**Lotteries COVID-19 Community   
Wellbeing Fund Evaluation**

**Evaluation Report**

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17 December 2021

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# Executive Summary

### Introduction

The Lotteries COVID-19 Community Wellbeing Fund (The ‘Fund’) was established to focus on community and social initiatives that increase the strength and resilience of communities in the wake of COVID-19. The Lottery Grants Board (LGB) allocated $40 million to the Fund over 2020-21, which offered one-off grants to support hapū, iwi and community organisations. Design and implementation of the Fund was led by Hāpai Hāpori in the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA).

This report presents findings from the formative and summative phase of the evaluation undertaken from April to October 2021, focusing on delivery of the Fund to date and learning from this process. This report includes learning from two tranches of grant applications: the first immediately following launch of the Fund; and the second following a pause in late 2020 to re-tune selection criteria, to support greater access by priority communities.

### Approach to this evaluation

Eight Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) guide this report, with the first five focusing on the formative evaluation, and the remaining three focusing on the summative evaluation.

#### Formative

1. To what extent is the Fund reaching its intended communities and supporting equitable funding access, including for hapū, iwi and Māori communities, priority communities (Māori, Pacific and other ethnic communities) and new communities who had not previously accessed Lotteries funding?
2. What are the barriers and enablers to reaching the Fund’s intended target communities and achieving equitable access to the Fund?
3. To what extent, and in what ways have the new ways of working established through the Fund strengthened the capacity of Hāpai Hāpori, and how have these influenced other changes in Hāpai Hāpori and DIA?
4. What have we learned from development and implementation of a rapid response fund, for similar funds in the future and for grant-making practice in general?
5. What is the value that the Fund offers to grant-making processes over business-as-usual approaches?

#### Summative

1. To what extent has the Fund reflected the needs and wishes of participating communities?
2. What has been the impact of the fund among successful recipients, including hapū, iwi and Māori communities?
3. In what ways does the Fund deliver value to participating communities?

Data collection for this phase of the evaluation draws on a review of background information; interviews with Fund stakeholders; a survey of grant applicants (referred to as community survey respondents); analysis of the Fund grant database, covering the first and second tranche of funding; and interviews with 39 grantees (i.e. successful applicants, and referred to as grantee interviews).

Criteria developed for KEQ1, KEQ3 and KEQ6 have informed evaluative assessments in this report.

### Reaching intended communities and delivering equitable access

With data from both tranche one and two, the Fund succeeded in engaging hapū, iwi and Māori communities, Pacific-led organisations, and organisations that are new to Lotteries grant processes. Some 11% of community survey respondents were from Māori organisations, 9% were from Pacific-led organisations, and 15% were new applicants. Overall, 63% of applicants were from small organisations (those with five staff or fewer).

There is positive evidence that the funds are reaching Māori and Pacific communities in an equitable way. Māori and Pacific organisations application success rate was comparable to other organisations; in addition, Māori organisations received an estimated 18% of funding and Pacific organisations received 12% of funding.

Organisations that were new to Lotteries funding were however less well represented in successful funding, receiving 12% of funding available.

Most grant applicants thought the grant-making process had the right supports available, with 79% indicating they had the right support during the application process (there were no differences between Māori, Pacific and other organisations in this response). New organisations to the funding process or organisations with no paid staff or one to five staff were less likely to agree with this statement.

Reflections by participants on the funding process were generally positive, with over 93% indicating they would apply again if a similar opportunity arose, that they were treated with respect and courtesy, and that they were treated fairly. Those in tranche two were more likely to indicate they would apply again for a similar fund compared to those in tranche one, and were more likely to indicate that they had the opportunity to get information about the funding decision.

### Enablers and barriers to equitable access

Through stakeholder interviews and community survey responses, a wide range of barriers and enablers to equitable access in the Fund were identified. Key enablers included:

* A clear vision for the Fund that enabled a shift in criteria and approach
* The ability to pause grant-making in late 2020 and adapt delivery
* Centralising assessment processes for incoming applications, to free up capacity for community engagement and support by advisors
* Knowledgeable and well-connected community advisors with close networks in their communities, and positive and constructive relationships
* Delegation of decision-making to regional and national managers, supported by community advisors in the application review process, and the Lotteries Grant Board in reviewing decisions to provide guidance for future processes
* Equity framing, including Te Tiriti o Waitangi, that informed grant-making
* Simplified application processes.

It was noted though that access for less experienced or organised groups remains a barrier to some degree, including the digital nature of fund applications, and requirement for financial statements for larger grants. Other barriers included:

* The initial setup of the Fund was not sufficiently well-catered to ensuring priority groups received funding, which led to the funding pause
* System constraints that tend towards online submission and requiring RealMe logins
* Limitations of information systems and web platforms
* Resourcing for community advisors to engage adequately at times
* Unclear communication in a range of ways (e.g. inconsistent advice, communication of criteria, access to information).

### Strengthening capacity of Hāpai Hāpori

The design of the Fund intentionally absorbed greater risk tolerance, and shows potential for greater acceptance of risk, development and change. There is widespread evidence that Hāpai Hāpori were able to adapt quickly in readiness for the Fund.

Feedback indicates that funding decisions were made in timely and agile ways and reached communities, but the ability to do so through the rapid response approach appears to have undermined the equity focus of the Fund.

Interviews with stakeholders indicates that Hāpai Hāpori are actively learning from new approaches, and applying or thinking about how to apply these in different contexts; with strengthening cultural capability and capacity, including more diversity, across staff being a key theme.

There is also evidence of collaborative and trusting relationships developed between advisors and communities; along with further opportunities to grow and strengthen relationships with Māori, Pasifika and ethnic communities.

A further innovation of the Fund is the emergence of collaborative funding channels with other government agencies, both at national and local levels.

### What have we learned for future grant-making processes?

Learning identified from the Fund to date can be grouped into three broad themes: planning, implementation and reflection.

In terms of planning, feedback indicated that intentions and priorities should be clearly articulated and well-considered; the Fund had to move rapidly, and needed to pause its activity to refine criteria to ensure access by priority populations. In the same vein, funding criteria need to align with the intentions of the Fund. Again, because of the pace with which the Fund was set up, the range of stakeholders involved was limited, and broadening input may be helpful for future funds.

From an implementation perspective, the grant-making approach should align with the intentions of the Fund. Pausing activity was seen to be the right decision, to recalibrate and set a different course to reach priorities. It was also noted that working with new entrants to the funding process takes time to be successful, and that communities are layered with diversity that need to be acknowledged in how support is delivered.

The devolved decision-making approach was seen to be an important and effective innovation, but needs time to embed properly.

Reflecting on overall learning, the Fund was seen as an important innovation, and shows the value of flexible funding approaches. However, adapting an existing funding model may not be sufficient to create significant change. In particular, the funding model was seen by some to be outdated and too restrictive.

### Responding to community needs and aspirations

From survey and interview feedback with grantees, the Fund has enabled a wide range of community-led responses, including community programmes developed and grown by volunteers, resilience-building opportunities and supporting access to services. For some organisations, the Fund enabled them to tap into community knowledge and strengths, build community capacity, and support innovative new activity to occur.

Community organisations, including Māori and Pacific grantees, made use of grants for a wide range of community purposes, including enhanced outreach; purchasing equipment and vehicles for food distribution and transport; employing staff to meet increased demand; and online connectivity.

Whilst some organisations developed capacity for applying for grants, this appeared to be opportunistically built rather than systematically fostered within participating organisations. There were however pockets of very positive feedback on community advisor support, where participants were individually coached in the application process, and communities and organisations were empowered to be more involved in the grant processes.

The Fund was generally well structured in its approach and suited to its purpose. It was seen as straightforward and easy to access, and many grantees appreciated the flexible nature of the Fund. In line with its purpose, a wide range of groups benefited from the Fund, with Māori and Pacific organisations well represented among grantees, along with organisations representing other diverse interests, including whānau whaikaha (disabled people), different age groups, migrants, and people with mental health and addictions needs.

### Impacts of the Fund for grantee organisations and communities

The Fund was widely seen to help respond to the impacts of COVID-19 in communities, help improve community resilience and improve local community services. Many organisations reported that the Fund supported recovery of some revenue lost through COVID-19; the lockdowns in particular had impacted on regular fundraising channels and events, and other ongoing revenue sources.

Many grantees discussed the importance of the Fund for providing financial support that enabled continuity in the face of COVID-19, and which provided an important platform for their ongoing viability. For many, the Fund was able to support operational and staffing expenditure, meet areas of peak demand due to COVID-19, extend into new areas of activity, or simply keep buildings and facilities well-maintained to support their communities.

Some Māori and Pacific organisations highlighted the contribution the Fund made to keep their organisations going, keep their people on board by supporting them financially, and having room for other opportunities and strategising. For some organisations, grants also supported them to improve their responsiveness to Māori, through developing new resources or service offerings.

### Value of the Fund

From a learning and innovation perspective, key areas of value of the Fund included the following:

* Capacity to work reflectively and adaptively, which helped ensure an equity response
* Enabling innovation, both within communities and between agencies
* Testing and validating a high-trust model, including shifting decision-making closer to communities, flexibility of funds to meet community needs, and the role of advisors working closely with communities
* Simplified and accessible funding processes, albeit with some need to ensure access for priority communities.

Specifically from a grantee perspective, key areas of value of the fund were:

* Ease of access and straightforward application process
* Personalised support for those able to access this
* High trust model with a relatively low level of compliance inputs needed for both application and reporting
* A sense of validation from receiving funding
* Flexibility of the Fund to support a range of community-identified needs and enable innovative responses
* Opportunity for communities to extend their scale and reach
* Supporting organisational viability.

### Potential areas of improvement or development

The fund can generally be seen to be successful in applying new approaches to Lotteries grant-making. Areas where the value of similar funding processes can be strengthened in the future include the following:

1. Building into the funding system some relatively simple processes, in line with many other grant organisations, to support the grant-making experience. This includes automated application acknowledgement; videos on completing applications; and clearer signposting of community advisor support.
2. Functional improvements to the online portal, including saving applications, enabling more formatting options; and downloadable templates for developing proposals pre-submission.
3. Greater flexibility to support applicants who struggle with applications, including accessing advisor support and advice, and exploring opportunities for verbal, video or audio submission.
4. Building the innovation and equity orientation of this Fund into future Lotteries grant opportunities.
5. Exploring the extent to which multi-year grants can be supported.
6. Strengthening the relational practice in grant-making support, particularly for new communities to grant-making, or communities that have previously struggled with successful applications and who are often put off from re-applying.
7. Building internal knowledge and capability to ensure greater consistency of advice to grant applicants.
8. Actively seeking to build capability for grant applications in priority communities.
9. Improving tracking and monitoring capability in grant-making systems.

