

LECTURE • ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

Reducing administrative burden from the inside

What the Māori Communities COVID-19 Fund shows about funding managers and burden

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Administrative burden: three costs

Administrative burden is the cost people experience when they deal with the state. It is commonly broken into three kinds of cost (Moynihan, Herd & Harvey, 2015).

COST 1

Learning costs

Finding out that a programme exists, whether you are eligible, and how to access it.

In the MCCF: finding out who in the whānau was eligible for vaccination, and when and where to get information or a vaccine.

COST 2

Psychological costs

The stress, stigma and loss of autonomy that come with dealing with the state.

In the MCCF: the stress and stigma of interacting with people often unknown to the whānau.

COST 3

Compliance costs

The rules, forms, documents and reporting required to get and keep a benefit or a service.

In the MCCF: application processes and reporting.

The fund at a glance

\$128.98m

invested between October 2021 and 30 June 2022

\$70.55m

Phase One: rapid vaccination activities

\$38.05m

Phase Two: the resilience of vulnerable Māori communities

\$20.39m

Phase Three: helping hapori Māori manage the impact of Omicron

HOW IT WAS RUN

Announced 21 October 2021

By Ministers Davis, Henare and Jackson, to accelerate Māori vaccination rates and prepare communities for the COVID-19 Protection Framework.

Three agencies

Investment decisions were prepared by officials from Te Puni Kōkiri, Te Arawhiti and Manatū Hauora.

Regional officials as the bridge

Te Puni Kōkiri regional staff (kaimahi) worked between Wellington-based officials and the fund applicants (kaitono).

Source: Te Kawa & MacDonald (2023), Māori Communities COVID-19 Fund evaluation report, Te Puni Kōkiri.

How we asked the question

59 interviews

September to November 2022, all online, opening and closing with karakia.

Kaitono (iwi/Māori providers), kaimahi (Te Puni Kōkiri regional staff) and Wellington-based officials.

Q-method with Āta

Q-method quantifies shared viewpoints: people are the variable, not their traits.

Āta builds the trust participants need to feel safe to share their views.

THREE QUESTIONS FROM TE PUNI KŌKIRI

- 1 Did the MCCF assist in improving vaccination uptake between October 2021 and June 2022?
- 2 Whether and how did the MCCF help improve vaccine uptake and build community resiliency?
- 3 What are the lessons in collaboration between Te Puni Kōkiri, Te Arawhiti and Manatū Hauora?

Source: Te Kawa & MacDonald (2023), *Māori Communities COVID-19 Fund evaluation report*, Te Puni Kōkiri.

Burden reduced for whānau

The MCCF improved equity in outcomes by funding services that practically reduced the administrative burden on whānau, so they could access vaccine information and vaccination services.

Whānau living rurally and remotely

Tamariki and rangatahi

Whānau who needed a “trusted messenger”

Tāngata whaikaha

Learning costs

Community engagement turned learning about vaccines from an individual burden into a collective learning effort, still paying off at the time of the evaluation.

