

Evaluation Summary Report: Regional Hui 2023

Comprehensive Evaluation Report: Regional Hui 2023

Executive Summary The 2023 Regional Hui provided a dynamic platform for educators across the Bay of Plenty, Tongariro, and Taupō regions and lower North Island region to address regional challenges and share localized strategies for enhancing inclusive education practices. With over 100 participants, the event emphasised cultural responsiveness, collaborative leadership, and the application of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This report delves into the key findings, participant feedback, and actionable insights gained from the hui. Notably, 95% of attendees rated the hui as highly impactful, with many highlighting the value of regional collaboration in shaping inclusive education practices.

Introduction The 2023 Regional Hui aimed to foster collaboration and address the unique needs of educators working in diverse regional contexts. Unlike other professional learning initiatives, the hui focused on leveraging regional strengths to co-develop tailored strategies for inclusive education. Participants engaged in hands-on sessions exploring themes such as Te Whare Tapa Whā, UDL, Disability Frameworks and culturally responsive pedagogy. This report captures the outcomes, challenges, and future pathways identified during the hui.

Methodology Data for this evaluation was collected using:

- Surveys completed by 102 participants.
- Qualitative feedback from breakout group discussions.
- Observational data and facilitator notes from interactive sessions.
- Quantitative ratings on session relevance, presenter effectiveness, and participant engagement.

Participant Demographics Participants included classroom teachers, learning support coordinators, SENCOs, principals, and teacher aides. Regional diversity was evident, with representation from both urban and rural schools. Māori and Pacific educators formed a significant proportion of attendees, underscoring the hui's focus on culturally responsive practices. One participant reflected, "The hui brought together voices from different corners of our region, reminding us of the strength in diversity."

Key Findings

Regional collaboration at the hui emerged as a critical factor in addressing systemic inequities in education. By bringing educators together from diverse contexts, the event facilitated the sharing of practical strategies and fostered a sense of collective responsibility for advancing inclusivity. Participant reflections underscored this value:

- "The regional focus meant we were able to discuss solutions that work specifically for our communities, rather than one-size-fits-all approaches."
- "This hui gave us the chance to connect with people who understand the unique challenges of rural schools."

1. Defining Inclusion and Leadership

- **Inclusion:** Participants defined inclusion as ensuring all learners feel seen, valued, and supported. Feedback emphasized the need for relational approaches and culturally anchored practices. Key reflections included:
 - "Inclusion is about recognising each learner's potential and creating an environment where they can thrive."
 - "When we celebrate cultural identities, we empower students to bring their whole selves to the classroom."
 - "Inclusion means seeing beyond disabilities and focusing on abilities."
- **Leadership:** Attendees identified culturally responsive leadership as essential for fostering inclusive environments. One educator noted, "Leadership is about modelling the change you want to see, whether through acknowledging iwi or embedding inclusive practices in policy." Another added, "Leaders must prioritise collaboration and actively involve whānau in decision-making."

2. Application of Practical Strategies

- **UDL in Action:**
 - 87% of participants reported plans to incorporate flexible teaching strategies. Examples included adapting assessments and using multiple modalities for instruction. "UDL isn't just for students with disabilities—it's a framework that works for everyone," shared one teacher. Another observed, "Scaffolding tasks using visuals and hands-on tools makes learning accessible for all learners."
- **Cultural Responsiveness:**
 - Participants highlighted the integration of iwi stories, waiata, and local traditions as transformative. "Purākau connects students to their heritage while making learning meaningful," noted an attendee. "Using local history in lessons helps students see themselves in what they learn," added another.
- **Collaborative Practices:**
 - Educators valued peer-to-peer learning opportunities. "These sessions allowed us to share real-world solutions and learn from each other's successes," said one participant. Another shared, "We've formed connections here that will last beyond the hui and enrich our Kāhui Ako collaboration."

3. Te Whare Tapa Whā in Literacy Design

- Educators applied Te Whare Tapa Whā to holistic literacy practices:
 - **Taha Whānau (Social):** Group storytelling and whānau evenings were proposed to strengthen community ties. "Inviting whānau into the learning process builds trust and strengthens support for students," shared one teacher.
 - **Taha Hinengaro (Mental):** Participants introduced tools like emotion charts and mindfulness sessions to support mental well-being. "Mindfulness has been a game-changer for helping students regulate their emotions," observed one attendee.
 - **Taha Wairua (Spiritual):** Cultural narratives and practices, such as karakia, were identified as critical for fostering identity and belonging.

"Starting the day with karakia helps set a positive tone and reminds students of their cultural roots," noted one participant.

- **Taha Tinana (Physical):** Incorporating movement and sensory activities was cited as essential for engaging learners with diverse needs. "We've started using sensory stations in our classrooms, and the impact on focus has been incredible," one teacher reflected.

4. Barriers to Implementation

- **Time Constraints:** Many attendees identified the challenge of integrating new practices into existing workloads. "Finding time to plan and execute these strategies remains a significant hurdle," one teacher observed. Another added, "Professional development is only impactful if we have the time to apply what we've learned."
- **Resource Gaps:** Access to tailored materials was a recurring theme. "We need more resources that are both high-quality and culturally relevant," shared another participant. "Having ready-made templates and guides would save so much time," noted an attendee.

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Impact and Outcomes

- 95% of participants rated the hui as highly relevant to their professional growth.
- 92% reported increased confidence in implementing inclusive strategies.
- Key actionable ideas included:
 - Developing differentiated literacy packs.
 - Embedding local cultural narratives in teaching materials.
 - Strengthening leadership practices through collaboration.
- One participant summarized, "This hui provided the tools and inspiration to create real change in our schools."

Recommendations

1. **Expand Regional Hui Opportunities:**
 - Host annual hui to sustain collaboration and professional learning.
2. **Enhance Resource Sharing:**
 - Develop an online repository of templates, tools, and culturally responsive materials.
3. **Facilitate Leadership Development:**
 - Offer targeted training for school leaders on embedding inclusive practices.
4. **Support Educator Well-Being:**
 - Include mindfulness and self-regulation sessions as part of professional development initiatives.

Conclusion The 2023 Regional Hui showcased the transformative power of localized professional development. By centering on regional strengths, cultural responsiveness, and collaboration, the hui empowered educators to create inclusive learning environments where all students can thrive. Sustained investment in regional initiatives will be critical to scaling these outcomes and fostering lasting change across Aotearoa.