### Conclusions

The Fund provides a positive example of adaptation within existing systems to support more innovative and equitable processes. The COVID-19 Wellbeing Fund has demonstrated a range of innovations in planning, communication, implementation and decision-making, that are unique to grant-making within the Lotteries system. The Fund has demonstrated that innovation is possible in a highly structured system and organisation; at the same time the constraints revealed by the Fund’s implementation indicate there is room to take innovation further. From a grant applicant perspective, the Fund offered a generally straightforward means of accessing grants, working within an often highly supportive context. The grants through the Fund were widely seen to be making a positive difference in communities, including Māori and Pacific communities, and were valued highly by grantees.

# Introduction

Hāpai Hāpori commissioned Dovetail, an independent evaluation consultancy, to evaluate the Lotteries COVID-19 Community Wellbeing Fund (The ‘Fund’). The evaluation explores the learning from and outcomes of grant-making at both regional and national levels, and for funding requests at a range of values (and potentially therefore scale of delivery and impact).

This report presents findings from the formative and summative phases of the evaluation undertaken from April to October 2021, focusing on delivery of the Fund to date and learning from this process.

This report draws from a range of data sources:

* Review of background documentation
* Interviews with Fund leadership and stakeholders, including national and regional staff from Hāpai Hāpori, and Lotteries Grant Board (referred to as Fund stakeholders)
* A survey of grant applicants (referred to as community respondents)
* Analysis of the Fund grant database
* Interviews with representatives of grantee organisations (39 interviews conducted in total).

This report details findings covering both the first and second tranche of applications. The first tranche occurred immediately after the Fund’s launch and opening for applications; the second tranche followed a shift in approach and criteria in fund decision-making, to support greater access by priority communities.

## Lotteries COVID-19 Community Wellbeing Fund

### Background

The Fund was established to focus on community and social initiatives that increase the strength and resilience of communities in the wake of COVID-19. The Lottery Grants Board (LGB) allocated $40 million to the Fund over 2020-21, which offered one-off grants to support hapū, iwi and community organisations. Its priorities were to support one or more of the following:

* Hapū, iwi and community organisations that deliver social and community initiatives that were impacted by COVID-19 – either through the loss of funding sources or through extra or changed demand on their services
* Innovative and transformative community or social initiatives that responded to the impacts of COVID-19
* Collaborative community or social initiatives that strengthened and increased resilience in communities.

### Development and establishment

The LGB approved the Fund in July 2020. To expedite establishment, the new Fund was set up under the Lottery National Community Committee (LNC). It became operational in October 2020. The final disbursement of funding occurred in June 2021.

The fund was different to Lotteries’ other funds in that the decision-makers were the Department. The Department devolved decision-making as close as possible to communities themselves, based on a philosophy of community-led development. In practice, this meant that funding decisions were delegated from the national committee to regional managers, working with community advisors who were seen as being close to community grassroots organisations.

Regional managers were able to sign off regional grant requests up to the value of $200,000. Decisions on regional grants above this level were made by a regional manager, after review by two community advisors and a manager outside the region. National grant requests were made by the Lottery National Community Fund Manager, on advice from national community advisors and/or the chair of the Fund committee, depending on the funding amount being requested.

The Fund was intended to reduce compliance costs to make applying for the Fund as straightforward as possible. The application forms were relatively short (compared to other Lotteries funds); and for smaller grants (below $50,000), supporting documentation was not required. Organisations without legal entity status could apply for up to $10,000 in funding; this was the first time Lotteries funding had been used in this way.

### Implementation

Once the Fund was operational in October, demand was much higher than anticipated and did not align with the priorities of the Fund. Applications from larger organisations with fundraising infrastructure seeking funds to cover loss of income or increase in services through COVID-19 were over-represented. As a result, a pause was placed on further grant-making as Hāpai Hāpori wanted to ensure that smaller communities, initiatives and innovations, together with iwi, hapū and Māori organisations, had sufficient time to apply to the Fund.

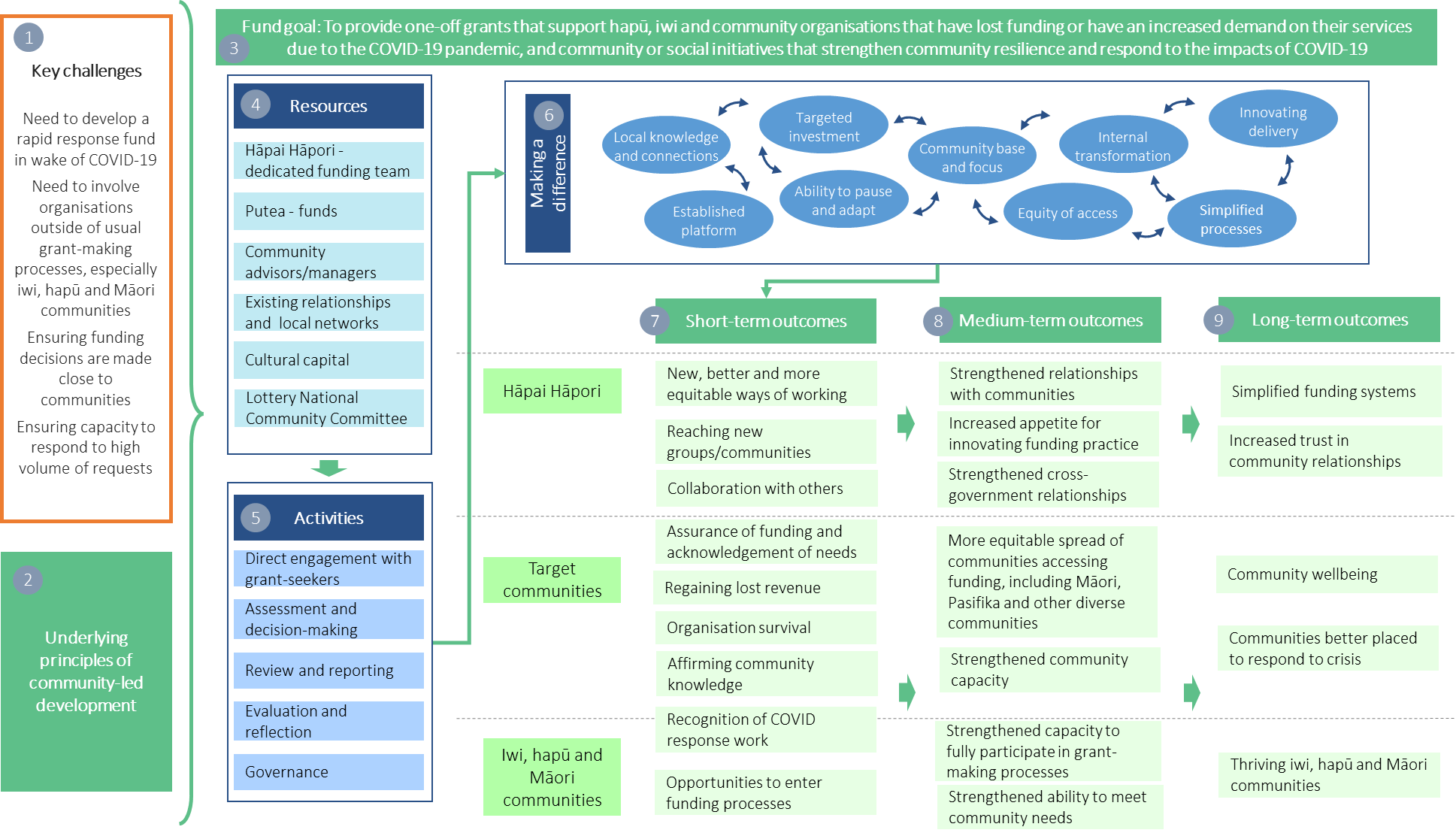
From 10 March, the Fund became operational again, with a focus on ensuring greater access by communities rather than organisations, and funding towards transformations and innovations rather than the status quo. Applications seeking funds for loss of income became targeted towards Māori/Pasifika and ethnic communities or small communities (that are not necessarily organisation-driven and have more of a focus on social cohesion, such as community events, street parties or get-together events) of geography or interest.

### Theory of grant-making

A theory of grant-making sets out how a grants body or foundation will achieve its vision, aims and objectives, which will be tested in the course of this evaluation. In the diagram on the following page (Figure 1), we set out a theory of grant-making for the Fund, and describe:

* The key challenges the Fund seeks to address
* The underpinning philosophy of the Fund
* The overall purpose of the Fund, in response to challenges and underlying philosophy
* The resources utilised by the Fund
* The activities in distributing Fund grants
* The ways in which the Fund is transformational or makes a difference compared to usual processes
* Short-term, medium-term and long-term outcomes of the Fund for Hāpai Hāpori, community organisations, and specifically iwi, hapū and Māori organisations.

Figure 1: Theory of grant-making for the Lotteries COVID-19 Community Wellbeing Fund



## This report

This report presents findings from the formative and summative phase of the evaluation. The formative evaluation explores learning from the Fund’s development and implementation, both for the Fund itself and for similar initiatives in the future.

Part 1 of the report details findings from the formative phase of the evaluation, exploring the intentions, delivery and process of the Fund.

Part 2 details findings from the summative phase of the evaluation, detailing the contribution the Fund is making to community needs and aspirations, impacts of the Fund for grantees, and value of the Fund to grantee organisations.

The report is structured around eight key evaluation questions (KEQs) developed in collaboration with Hāpai Hāpori. The first five questions deal with the formative evaluation (Part 1):

1. To what extent is the Fund reaching its intended communities and supporting equitable funding access, including for hapū, iwi and Māori communities, priority communities (Māori, Pacific and other ethnic communities) and new communities who had not previously accessed Lotteries funding? (chapter 3)
2. What are the barriers and enablers to reaching the Fund’s intended target communities and achieving equitable access to the Fund? (chapter 4)
3. To what extent, and in what ways have the new ways of working established through the Fund strengthened the capacity of Hāpai Hāpori, and how have these influenced other changes in Hāpai Hāpori and DIA? (chapter 5)
4. What have we learned from development and implementation of a rapid response fund, for similar funds in the future and for grant-making practice in general? (chapter 6)
5. What is the value that the Fund offers to grant-making processes over business-as-usual approaches? (chapter 7)

Three further KEQs are the subject of the summative evaluation. These questions are:

1. To what extent has the Fund reflected the needs and wishes of participating communities?
2. What has been the impact of the fund among successful recipients, including hapū, iwi and Māori communities?
3. In what ways does the Fund deliver value to participating communities?