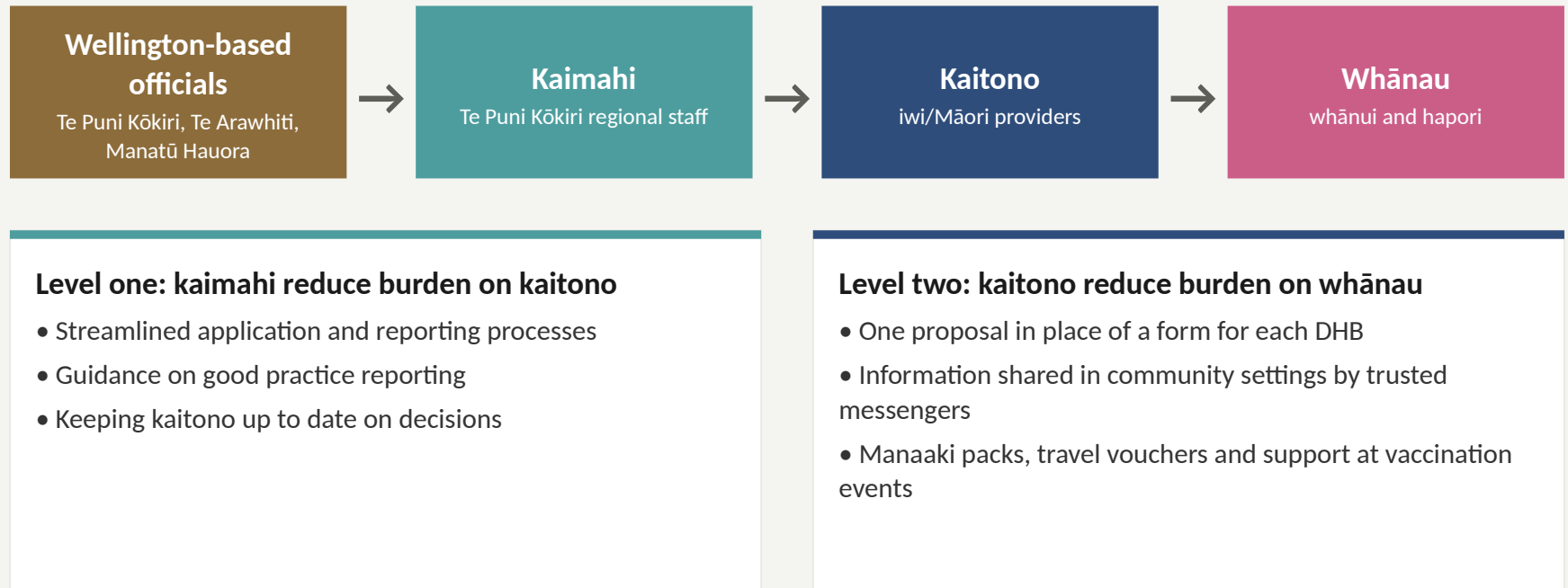
Psychological costs

Coming together as whānau, whānui, hapori and neighbours reduced the stress and stigma of interacting with clinicians who were strangers.

Compliance costs

Kaitono reported that proposals were easy to fill in and that reporting was simple and appropriate.

Burden was reduced at two levels



Source: Te Kawa & MacDonald (2023), Māori Communities COVID-19 Fund evaluation report, Te Puni Kōkiri.

Kaimahi actively reduced burden

“Kaimahi found the right balance between compliance that enabled accountability and compliance that became a burden.”

THE EVALUATION, SUMMARISING KAITONO

Streamlining

Application and reporting processes were streamlined, so compliance served accountability.

Guidance

Kaimahi gave guidance on good practice reporting, lowering the learning cost of complying.

Information

Kaimahi kept kaitono up to date on decisions, smoothing the flow of information.

Kaitono: “the application proposals were easy to fill in, they had good support from kaimahi, and the reporting was simple and appropriate.”

Source: Te Kawa & MacDonald (2023), Māori Communities COVID-19 Fund evaluation report, Te Puni Kōkiri.

From forms to whānau

BEFORE

Elsewhere

Kaitono described days wasted filling out forms for one DHB, only to be asked to fill out a completely different one for another DHB.

They also described significant learning and compliance costs attached to funding from other agencies.

AFTER

In the MCCF

Kaitono could ignore DHB boundaries and work along whakapapa and whenua lines. For many, it was the first time they could work with the Crown in this way without being penalised.

Because they filled in one proposal, they used the spare capacity to travel to remote whānau or support a vaccination event.

“Because we built trust through the practice of manaakitanga, we were invited back to drive that kaumatua to get his vaccination while enrolling him in the GP clinic and connecting him with his local Whānau Ora navigator.”

KAITONO

Facilitative, not authoritative

The role of kaimahi became geared towards information brokerage and collective learning.

1

Stand back and let
kaitono take the lead

2

Identify and applaud
effective practice

3

Share the lessons

4

Help others try them in
their own context

5

Create and recreate the
overall strategic
purpose

“A culture of bureaucratic entrepreneurialism that was answerable and accountable while playing with possibilities, moulding to the means, and working through the necessary methods, all the while engaging in learning to be effective.”

THE EVALUATION

Where burden remained

The application form

Some kaitono attributed negative value to the difficulty of filling in the application form.

The end of the financial year

Funding was not flexible enough for changing circumstances. Community needs did not stop on 30 June 2022, and the “bureaucratic assumption that it did was frustrating and naive”.

Power imbalances

Officials and kaimahi did not think the MCCF sought sufficient feedback from providers or actively managed the power imbalances; kaimahi had to manage them.

Voices at the table

Officials agreed that, ideally, more iwi/Māori voices would have been at the decision-making table, but the speed of deployment did not allow it.

Two recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

Improve programme impact data

Better mapping between investment costs, impacts and benefits, aligned if necessary to the Whānau Ora Pou, if only to reduce the compliance burden on providers.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Iwi/Māori voices at the table

Include more iwi/Māori voices at the decision-making table, irrespective of the speed and pace of the programme delivery schedule.

THE LESSON ABOUT DESIGN

As the rollout matured and the risk reduced, funding decisions moved closer to where the work went on. Decisions were made at three levels within the Crown and at least two levels by kaitono.

References

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He pātai

Questions and discussion

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