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Report explores Māori perspectives on volunteering

A soon-to-be-released report on Māori and volunteering promotes the term *mahi aroha* as the most appropriate way to describe the way many Māori volunteer.

Mahi aroha – work performed out of love, sympathy or caring and through a sense of duty – was the term agreed by research participants and the researchers behind the report titled *Mahi Aroha: Māori Perspectives on Volunteering and Cultural Obligations*.

The report is based on research carried out by Pam Oliver and Associates and a literature review on indigenous models of volunteering and Māoritanga provided by Dr Catherine Love. The research was commissioned by the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) and is part of a broader OCVS project to examine and promote different cultural perspectives on volunteering. The OCVS also works to identify and remove barriers to volunteering in government legislation, policy and practice.

The report reveals that *mahi aroha* for many Māori is based on the notion of *whanaungatanga* (kinship) and the benefits – both for individuals and the wider community – derived from contributing to the collective good.

Research participants identified a broad range of motives for the *mahi* they undertook. *Tikanga* Māori (doing the right thing according to customs and beliefs handed down through generations) was the common link for people's motivations. *Mahi aroha* was seen as an important aspect of cultural survival and identity, which in turn contributed to people's overall social and economic wellbeing.

To order a copy of the report, email ocvs@msd.govt.nz and the report will be available for download on the website www.ocvs.govt.nz after publication on 30 April.

Community- government forum on working together

A joint community-government forum on 20–21 June will explore new ways for the government and community sectors to work together. The forum provides an opportunity for both sectors to discuss common issues, and work towards putting in place a lasting mechanism for engaging with each other.

The Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) is helping co-ordinate and plan the forum in conjunction with a steering group of representatives from the community sector, which includes people from sports, health, volunteering, international development, social services and government.

“The community and voluntary sector is large, complex and diverse, with many different players,” says Brenda Ratcliff, OCVS Director. “The challenge for the steering group and those who attend the forum will be ensuring we have wide representation from across the community sector at local, regional and national levels, and from all relevant sub-sectors.”

The forum is the latest in a range of government initiatives to improve relationships with the community sector. These include the establishment of the Community and Voluntary Sector Working Party in 2000, the signing of the Statement of Government Intentions for an Improved Community-Government Relationship in 2001, and the Good Practice in Action seminar series run by the OCVS since 2005.

“The relationship between the community sector and government can take many forms – we may be partners, funders, service providers, parties to a contract, clients or mutually-concerned citizens. Often we have multiple roles simultaneously and may have a superb working relationship at one level, but challenges and different priorities at another,” Brenda says. “The forum aims to establish a way forward for constructive dialogue to continue between relevant ministers, government agencies and community and voluntary sector organisations.”

See www.ocvs.govt.nz for further information.

'Community engagement' explored at conference

Hugh Lawrence and Ann Walker of the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) presented a challenging paper at the Social Policy, Research & Evaluation (SPRE) Conference held in Wellington on 3–5 April.

The OCVS paper, Investing in Communities of Interest: Building Engagement to Maximise Opportunities for All, explored the challenges involved in identifying targets, clearly establishing the mandate particular organisations or individuals have to speak on

behalf of others in the community – and whether their views are representative of the wider sector.

The paper also examined new forms of civil engagement, challenges for the community/government relationship, and the broad range of 'communities of interest' that can be identified, including those based around a particular issue, geographical area, region, ethnicity, religion, culture, special interest, or service delivery.



Hugh Lawrence and Ann Walker prepare their paper for the 2007 SPRE conference.

Conference delegates, including policy practitioners, non-government organisation representatives, researchers, evaluators and others from the wider community, discussed and debated the landscape of social policy in New Zealand.

The paper is available at www.ocvs.govt.nz/publications/#papers

Key events 2007

16 April

Statistics NZ announces number of non-profit organisations in NZ

20-22 April

Global Youth Service Day

30 April

Mahi Aroha research published

15-25 May

Regional Funders Forums

17-23 June

Volunteer Awareness Week

20-21 June

Community-Government Forum

August

Non-Profit Institutions Satellite Account published

1 Nov

International Volunteer Manager Appreciation Day

5 Dec

International Volunteer Day

Funders making connections

A series of regional funders' forums is bringing philanthropic, corporate, government and other grant providers together to share information and learn from each other's experiences.

The forums are being organised by Philanthropy New Zealand, the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) and the Department of Internal Affairs with input from local grant providers to ensure the events reflect regional needs.

Forums have already been held in Canterbury and Wellington, and others are planned for the following regions:

- 15 May Dunedin/Southland at Dunedin
- 16 May Mid and South Canterbury at Timaru
- 18 May Bay of Plenty at Rotorua
- 21 May Hawke's Bay/Manawatu at Hastings
- 22 May Northland at Whangarei
- 23 May Gisborne at Gisborne
- 24 May Waikato at Hamilton

25 May Taranaki/Manawatu at Wanganui

5 July Auckland

(NB Dates may change.)

It is hoped the forums will provide a foundation for future regional networking and communication between grant providers, grant seekers and non-government organisations.



Luamanuvao Winnie Laban, Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, opens the Wellington forum.

For more information contact Philanthropy New Zealand: info@philanthropy.org.nz