Appendices to this report provide further survey data, that are not reported in the main sections of this report.

# Evaluation methods

## Data collection

The formative evaluation comprised the following components:

* Analysis of background documentation and grant-making data supplied by Hāpai Hāpori
* Interviews with 15 Fund stakeholders to explore the establishment and implementation of the Fund and learning to date. Interviews were held with staff from Hāpai Hāpori at regional and national levels, and the Lotteries National Committee Chair. Interviews generally lasted 60 to 90 minutes.
* An online survey circulated to all grant applicants covering applicants in both tranche one and two. The survey explored the experience of applying to the Fund, reflections of the process, and outcomes of the grants. For the purposes of this report, the focus is on the process of applying and receiving funds; impacts will be explored in the summative report. Survey data in this report is drawn from a sample of N=710 respondents.
* Review and analysis of grant applicant data, comprising applications made before and after the funding pause. This database included funds sought, success in grant application and funds granted.

The survey data and database were combined to allow further analysis of groups which included: iwi, hapū and Māori communities; Pacific organisations; applicants new to Lotteries grant-making; number of paid staff; and tranche one and two. Differences are reported where results were statistically significant (p < 0.05).

Tranche one refers to applications made before the funding pause. Applications with a decision date before 1 April 2021 were allocated into tranche one, and applications with a decision date from 1 April forward were allocated into tranche two.

Feedback gleaned from discussions with Hāpai Hāpori staff in the design phase of the evaluation has also been taken into consideration. Overall, the evaluation draws on Kaupapa Māori and culturally responsive evaluation practices. Our evaluative judgments are based on a set of rubrics and associated criteria developed in collaboration with Hāpai Hāpori, discussed further below.

## Developing rubrics and criteria

Rubrics provide a transparent way of making evaluative judgements, by explicitly identifying how well an initiative has performed against key criteria. The criteria provide a way of presenting agreed definitions of quality and value at different levels of development. It makes explicit the basis on which evaluative judgments will be made, and facilitates clarity of evaluation design, data collection, analysis and reporting.[[1]](#footnote-1),[[2]](#footnote-2) Essentially, the evaluation criteria and indicators provide the key road map for the evaluation.

In evaluation planning activity with Hāpai Hāpori, we asked participants to identify markers of success of the Fund for communities and community organisations; hapū, iwi and Māori; Hāpai Hāpori, and the LGB and minister. Hāpai Hāpori stakeholders were further asked to identify levels of performance that were either **just good enough** or **excellent**. Together, these form the basis for evaluative criteria.Anything that does not meet adequate is by definition insufficient for the delivery standards envisaged by Hāpai Hāpori; and anything that is above adequate and below excellent can be categorised as on a pathway to excellence.

The rubrics for this evaluation are presented in the sections that follow, drawing on Hāpai Hāpori stakeholder engagement, and the theory of grant-making (page 12). Using ‘Te Puāwai’ (flower) framework developed by Kataraina Pipi, we set out a four-level scale where:

* Te Puāwai (the flower) signals ***excellent*** delivery across success criteria.
* Te Puanga (the bud) signals relatively strong delivery across success criteria, or on the pathway to excellence.
* Te Pihanga (the shoot) signals that the foundations are in place but there are some areas for improvement; ***this rating signals at least adequate performance against criteria***.
* Te Kākano (the seed) signals that performance in this area is still emerging and requires further work to create the foundations.

Figure 2: Te Puāwai criteria framework

Diagram

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For some KEQs, such as where there are reflections on overall learning (KEQs 2 and 4), or as assessment of the value obtained from the Fund (KEQs 5, 7 and 8); detailed criteria will have limited use, as the discussion is more exploratory in nature. For these KEQs, the discussion will focus on identifying strengths, weaknesses, lessons, opportunities for improvement, and areas of value.

These criteria will be tested further with Hāpai Hāpori staff and will be refined further as data collection approaches are developed and implemented.

## Criteria for the formative evaluation

### KEQ1: To what extent is the Fund reaching its intended communities and supporting equitable funding access, including for hapū, iwi and Māori communities, and new communities who had not previously accessed Lotteries funding?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scale** | **Initial criteria** |
| Te Kākano (the seed);  Foundational but insufficient | *Below the level described by Te Pihanga* |
| Te Pihanga (the shoot);  Adequate/just good enough | * Funding scheme was delivered * Funding was expended * Existing customer groups were funded * Some funding was delivered to hapū, iwi and Māori communities |
| Te Puanga (the bud);  Pathway to excellence | *Between the levels described by Te Pihanga and Te Puāwai* |
| Te Puāwai (the flower);  Excellent delivery | * New entrants to Fund from communities that struggle to access funding * Priority communities are accessing the Fund * Communities were well-supported by Hāpai Hāpori in being ready to apply for and access funding * Equitable access to funding was achieved * Hapū, iwi and Māori communities recognised and directly funded * Shift in funding from first-come, first-served, to reaching priority communities * Ability to adapt and give people a mandate to work in a different way |
| Data sources | * Fund stakeholder interviews * Analysis of grant distribution and internal documentation * Grant applicant survey and grantee interviews |

### KEQ2: What are the barriers and enablers to reaching the Fund’s intended target communities and achieving equitable access to the Fund?

This KEQ is primarily exploratory and is intended to uncover successes, learning and challenges from the Fund’s implementation.

### KEQ3: To what extent, and in what ways have the new ways of working established through the Fund strengthened the capacity of Hāpai Hāpori, and how have these influenced other changes in Hāpai Hāpori and DIA?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scale** | **Initial criteria** |
| Te Kākano (the seed)  Foundational but insufficient | *Below the level described by Te Pihanga* |
| Te Pihanga (the shoot);  Adequate/just good enough | * Hāpai Hāpori were able to adapt quickly in readiness for the Fund * Funding decisions were made in timely and agile ways and reached communities * Internal grant-making processes were fit for purpose * Hāpai Hāpori are actively learning from new approaches |
| Te Puanga (the bud);  Pathway to excellence | *Between the levels described by Te Pihanga and Te Puāwai* |
| Te Puāwai (the flower);  Excellent delivery | * Hāpai Hāpori are applying learning from the Fund to other funds, and to improve service delivery * Collaborative and trusting relationships developed between community advisors and communities * Collaborative funding channels emerging with other government agencies * Fund delivery gives LGB confidence and greater appetite for risk, development and change * Fund provides exemplar for more equitable funding processes |
| Data sources | * Fund stakeholder interviews * Analysis of grant distribution and internal documentation |

### KEQ4: What have we learned from development and implementation of the Fund, for similar funds in the future and for grant-making practice in general?

This KEQ is also exploratory and focuses on the readiness of Hāpai Hāpori to take on the challenge of a rapid response fund, lessons for similar funds and for general grant-making practice, including from the opportunity presented by the Fund’s ‘pause’ to pivot activity and shift its funding emphasis.

### KEQ5: What is the value that the Fund offers to grant-making over business-as-usual approaches?

This KEQ synthesises findings from earlier KEQs to understand the key points of difference of the Fund compared to BAU, and the value that these offer to grant-making in the future.

## Criteria for the summative evaluation

### KEQ6: To what extent has the Fund reflected the needs and wishes of participating communities?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Scale** | **Initial criteria** |
| Te Kākano (the seed)  Foundational but insufficient | *Below the level described by Te Pihanga* |
| Te Pihanga (the shoot);  Adequate/just good enough | * COVID-related needs identified by communities were supported through the Fund * Access to the fund was straightforward for participating communities * Fund is supporting organisational continuity |
| Te Puanga (the bud);  Pathway to excellence | *Between the levels described by Te Pihanga and Te Puāwai* |
| Te Puāwai (the flower);  Excellent delivery | * Community-led responses to COVID-19 and community innovation were supported * Communities, particularly iwi, hapū and Māori communities are developing capacity for applying for grants * Fund is supporting innovative delivery identified by organisations * The structure of the fund (application process, supports, amount etc) was suitable for its purpose. |
| Data sources | * Grantee survey and grantee interviews * Analysis of grant distribution and internal documentation |

### KEQ7: What has been the impact of the fund among successful recipients, including hapū, iwi and Māori communities?

This KEQ is exploratory, and is also guided by some anticipated short-term and medium-term impacts of the Fund, as set out in the theory of grant-making. Because of the new and innovative nature of the Fund, these are less used as evaluative criteria and more as potential areas of impact to be tested and explored.

Impacts for priority communities include the following:

* Extent to which the Fund has regained revenue lost due to COVID, and recognises work of communities during (and in the wake of) COVID lockdowns
* Extent to which the Fund is supporting ongoing organisational survival
* Ways in which community knowledge is being channelled and supported through the Fund
* Extent to which work between community advisors and communities are strengthening community capacity for grant-making, and also for community development and change.

Impacts specifically for iwi, hapū and Māori communities included the above, as well as the following:

* Extent to which work between community advisors and communities are strengthening capacity for grant-making in these communities
* Extent to which the Fund is supporting these communities to meet the needs of their people

### KEQ8: In what ways does the Fund deliver value to participating communities?

This KEQ synthesises all findings to identify the value of the Fund to participating communities, compared to BAU.

## Data reporting

This report presents key themes from the data sources discussed earlier, which are analysed within each of the KEQs. Qualitative data in this report distinguishes between Fund stakeholders, from DIA and Lotteries National Committee; and community respondents providing responses to open ended questions in the grant applicant survey:

* Fund stakeholders are quoted in *italicised orange* text
* Community respondents are quoted in *italicised blue* text.

Please note that ‘grantees’, where reported, are a subset of community respondents. They are respondents whose application was successfully funded.

In reporting survey findings, any statistically significant differences are noted where p<0.05, which indicates a confident level of difference exists between two categories in a survey sample.

Part 1: Formative Evaluation – processes and system innovations

# Reaching intended communities and delivering equitable access

### KEQ1: To what extent is the Fund reaching its intended communities and supporting equitable funding access, including for hapū, iwi and Māori communities, and new communities who had not previously accessed Lotteries funding?

