ. The Hub meetings always include shared food, games and activities to improve English fluency, and quite often someone from an agency such as Public Health comes along,

Sasikala Syed Niyamathullah, a refugee from Sri Lanka, is currently one of two WISE Project workers. One of her jobs is to put together a weekly newsletter which goes out to over 300 WISE Hub members. Nanmyat Htwe, originally from Burma, is the other part time project worker. Nanmyat was an activist back in the Thai-Burma refugee camp where she worked with NGOs carrying out an Anti Child-Trafficking programme for the people living in unsafe areas especially in the Mekong area. She is currently completing a Degree of Applied Management at Manukau Institute of Technology.

Nanmyat: 'My job in the WISE Collective involves organising, guidance and interpreting for my community members for WISE trainings and workshops, as well as coordinating market stalls. What I like best about this role is working with many community people especially women because they do not have confidence to get involved in the community and they live alone at home. Since the WISE Hubs started, they are meeting, encouraging and sharing information with each other and are enjoying and participating in their society. They even have confidence to vote in the elections for their leaders and their government. Women in my community are benefitting from participating in the WISE Project - getting jobs and becoming involved in stalls.

"For me, my WISE role has given me the opportunity to practice what I am learning in my MIT course, and to have a better understanding of the NZ working and communication styles. I like it too that my family is also involved in supporting my WISE activities."

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