The Fund intended to reach hapū, iwi and Māori communities, priority communities (Māori, Pacific and other ethnic communities) and new communities who had not previously accessed lottery funding, and to support equitable funding access.

Note that this chapter focuses on the quantitative data captured through grant databases and survey responses. Qualitative reflections are incorporated in the rubric assessment below and are reported in chapter 4.

## Rubric assessment

*Overall, we made the evaluative judgment that the Fund is on the pathway to excellence – Te Puanga – with regards to reach and equitable access. This is summarised in Table 1 below and detailed further in the sections that follow. This draws from the findings of this chapter, as well as the next chapter focusing on enablers and barriers.*

Table 1: KEQ1 Rubric assessment

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rubric assessment** | **Key elements of assessment** |
| Te Puanga (the bud): On pathway to excellence | * Evidence that there are new entrants to the Fund from communities that had not previously applied for funding; less clear if these are communities that struggle to access funding * Priority communities are accessing the Fund, particularly Māori and Pacific communities * Evidence that hapū, iwi and Māori communities were recognised and directly funded * Some evidence that applicants were well-supported by Hāpai Hāpori in being ready to apply for and access funding * Adaptation in funding processes through tranche two funding enabled significantly stronger delivery against objectives * Clear indication through the second funding tranche of a shift in funding from first-come, first-served, to reaching priority communities in grant-making practice * Some indication of equitable access to funding from the first tranche; this was magnified through the second funding tranche, and the shift in focus was supportive of equity responses * Funding criteria gave community advisors greater ability to adapt and work more closely with communities, but assessment and review still takes considerable time. |

## Reaching priority communities

### Māori, Pacific and other communities were engaged in grant-making processes

Survey data indicates that the Fund succeeded in reaching target communities to some degree. The survey data also suggests that the reach into the target communities increased from tranche one to tranche two. Responses indicate satisfaction with the application process which may be a reflection of the changes made to BAU in the setting up of the Fund.

There were some respondents who were from a hapū, iwi or Māori organisation (11% overall) or Pacific-led organisations (9% overall).

In tranche one, 7% of survey participants were from a hapū, iwi or Māori organisation, this increased to 20% in tranche two after the pause. Likewise, in tranche one only 5% of survey participants were from a Pacific-led organisation, this increased to 21% in tranche two participants. Both increases were statistically significant (*p* < 0.01) (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Percentage of Māori and Pacific-led organisations in each tranche

*\* Statement with a statistically significant difference*

Among all respondents, approximately two fifths indicated that their organisation worked with Māori populations (39%). Organisations who worked with other ethnic groups (e.g., Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island Māori, Indian, Niuean and Chinese) ranged between 11 and 20% (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Ethnic groups that respondent organisations work with

*Note: Multiple responses possible*

### Organisations new to grant processes, and smaller organisations were engaged

The majority of those who applied to the Fund were people who had applied for Lotteries funds previously (85% overall), with 15% being new applicants.

Only 10% of tranche one participants were new to applying for Lotteries grants, this increased to 30% in tranche two. This was a statistically significant difference (*p < 0.01*). This suggests that the reprioritisation following the funding pause succeeded in its goal of increasing the proportion of new applicants.

A majority of the organisations applying to the Fund were relatively small, with around 12% having no paid staff, and a further 47% having one to five staff (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Number of paid staff in participating organisations (approximate)

## Supporting equitable access

### There is positive evidence across both funding tranches of reaching Māori and Pacific communities in an equitable way

Participants were asked if they were successful with their application. About three quarters (77%) of respondents were successful with their application, one-fifth (19%) were not successful, and the remaining respondents had not heard yet (3%). This suggests that the survey may be somewhat skewed towards successful applicants, given 68% of applicants were successful and 32% were unsuccessful. However, patterns within survey responses give some useful indications of the extent to which equity was being achieved, with varying success in relation to the equity intentions of the Fund.

From the database supplied, covering the first and second tranche, a total of $39,770,398 had been awarded (and is the full sample used in calculations below).

Survey findings show respondents that had not applied for a Lotteries grant before received 12% of funding, being granted $2,213,037 in total. If this were extrapolated across the full sample, we would estimate the amount awarded would be $4,638,701 overall, to organisations that have not applied for Lotteries grants before. This is slightly less than the proportion of applications to the Fund from new communities (15%). This improved considerably in the second tranche compared to the first tranche, where new communities (10% of tranche one) received 4% of funding, and in the second tranche (30% of tranche two) received 25% of funding.

There are also positive indications of findings for hapū, iwi and Māori organisations which had a success rate of 84%, and 82% for Pacific-led organisations, comparable to 76% for other organisations (note that these differences are not statistically significant).

Respondents that were from a hapū, iwi or Māori organisation received 18% of funding (despite being 11% of applicants), being granted $3,429,122 in total. If this were extrapolated across the full sample, we would estimate the amount awarded would be $7,187,712 overall, to hapū, iwi or Māori organisations.

Similarly, respondents that were from a Pacific-led organisation received 12% of funding (despite being 9% of applicants) and were granted $2,243,905 in total. If this were extrapolated across the full sample, we would estimate the amount awarded would be $4,703,402 overall, to Pacific-led organisations.

Among successful applicants, hapū, iwi or Māori, and Pacific-led organisations overall received 79% of the amount requested vs other organisations, who received 74% of what they requested (again this was not statistically significant).

Note that there was a 3% ($580,900) crossover with Pacific-led and hapū, iwi or Māori organisations. Therefore, the total funding was 27% to these groups combined. An estimate of the grants awarded to these two groups combined is $10,738,007 in the full sample ($29,032,391 to other organisations).

From the database, organisations in tranche two on average received 63% of what they requested, compared with 45% from organisations in tranche one. Additionally, among only successful applicants, organisations in tranche two on average received 81% of what they requested compared to 70% of successful organisations in tranche one.

### Most grant applicants thought the grant-making process had the right supports for them

Community respondents were asked to consider the following statement: ‘Different organisations or communities have different experiences and levels of understanding when it comes to funding applications. Part of providing equitable access means ensuring that people have the resources and support to meet their individual needs. Do you think you had the right supports to meet your needs during the application process?’

There were high levels of agreement among respondents that they had the right support during the application process. Four out of five (79%) respondents believed they had the right supports when applying to the Fund, a further 12% were not sure, and 5% did not think they had the right support (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Whether respondents thought they had the right supports during the application process

From the survey, organisations that had not applied for Lotteries funding before were less likely to agree that they had the right supports to meet their needs during the application process (64% not applied before, 82% applied before) (*p* < 0.01).

Organisations with no staff or one to five paid staff were less likely to agree (71% and 76% respectively) that they had the right supports to meet their needs compared to organisations with six or more staff (86%) (*p* < 0.01).

There were no significant differences between respondents from hapū, iwi and Māori organisations; Pacific-led organisations; and other organisations.

### Reflections by participants on the grant process were generally positive

Survey participants were asked to reflect on a series of statements about the overall application process, regardless of the outcome of their grant application, and asked to rate their level of agreement (Figure 7). They suggest that the overall process was viewed positively.

* A high proportion (93%) of respondents would apply again for funding if a similar opportunity came up (75% strongly agree, 18% agree).
* Similarly, there was agreement (89%) that respondents were treated with respect and courtesy (59% strongly agree, 30% agree).
* There was slightly less agreement, although still a high level of agreement (79%) that respondents were treated fairly in the funding decision (52% strongly agree, 27% agree).

In contrast, there was significantly less agreement (53%) when respondents were asked if they had the opportunity to get further information about the funding decision (28% strongly agree, 25% agree). There was considerably more uncertainty (31%) compared to other statements. This may be because the Fund was overprescribed, and staff were unable to keep up with all the applications that came through.

Figure 7: Participant’s experience applying to the Fund

#### Number of paid staff

Respondents from organisations with no paid staff or one to five paid staff were less likely to agree with the following statements (*p* < 0.01):

* We were treated fairly in the funding decision (71% no staff, 76% one to five staff, 83% six or more staff)
* We were treated with respect and courtesy (83% no staff, 87% one to five staff, 93% six or more staff)
* We would apply again for funding if a similar opportunity came up (86% no staff, 91% one to five staff, 98% six or more staff)

#### Differences between tranches

Tranche two participants were more likely to agree with the following statements (*p* < 0.01) (Figure 8):

* We would apply again for funding if a similar opportunity came up (95% tranche two, 92% tranche one)
* We had the opportunity to get further information about the funding decision (63% tranche two, 49% tranche one)

Figure 8: Perceptions on funding decision and process between tranches

*\* Statement with a statistically significant difference*

### There was mixed feedback on reporting requirements, although the survey was conducted well before reporting was due

Of those who were successful with their grant application only 9% had submitted a report on how they had used the funds. Most, 84% had not submitted a report and 7% were unsure (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Successful grant applicants who had submitted a report on the use of funds

Those who were successful with their grant application were also asked a series of statements about the reporting requirements. Respondents were asked to rate the statements from a scale of 1-4, with 1 being strongly disagree and 4 being strongly agree, don’t know/not applicable answers were also possible (Figure 10).

There was a mixed response to reporting requirements outlined below:

* 65% agreed that the reporting requirements were clear, although nearly a third were unsure (25% strongly agree, 40% agree, 30% don’t know).
* 58% agreed that the reporting was simple to complete, however a large percentage were unsure (21% strongly agree, 37% agree, 39% don’t know).
* Only 56% agreed that they had been given useful information on how to complete reporting, similar to other statements a large percentage were unsure (19% strongly agree, 38% agree, 34% don’t know). Additionally, there was more disagreement with this statement (8% disagree, 2% strongly disagree).

Figure 10: Participants perceptions on the reporting requirements

# Enablers and barriers to equitable funding access

### KEQ2: What are the barriers and enablers to reaching the Fund’s intended target communities and achieving equitable access to the Fund?

## Overview of key enablers and barriers

A range of enablers and barriers to reaching the intended target communities and achieving equitable access to the Fund were identified through interviews with Fund stakeholders and community respondents. These are summarised in the mind map below (Figure 11):

Figure 11: Enablers and barriers to equity in grant-making

Diagram

Description automatically generated

## Enablers to equity

### Having a clear vision for the Fund is critical

Fund stakeholders were concerned for some time that Lotteries funding processes can bring about a transfer of wealth from poorer areas with high Māori and Pacific populations, to wealthier areas. There was a concern that people from higher deprivation communities are more likely to spend on Lotteries products, but may not have the organisational staff or infrastructure to take advantage of the Lotteries funding opportunities, compared to more well-off communities.

Often those organisations have the ability to have staff that actually do the funding requests, so it can ask for bigger amounts of money and also … probably have assets they might want to do up or get refurbished, so the money transfer ends up going from the poorer or the lower decile communities to the middle. (Fund stakeholder)

There was a sense amongst stakeholders that there was a clear vision for the Fund. One stakeholder noted that without the strong, clear vision of Hāpai Hāpori, to ‘decolonise, de-homogenise, rehumanise’, the Fund could have easily just followed standard process and ended up being no different to other funds. Having a clear vision, it was believed, was also instrumental in the decision to pause the Fund to ensure it was reaching the target communities.

### Pausing to amplify the equity response

The pause of the Fund and subsequent reflections on how the Fund was progressing, represented a significant step towards more equitable funding. Feedback suggests that although access and equity were always ‘top of mind’ in the set-up of the Fund, a desire to support ‘everybody and open the Fund up as wide as possible’ led to a lack of clarity and focus on who and what it was for.

We realised that actually dependent on whether or not you had clever funding people and organisations or not was whether you got funded or not quickly. It lacked equity, all with good intentions, we just wanted to get it out the door to communities who said they needed it but then we quickly realised that actually it was our usual suspects that had request writers on tap that were coming in in the first few weeks in droves and they were coming in for loss of income, not necessarily for immediate response to communities in the COVID crisis. (Fund stakeholder)

A very high need in the communities as a result of the pandemic, coupled with a broader (than perhaps anticipated) criteria and a rapid-response approach (that is, first in first served) resulted in unprecedented numbers of applications in tranche one. Subsequently, priority groups simply ‘got lost in the rush’ of the first round. It appears that the obvious desire to distribute funds quickly compromised the ability for funds to reach the intended communities.

The deliberate decision to pause the Fund was seen to have ensured more flexibility and responsiveness, thus enabling the Fund to reach smaller less structured groups. Local equity responses were also made possible. In one area for example, there was consistent equitable access and in particular ability to respond through the second tranche. For example, the changes had contributed to kanohi ki te kanohi engagement with a rōpu that work with wāhine Māori, who had previously never been successful in accessing DIA funds (as they had considered it ‘too difficult’). The community advisor was able to support the rōpu to apply, and work to restore the reputation of DIA.

### Changing the decision-making approach supported greater equity

An important turning point for the Fund was the decision in late 2020 to pause further applications, and shift from a rapid response fund to a more prioritised approach; this gave momentum to more equitable responses. Interviews with Fund stakeholders gave support to the changes that followed the pause and pivot, which centred on better aligning the criteria with the vision and intention of the Fund.

This shift was seen to allow managers and community advisors to look at a whole set of requests and provided them the mandate to make decisions based on need and target populations, rather than a fast turnaround approach which did not account for longer timeframes to develop applications and make decisions, especially for hapū and iwi groups.

The funding round approach was considered a more appropriate equity response, in that Māori and Pasifika groups may require extensive discussion and deliberation (e.g., within their whānau, hapū or iwi) before an application can be put through, and that many smaller organisations are likely to have less infrastructure (e.g., staff, volunteers) and/or the ‘know how’ to respond quickly.

Further, there may be a longer lead up period in terms of relationship development for new groups, and Māori and Pasifika in particular, in terms of them opening their books to someone they have just recently met – ‘and not just feeling dug over by the process’. It was also acknowledged that innovative responses are harder to write up, and therefore likely to be slower to come in.

In one region, the pause and change of decision-making approach was seen to have slowed down the application process and allowed for more engagement in collective conversations that support better equity responses.

Yesterday, [we] did a moderation process face-to-face around the table, all of the requests are in front of us and we walk through them and discuss, does it meet the priorities of the hard to reach, Māori, Pacific and ethnic communities? Is it about new responses that came up as a result of COVID, new initiatives, new ways of reaching out to the communities? Does it meet those priorities? And we collectively then determined which ones we recommend give funding. (Fund stakeholder)

### Centralising assessment support the work of community advisors

Centralising assessment processes was considered to have contributed to more visibility of community advisors in the community. This change meant that community advisors spent less time on administrative tasks, allowing more time for community engagement – including the ability to connect groups new to grant making, spend more time with those who require more intensive support and work on strengthening relationships with target groups.

### Knowledgeable and well-connected community advisors were central to the Fund’s activity

It is clear from stakeholder feedback that community advisors existing knowledge of and connections within their community, as well as their skills and cultural capability to connect with diverse communities, were seen as key to the Fund’s equity response.

In setting up the Fund, Ministers (e.g., Internal Affairs, Community and Voluntary Sector) wanted a picture of how COVID-19 was affecting communities, including hapū, iwi, as well as the community and voluntary sector. Community advisors played a crucial role in this, as they were providing intelligence from their communities about what and where the needs were to ensure that their response would have a meaningful impact.

So we were doing that and of course there were hundreds if not thousands of people we reached out to. So they were giving us some indication about the fear that was in the community, for our rural communities, what was happening in terms of isolation, access to food. (Fund stakeholder)

What we did was we made a fund list of all of our contacts, community organisations in our system, in our grants client management system and we set about for our advisors to touch base with every organisation that we had on, in our system, in our region and talked to them about what was happening in their communities, what was happening for them as an organisation but of course for them as people as well and what did they think we might be able to offer them in the way of support. (Fund stakeholder)

Once the Fund was established, the community advisors were the ‘the connectors’; ensuring communities knew about and could access funding. The advisors used their existing networks and channels to reach organisations (e.g. council newsletters and community networks), and also reached out directly to organisations less involved in accessing DIA funding through such means as ‘cold calls’ and road shows. Advisors used a targeted approach to promoting the Fund to potential organisations and communities; and this was amplified in the second round with the new criteria.

### Equity framing, including Te Tiriti o Waitangi informed grant-making

It was noted that a strong equity framing – and recognition of Māori as tangata whenua has to underpin an equity response. It was generally agreed that this had been the case with the Fund, but more so in the second tranche with the more targeted criteria. A Te Tiriti lens was seen to enable deviation from the ‘old funder mentality’ and support mana enhancing practices – for Māori, Pasifika and ethnic communities – but first and foremost for Māori as a Treaty partner.

One interviewee said that being an advisor is often more than what is outlined in the job description, it means being connected in with communities, having a knowledge of whānau, and also being present to support them in their applications. This further highlighted the need for community advisors to have knowledge of Te Tiriti in community spaces.

It’s not a nine to five job…our people meet in the weekends, so you need to be available to meet them in the weekends, need to be available in the evenings. When funding rounds are closing, what I do and many of my colleagues around the country that have lived experience is that we will stay up till after midnight supporting our people to submit their applications. So this becomes not so much a job, it becomes a calling because you’re there to support your people and so for those non-Māori who are working in this space and they're working with Māori, that, what I mean is that you need to honour the Te Tiriti and you need to actually understand how, the mechanics of how our people are and why they are the way that they are because if you don’t know that then it will be, I think it puts our people, my people at risk and also our advisors. (Fund stakeholder)

There was evidence that some managers spoke to their teams about the reasons for the pivot, and that Te Tiriti training was provided. The application of an equity and Te Tiriti lens certainly appeared to occur in in some teams, but it is unclear how consistent this was across the board. One community advisor described how they did an extra check in their process – asking themselves whether they were ‘being equitable’. The advisor went on to note that it had opened their eyes to doing things differently recognising the value add, or point of difference (that can benefit all) a Māori initiative brings. The flexibility and openness that the Fund brought allowed community advisors to 'test' new ways and approaches.

### A high trust model that honours local knowledge in decision making was an important element

A move to a more relational risk assurance approach enabled community advisors to work in a high trust model, which in turn has amplified high trust relationships with their communities who are then more likely to engage. Moving decision making closer to the community is believed to have led to processes that enable more diverse communities to access the Fund.

I just want to share that the Lottery National Community Committee and with having some key people in the room alongside them took a brave step to, for devolution of power to the local teams and the managers. (Fund stakeholder)

A small group of community respondents described the Fund as a great opportunity for the local community to develop capacity through responsive initiatives that address local needs. Some of these applicants expressed that they felt ‘affirmed’, ‘trusted’ and ‘recognised’ by the Fund’s approach to grant-making. That the Fund supported the strengthening and empowerment of communities were further comments.

I was very impressed by the way the fund was promoted and felt affirmed as a Māori organisation that we were valued and supported to submit an application. (community survey respondent)

This fund seems well managed without some of the barriers we face from community funding. The high trust model in light of the shock and stress from COVID-19 was a welcome relief. (community survey respondent)

### Positive, constructive relationships with DIA staff were noted

The role of knowledgeable, accessible and responsive DIA staff in enabling access for applicants was a clear theme in survey responses. When asked if they thought the help from DIA could be improved at all, many respondents took the opportunity to make positive comments expressing appreciation for the work of staff members with whom they had engaged. DIA staff were generally described as helpful, friendly, patient and providing prompt and informative responses to questions from applicants.

For those that were assisted by a DIA advisor, most found the advisor helpful when preparing their application (83% very helpful, 11% reasonably helpful). Only a small proportion found the advisors somewhat helpful or not helpful (3% each) (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Perceived helpfulness of DIA advisor

Respondents highlighted the positive nature of their relationships with community advisors in particular, noting their knowledge and expertise, along with the ways they support and challenge the groups they work with. Responsiveness and accessibility were clear themes in these comments, with many respondents describing their advisors as supportive, engaging, and approachable and helpful when asked for support. A few noted that the advisor they work with know their work well, keep in regular contact, or take the time to get to know their communities and their needs. Respondents also shared that advisors had steered them in the right direction, and a few had been helped ‘step by step’ through the application process.

Honestly, I can’t recommend any improvements. The advisors & staff ALWAYS get back to you quickly; they come & meet with us; are interested in what we are doing; will ask questions to prompt or challenge our thinking; keep their advice within the boundaries of their role & the fund. (community survey respondent)

The DIA Team in Wellington are great… [our community advisor] is super helpful- good, timely, sensible accurate advice. Definitely makes it easy as we have a great contact there. (community survey respondent)

I found the direct communications with staff over the phone incredibly helpful and informative. They were very patient with questions and providing quality information. (community survey respondent)

A further key enabler in terms of access noted in survey responses is the support offered by advisors in guiding groups through the application process. Comments indicate that this support covered two main areas – working with groups to understand the Fund’s purpose, including intended target communities, along with practical, often bespoke one-on-one support or group guidance in developing and submitting applications. Some took the opportunity to note and praise the support they received from individual DIA staff.

The staff member was absolutely amazing and continues to offer support around our new initiative. (community survey respondent)

Respondents also noted how a range of interactions, including online hui, phone calls, workshops, visits or face-to-face meetings had supported them through the application process.

Staff ran information workshops in the community that were informative, practical and helpful. (community survey respondent)

They ran a funding zoom meeting going through the process and answering questions, it was great apart from some technical difficulties. (community survey respondent)

### Simple application processes were valued

Those who were successful with their grant application were asked a series of statements about the application process. Respondents were asked to rate the statements using a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 4 indicating strongly agree; don’t know/not applicable answers were also possible (Figure 13).

Overall, the application process was perceived as a positive process by participants:

* The majority of participants (95%) reported finding the application form as easy.
* Likewise, nearly all participants (94%) agreed that it was easy to complete and submit the grant application.
* Most respondents (92%) agreed that they understood what was needed to complete the application and what supporting information was needed.
* Similarly, most participants (90%) reported they had a clear understanding of the funding criteria.
* Overall, most participants (89%) were satisfied with how the grant application process worked.

The strength of agreement was slightly less for the following statements:

* Most (76%) participants agreed that from their experience of applying to the Fund they were better prepared to apply for other funds in the future. There was more disagreement with this statement than others (11% disagree, 4% strongly disagree).
* Likewise, three out of four (75%) survey participants agreed that they could ask questions about the application process from someone in the DIA when needed. There was a higher amount of uncertainty compared to other statements (17% did not know).

Figure 13: Perceptions of the application process

#### Māori or Pacific-led organisations

Participants who identified as being from a Pacific-led organisation were less likely to agree that the application form was easy to find (85%); or that it was easy to submit the application form (86%), compared to other organisations (96% and 95% respectively) (*p < 0.01*).

There were no significant differences between hapū, iwi or Māori organisations and participants from other organisations.

#### New applicants to Lotteries grants

Those who were new to applying for Lotteries grants were less likely to agree with the following statements (*p < 0.01*):

* It was easy to find an application form (89% haven’t applied before, 96% applied before)
* The grant application form was easy to complete (87% who hadn’t applied before, 95% who had applied before)
* It was easy to submit the application form (86% who hadn’t applied before, 96% who had applied before)

#### Number of paid staff

Participants from organisations with no paid staff or one to five staff members were less likely agree with the following statements (*p* < 0.01):

* I understood what was needed to complete this application (86% no staff, 92% one to five staff, 98% six or more staff)
* The grant application form was easy to complete (88% no staff, 94% one to five staff, 96% six or more staff)
* It was easy to submit the application form (88% no staff, 95% one to five staff, 97% six or more staff)
* It was easy to find an application form (91% no staff, 92% one to five staff, 98% six or more staff)

#### Differences between tranches

Tranche two participants were more likely to agree with the statement: ‘From our experience of applying to this Fund we are better prepared to apply for other funds in the future’ (85% tranche two, 74% tranche one) (*p* < 0.01).

#### Time applying

Most participants reported that it took less than a day in total to complete their application. Just over a quarter (27%) responded that the total time spent on the application was between 2 and 4 hours. About one fifth of participants (19%) spent a total of 1 to 2 hours, and a similar proportion (21%) had spent 4 to 8 hours. Some (16%) participants spent between 1 to 2 days, and a few (5%) took 3 to 5 days complete their application.

## Barriers to equity

### Access for less experienced/organised groups remains a barrier

Although there was recognition that a simplified application form had been developed, with less requirements for financial documentation, and that this had made it easier for groups less experienced with grant funding and without organisational structures, to participate, there was some concern that the accessing platform remained set within a western structure.

In particular, barriers around the digital nature of the application process were noted, such as need for internet access and a RealMe account – which required a need for ‘designated formal roles’. Further, the way the website was set up for finding the Fund and how to apply was considered a little complicated (rather than providing funding pathway examples for a particular idea or plan).

For smaller grants under $50,000, financial statements were not needed, but this requirement for larger grants was raised as a possible barrier. It was noted by one Fund stakeholder that the criteria or funding structures create challenges for some Māori and Pasifika organisations that don’t have regular financial statements or processes, or do not have a structure for joint decision making or track of spending. Some of these communities are directly supporting whānau and community while not fitting within traditional western ideas of an “organisation.”

Possibly the only barrier that I can think of is […] needing to have a formalised structure, so a committee or a governance group of some kind. So for some of our Māori community they are doing this work for their whānau and for their wider community, but they may not have a formalised structure […] but what they’re doing within the community is really important work […]. It’s the same with Pasifika groups, like the willingness and the want to just contribute to support the people around them doesn’t necessarily come with formalising themselves into an entity like a lot of kind of mainstream groups, so that means that they can’t access funding that’s available for formalised entities and I think that is a bit of a barrier. (Fund stakeholder)

One community respondent noted the absence of advice in terms of ‘what amount was reasonable to apply for, or for what specific type of project’. Another highlighted the difficulty faced by a new organisation with little track record to apply for this funding. A further applicant felt that targeted, individualised support should be offered to groups working specifically with the Fund’s priority communities.

### Shortfalls in ensuring Fund able to deliver on its intentions for priority communities

There was reflection from some Fund stakeholders that while enhancing access for priority groups was very much ‘top of mind’, the groundwork to ensure this vision would translate to outcomes had at times been insufficient in terms of addressing the barriers these groups face with regards to the application process:

We very much expected the funding to go towards Māori, Pasifika, ethnic communities and rural…I don’t think initially we paid enough attention to what that would look like or how we would make that happen…we should have been really explicit about that right from the opening of the fund. (Fund stakeholder)

This stakeholder reflected on the tension between the Fund’s ‘ambitious plan’ to fund more innovative, community-led projects, and the numerous time-pressure and risk and legislation compliance issues that required significant time to work through, and were unable to be resolved in during the Fund’s lifetime:

We had hoped to set up an even more innovative approach where we could actually fund communities directly with really small-scale quick response type funding, but there were a few stumbling blocks for us in regard to that as we needed to work out, someone has to hold the funds and be accounted for them so it was, and that needed to be an organisation, we can’t fund individuals. So, we were still working on landing that when we got to the point of having to close the fund due to the huge number of applications we had received in the early phase...it would have been good to actually put a bit more emphasis into those right at the beginning. Because it was quite difficult, we kept putting off just wanting to get the fund open and put that off, and we’ll work on that as we go, whereas ideally, we would have had that all developed before we opened, so we were ready to receive those kinds of applications from the get-go. (Fund stakeholder)

### System constraints restrict the extent of innovation

Fund stakeholders were seeking to test new ways of working that could potentially lay the groundwork for more equitable and innovative funding in the future. This is in the context of grant-making processes that tends to favour organisations with good infrastructure, such as through use of online submission and RealMe logins .

We need to be able to manage a fund based on the principles behind a fund, not on the way a system is configured for us to manage it. (Fund stakeholder)

### Information systems are not geared for an equity response

A key issue, referred to as ‘the elephant in the room’ by one stakeholder, is that the online grant system does not record ethnicity data. This means that there is no reliable data to indicate whether the Fund is improving access and utilisation by Māori, and other ethnic groups. The system reportedly does not identify smaller, less structured groups either.[[3]](#footnote-3)

It was also noted that the live data monitoring systems are able to show what is requested and granted, but not to report by ethnicity and other categories. It was suggested that systems need to be able to report more clearly on the aims of the Fund i.e., how are the priorities for funding are being reflected in funding, to enable learning and reflection in real time.

One Fund stakeholder noted that MSD has KPIs for their priority groups and has developed an in-house grant management system that records ethnicity data. The lack of appropriate data fields in the DIA system in this regard was seen as a missed opportunity.

It was also noted that there are no processes for reporting back to priority communities.

### Web platform constraints limit participation

The limitations of the web platform were noted by some Fund stakeholders. From an equity perspective, the extent to which the website and forms reflected the target communities was questioned. For example, it was noted that the website was not bilingual, and that the application form asked for ‘western’ titles (e.g., Mr/Mrs/Miss), but did not provide options that reflected Māori or Pasifika titles (e.g., kaumatua, matua) that upholds the mana that sits behind those individuals (e.g., as a Pasifika matai (chief) you get an honorary chief name, that is different to your birth name). There were also no key documents translated into Pacific languages.

Additionally, it would have been difficult to navigate the website and online application process if the applicant were visually impaired. Whilst DIA could have accepted visual-oriented and voice recorded applications, the underlying assumption of Fund delivery is that it will be submitted online in the usual formats. The availability of other formats for uploading in submissions does not appear to be well known by participants., and may require guidance to both fund administrators and grant applicants to promote uptake.

### Insufficient resourcing for community advisors to engage adequately was noted by some

Some feedback suggests that there may not have been sufficient resourcing for community advisors to engage with Māori and Pasifika communities in appropriate ways. One Fund stakeholder spoke of the assessment team and community advisor’s desire to provide bespoke support to priority groups, but in practice the time-consuming nature of some applications and volume prevented this. Others also mentioned resource related challenges.

I think that they would all say that they’ve really liked the process, the thing that they would all say they haven't liked is trying to find the time because this has been a weekly mahi in their teams every week, on top of their already full workload and the fact that COVID has added to our workload irrespective of this fund. (Fund stakeholder)

In contrast to Fund stakeholder perceptions, the majority of community respondents were happy with the service provided by advisors, although not all respondents felt that their interactions with DIA staff had met their needs. Reflecting the Fund stakeholder feedback, some community respondents expressed a desire for more tailored or face-to-face support, including visits to organisations with personal advice on how to strengthen applications or advice on which funds would be best suited to their project. There was also a wish for more bespoke, constructive, rather than generalised advice from DIA staff.

We would appreciate specific advice on where we are going wrong, rather than generalised advice that we're on the right track. (community survey respondent)

It is worth noting however that not all applicants were aware that community advisor support was available, which suggests that for priority communities, some active outreach would be beneficial.

### Unclear communication was a noted concern among some applicants

As noted earlier, feedback on the application process was generally positive. Where some critique appeared it related to struggling to speak with a DIA staff member, or to get answers to their questions. Others sought more specific advice on how to strengthen their application yet were unable to access the information or detail they were looking for. Needing to speak with multiple community advisors or other DIA staff over the application process (and at times receiving different advice in each instance) was a further complaint.

I spoke to three advisors - having one advisor to speak to would have been better - they were very hard to get hold of and seemed to keep changing. (community survey respondent)

It was challenging to get answers initially, emails not being replied to. My general manager had to get involved and eventually got a response from a different person. (community survey respondent)

For the Wellbeing Fund, everyone I rung and spoke to had no idea. They were not really sure what I needed to do to strengthen our application and were very relaxed about it. So much so they said to take our time as I was worried the pool of money would run out very quickly. I had started the application and was waiting for one last document which was taking a while, when I was advised it was shut, but our application would still be considered. (community survey respondent)

### Communication of criteria was not consistent

A lack of clarity with regards to selection criteria was one of the most frequently cited criticisms. Many community respondents felt that criteria could be more ‘clear cut’ – reflecting feedback from some Fund stakeholders that the initial criteria were ‘too broad’ – with a number of these noting they had submitted applications that addressed the needs of priority groups, yet subsequently had their applications declined. Some had received advice their initiatives did meet criteria, yet were unsuccessful.

Greater clarification on criteria or how to make application stronger. (community survey respondent)

It wasn’t thought through and some charities who were desperate for funding and advised eligible were totally left in the dark. Was a waste on our valuable time applying. (community survey respondent)

Some community respondents noted that certain terminology used in the Funds’ eligibility criteria can be open to subjective interpretation, with ‘wellbeing’, ‘resilience’, ‘strength’ and ‘priority communities’ provided as such examples.

Issues around the clarity and transparency of decision-making processes were highlighted in some of these responses, particularly with regard to the reasons for applications being declined. A few community respondents also felt that a lack of clarity around the pause and refocusing of priorities had impacted their applications.

A check to see that criteria documented is fully understood as to what can be applied for - otherwise if issue is oversubscription, then decline letters need to state that, not say I didn't meet criteria when I'd had email confirmation project did meet criteria. (community survey respondent)

The process ground to a halt for about 2 months and then we didn't get anything. So that could have definitely been better. (community survey respondent)

### Inconsistency across information sources and individual advice was noted by some

A further theme from community respondents was the impact of inconsistent information on applicant’s submissions. Some of these comments related to selection criteria, and are detailed above, but others noted inconsistencies between published information and that received from individuals, while others highlighted discrepancies between what they heard from community advisors and the final decision on their application.

Feedback from Fund stakeholders suggests that there was pressure to start prioritising Māori and Pasifika before the Fund was paused, and the changes had been made official (i.e., website and information sources updated). Some went ahead and did so, while others waited.

So I think it then was a good idea that they stopped the Fund, reshaped those priorities, publicly popped that on the website and then we could happily make decisions based on those priority sectors but because that hadn't happened before the closing of the Fund, there became this kind of pressure on us as reviewers to prioritise Māori and Pasifika funding but when we looked at the priority of the Fund and the criteria of the Fund they didn't, they weren’t a higher priority than any of the other requests coming through. So then that felt like it was not a fair process for anyone involved. (Fund stakeholder)

A concern from some community respondents was a query on if applications were fully considered on their merits or the extent to which they met criteria. A few community respondents noted that their applications were declined, yet those submitted by groups engaged in the same work were successful. There was also a perception that the Fund was likely oversubscribed, and some community respondents commented that staff were under-resourced and over-committed, which was felt by some to have impacted decision-making. Some respondents in this group also felt that the funders should be up front if oversubscription is the reason for a decline response.

# Strengthening capacity of Hāpai Hāpori and DIA

### KEQ3: To what extent, and in what ways have the new ways of working established through the Fund strengthened the capacity of Hāpai Hāpori, and how have these influenced other changes in Hāpai Hāpori and DIA?

## Rubric assessment

*Overall, we made the evaluative judgment that the Fund is on the pathway to excellence – Te Puanga – with regards to strengthening the capacity of Hāpai Hāpori. This is summarised in Table 2 below and detailed further in the sections that follow.*

Table 2: KEQ3 Rubric assessment

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rubric assessment** | **Key elements of assessment** |
| Te Puanga (the bud): On pathway to excellence  A picture containing text  Description automatically generated | * Fund actively took on greater risk tolerance, and shows potential for greater acceptance of risk, development and change * Evidence that Hāpai Hāpori were able to adapt quickly in readiness for the Fund * Evidence that funding decisions were made in timely and agile ways and reached communities, but the ability to do so through the rapid response approach appear to have undermined the equity focus of the Fund * Internal grant-making processes were constrained by system limitations, albeit with some scope for pivoting * Evidence that Hāpai Hāpori are actively learning from new approaches, and applying or thinking about how to apply these in different contexts; with strengthening cultural capability and capacity, including more diversity, across staff being a key theme * Along with the learning to date, the Fund provides a positive example of adaptation within existing systems to support more innovative and equitable processes * Evidence of collaborative and trusting relationships developed between community advisors and communities; with opportunities to grow and strengthen relationships with Māori, Pasifika and ethnic communities * Evidence of collaborative funding channels emerging with other government agencies, both at national and local levels. |

## Confidence and acceptance of risk

A key element of the Fund was a greater tolerance of risk, to the extent that concerns of risk and assurance advisors were acknowledged, but a new approach to grant decision-making was nevertheless adopted.

To encourage and support innovative initiatives that would make a difference in communities, decision-making was delegated to regional managers (acting on advice of community advisors) for regional grants; and national managers acting on advice, and depending on the funding amount, on advice from national community advisors and/or the chair of the Fund committee.

This was a fundamentally different approach to grant-making to date, in which grants committees would meet twice per year to apportion funds. Instead, managers would substantially be responsible for the funding decisions, with a view to ensuring decisions were made as close as possible to the communities in need of support, or as one fund stakeholder described, ‘right money, right place, right time, right people.’

I do believe that what’s happened with this COVID Fund has been, from an operational level as well as from an LGB level, it has been quite courageous because it’s just not the way they’ve done it in the past. They’ve shifted a paradigm quite significantly. (Fund stakeholder)

The presiding Lotteries Community Committee would review the decisions, not with a view to confirming or overriding the funding decisions, but instead with a view to learning and adjusting approaches over time. This would provide guidance for future decisions, build quality of grant-making over time, and maintain both a close connection with communities and a relatively rapid distribution of funds.

## Adapting in readiness for the Fund

Feedback indicates that Hāpai Hāpori were able to adapt quickly in readiness for the Fund. Stakeholders spoke of a ‘rapid need’ in the community, and a need to get ‘money out quickly’, as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded. There was a recognition that a different approach to how standard DIA/Lotteries funds were distributed was needed; that they were going to have to be more flexible and open minded to engage priority communities. Examples that they were able to adapt quickly include (but are not exhaustive of):

* Quickly mobilising to put proposal to the LGB
* Create a fund that could distribute $40m relatively quickly, and in a way that was not constrained by a committee meeting twice a year to distribute money
* Ability to write up new policy and processes in recognition that no Grants Committee would have capacity to oversee distribution of funds within the short timeframe necessary
* Devolving decision making to the regions and shifting assessment making from a regional to national level. This required some acceptance of risk, and delegations of decision-making to different levels depending on funding amount
* Centralising assessment processes required the setting up of, training and onboarding a new team
* Making changes to the application form; to simplify for applicants but also make it more streamlined for assessment purposes
* Changes to website, communications and engagement with communities.

Stakeholders spoke positively of the front-end process; including joint leadership in the building of the Fund, which had been made possible by the recent re-structure within DIA. The Fund manager role was considered key to getting ready for the Fund.

At a regional level, two hui prior to going live supported the teams to have the confidence to roll out the Fund. The addition of a central administrative team for grant assessments led to a change to the community advisor role, which needed period of adjustment, including training in grant processes. As well as enabling greater direct contact with communities, community advisors took on a reviewer role in applications, which was closer to decision-making than their usual assessor role. It was noted though that the mana of the role of community advisors was elevated through this process.

Despite many referring to the set-up process of the Fund as ‘very intensive’, some felt it was not quick enough compared to the speed that other funders were able to mobilise. Conversely, a few stakeholders talked of the value of taking time to develop the Fund, of getting a sense of where other funders were ‘putting their money’ – ensuring they were not duplicating things. It was also noted that taking their time had given them an understanding of the impacts of the pandemic by the time the Fund was established and implemented.

## Timely and agile funding decisions

Feedback from Fund stakeholders indicates that the more streamlined reviewing and assessment processes certainly contributed to timely and agile funding decisions. This is also clearly reflected in community responses, which highlighted a fast turnaround for both decision making and transfer of funds. Many reported that funding was received within days of hearing their application was successful, with a number of community respondents sharing how this enabled them to meet increased demand or strengthen their organisations during uncertain times for their communities.

It was made available very quickly which was needed given the speed at which the demand for our services grew. (community survey respondent)

Clear purpose and objectives. Speedy decision making. Funds came when we needed them, not six months later. (community survey respondent)

The quick turnaround - about 4 days was fabulous. It meant we could move quickly and get the kit ordered and on site - at the time the supply chain was interrupted, and we were most lucky to get everything in place. (community survey respondent)

Response was fast... hugely appreciate finding out the results so quickly, allowed us to employ the staff member and get on with supporting our community!! (community survey respondent)

However, as has been alluded to elsewhere, the ability to provide a fast turnaround through the rapid response approach challenged the underlying intentions of the Fund to provide an equity response. Because funding decisions were made on a first in first served basis, there was limited ability to consider the wider picture of applications coming through and to apply an equity lens to the process.

The Governance Group’s ability to press pause and take time to reset to respond to equity enabled a more considered process for making funding decisions. While the new grant-making approach may be slower than what occurred in the first tranche, it is faster than standard DIA practices. Community responses from tranche two will provide us a better picture as to whether funding decisions were still experienced as timely and agile after the pivot.

## Streamlined grantmaking processes

Evidence indicates that for the most part, internal grant-making processes were fit for purpose. Shifting decision making closer to the communities was effective; it freed up time for community engagement and made for a faster turnaround of applications. It also allowed for community advisors knowledge of their communities to inform decision making. Stakeholders believed this was an approach that could work well for some other funds managed by Hāpai Hāpori.

The tiered model for different funding amounts was generally considered to have worked well both at a regional and national level. With the lower amounts requiring less documentation, organisational structure and number of people reviewing the applications, processes were streamlined further, and enabled faster turnaround for smaller amounts. Conversely, having more requirements and more reviewers involved in decision making around larger amounts added another layer of security and accountability. Regional teams also developed their own processes for reviewing applications such as ‘cross pollination between patches within regions’ – where community advisors reviewed each other’s applications.

There were however, also challenges with some of the internal grant making processes. Some have been covered in the enablers and barriers section. Others included:

* The 10-day turn around expectation in the first tranche was unattainable in some regions where applications were double the expected amount.
* The ability for quick response funding for innovative small-scale community led projects was hampered by the need to have a ‘fund holder organisation’ registered on the DIA website, as DIA can’t fund individuals. Subsequently, distributing funds to some of these types of projects was made more difficult (extra resource required to support the setup of this), or did not occur at all.
* Regional funding amounts were determined by the Lottery funding formula and some ‘great’ applications were declined because there was not enough funding left in some regions. More flexibility around regional funding amounts were called for, in particular the ability to target regions with greater need.

A key theme that emerged from the community survey with regard to grant processes, was that many community respondents were unclear about reporting requirements or processes for the Fund. Some respondents noted they had not received any information regarding the reporting requirements or process and a number of these asked for this information to be shared, while others were expecting contact via DIA staff or a notification from the application portal. A few stated they were under the impression that they were not required to submit an accountability report for their grant. There was also difficulty for a small number in accessing the reporting form.

## Learning from new approaches

It is clear from the previous sections, and from the pause of the Fund in particular, that Hāpai Hāpori are actively learning from new approaches (e.g., refining the criteria, applying an equity lens). Feedback also indicates that Hāpai Hāpori are considering how their learning can be applied to other funds, and to improve service delivery.

In particular, stakeholders spoke of Hāpai Hāpori becoming clearer about who the priority groups are, asking themselves the ‘equity question’ much more, and how they can make their funds more accessible generally.

So I think the long-term impact will be really good because it’s got us to hold a bit of a mirror up to ourselves to see how we are addressing [equity and accessibility] issues. (Fund stakeholder)

One Fund stakeholder highlighted that the Fund had provided an opportunity and framework for progressing staff’s existing understanding of equality, to that of equity, and to consider and apply this in their mahi more confidently.

Interviewees also spoke very positively of localised decision-making, noting that the Fund is a start that could have further implications on other community-related funds.

The need for a stronger equity and Te Tiriti lens was also amplified through the Fund. Many called for improved cultural capacity across the board, with some recognising that this would require changes to the recruitment processes of Hāpai Hāpori.

I think we should insist that they [decision making committees] all do intensive Treaty training, for a start. (Fund stakeholder)

There was recognition of a need for diversity in the teams, including at leadership level. One Fund stakeholder wanted to make sure there is capability across community advisory teams to ensure that different communities feel welcomed and connected. Having a Pasifika person engage with Pasifika communities for example would support this.

There's a lot of shame for Pacific ethnic and Māori communities and being seen as a community of need, someone going in of the same culture that shame is lessened because there's an automatic thought that they understand why. (Fund stakeholder)

Feedback also suggested that Hāpai Hāpori staff would benefit from building confidence and capability with regards to other ethnic communities. Overall, feedback from Fund stakeholders indicate that the Fund provides an exemplar for more equitable funding processes.

## Collaborative and relational ways of working

As an existing workforce, community advisors had existing relationships inside their communities prior to the establishment of the Fund. However, as the Fund allowed for more time for community advisors in the community these relationships were elevated, and feedback suggests that more collaborative and trusting relationships developed between community advisors and their communities. However, although relational ways of working were recognised, there was a call for capability building within teams to grow and strengthen relationships with Māori, Pasifika and other ethnic communities.

A key theme in stakeholder interviews was collaborative funding channels that emerged with other government agencies. Because a number of agencies received COVID-19 response related funding, MSD convened these as a network of agencies to get together and share their criteria, learning, and explore opportunities to co-fund requests. It was noted that cross agency collaboration is more frequent than before, including with the Office of Ethnic Communities, Ministry of Pacific Peoples, Te Pūni Kōkiri and Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Women.

The second iteration of the Fund in particular saw a strengthening of relationships at both national leadership and community levels. This cross-agency collaboration was considered instrumental in supporting a better reach into, and ability to work with, the target communities – particularly with Māori and Pasifika. Examples include:

* MSD and DIA sharing the cost of a grant higher end funding requests (around 200K) for community groups
* The transfer of applications from Pasifika communities from MPP and MSD to the Fund. This enabled relationships with Pacific organisations, including groups that would never have received funding from DIA before. Community advisors worked intensively with these groups to support them in the application process, including holding application workshops.
* MPP hosting, and translating, a national Zoom to all community advisors and Pasifika groups who wanted to join in.

On average, community advisors who worked on the referrals from MPP were estimated to spend 12 hours per organisation, compared to the three hours initially estimated. More information should be available for the summative report around the effectiveness of this support. However, whether or not these organisations were successful in the first round of the Fund, it has been an important opportunity to build relationships with grassroots organisations and communities that have fallen outside of grant-making processes in the past, and to develop the capacity for these organisations to successfully take part in grant-making now and in the future.

# What have we learned for future grant-making processes?

### KEQ4: What have we learned from development and implementation of the Fund, for similar funds in the future and for grant-making practice in general?

This section identifies what has been learned from development and implementation of a rapid response fund, for similar funds in the future and for grant-making practice in general. Figure 14 illustrates the key areas of learning. It is followed by a more detailed discussion of each topic.

Figure 14: Learning from Fund development and implementation

Diagram

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### Intentions and priorities need to be clearly articulated and well considered

It is important to be clear from the outset about whom you are targeting, within what parameters they can be funded, what you are aiming to achieve and how you are going to achieve it. Feedback indicates that although equity for Māori, Pasifika and other ethnic groups was a focus in the set-up of the Fund, more attention could have been paid to considering what that meant and how that would be realised. It was suggested that the equity focus could have been made more explicit by for example, allocating certain amounts to the different priority groups or make the Fund more explicitly about Māori, Pasifika and other ethnic groups.

The equity discussion also points to a wider learning of the clarity of priorities and purpose; a fund that can be easily accessed on a range of criteria is one that can easily be over-subscribed. Being very clear on the priorities, and what will or will not be funded, is essential if a fund is to meet its intended purpose. For future fund development, a dedicated change approach that identifies the present state and desired state, may be useful.

### Funding criteria need to clearly align with the intentions of the Fund

The initial criteria (including loss of income and increased demand as a result of COVID-19) were seen to be too broad, in relation to the intentions of the Fund. As one Fund stakeholder points out, ‘almost every group we work with would be able to meet that criteria.’ With criteria so broad, it was challenging to determine one request above another, which made it difficult to prioritise in a contestable funding space. It was noted that wording of priorities is incredibly important as this drives decision-making – for potential grant seekers as well as DIA staff.

### You need the ‘right’ people involved from the start

The Fund was developed at pace which meant that consultation on the design of the Fund was DIA and Grants Committee-focused. A working group was established that included members of Te Komiti or other Māori members of Hāpai Hapori staff. However, it was suggested that having community stakeholders involved early on, particularly iwi and hapū, would likely have contributed to a more solid foundation for a successful equity response.

Risk and Assurance were involved in relevant aspects of the Fund’s development; there was however a suggestion that having Risk and Assurance representation on the Governance Board may have helped address some tensions between the focus on risk, and the desire to innovate quickly and early on.

## Implementation

### The grant-making approach needs to align with the intentions of the Fund

Larger groups with fundraising infrastructure were able to mobilise and respond quickly once the Fund opened, and arguably could have been unintentionally privileged under a rapid response funding approach. Nevertheless the Fund was still able to reach smaller organisations: overall 63% of applicants had five staff or fewer; and with intentional outreach this increased from 61% in tranche one to 76% in tranche two. Māori and Pacific organisations were also better represented in tranche two compared with tranche one.

A rapid response approach would benefit from a specific equity consideration and criterion; without this, it will not fit with decision-making processes of hapū and iwi groups. The second funding tranche, with a more intentional equity approach and outreach to communities, signposts how greater alignment with the aims of the Fund can be achieved.

### It is good to pause when things are not heading in the right direction

If anything, what the Fund has taught us is, pause when things need to change. It was a responsive move, and showed strong leadership, by Hāpai Hāpori to pause when it transpired that the system could not respond in an equitable way. As already alluded to in the enablers and barriers section, the pause and pivot that followed amplified the Fund’s equity response.

### When targeting new communities, things take longer

Although centralising assessment processes resulted in community advisors having more time to engage with their communities – this engagement was more intensive and time consuming. This was in part because new relationships had to be forged and more support was required for new applicants. However, due diligence also required more effort in regard to new applicants as there was no existing knowledge about the group/organisation (e.g., about track record).

### There are layers of diversity within communities

A few Fund stakeholders’ experience was that different ethnic communities were often seen as homogenous groups, and that different layers within ethnic or cultural groupings – such as different Pasifika ethnicities or even within that, different church congregations – were not always recognised. They felt that for an equity response to be effective, these differences needed to be acknowledged and catered for.

### Devolved decision-making works, but has to be given time to embed

As has already been covered elsewhere, devolved decision making was considered to have worked well. Stakeholders believed this was an approach that could work well for some other funds managed by Hāpai Hāpori. Although community advisors’ role had been elevated through the devolved model, it was generally considered that their knowledge, expertise and connections could be elevated further to support equity.

It was noted that it had taken some time for community advisors to lean into the different practice that the Fund called for, as opposed to historical institutional practices. Managers had to ‘give permission’ for their staff to work differently. Community advisor feedback reflected this, while acknowledging that they had more discretion there were challenges in for example ‘knowing how far to go’ when funding amounts of up to 50k to new initiatives ‘while also retaining effective funding?’, and that some mentoring in this space would have been useful. One Fund stakeholder felt it might have been better to review the process earlier and ensure staff were fully aware that they could practice differently; but that the Fund has represented a ‘small wedge in the door to continue to enhance flexibility and responsiveness’.

## Reflection

### Adapting a funding model may not be enough to create significant change

It was highlighted that the general model for funding and grant making was developed over 30 years ago when few ethnicities other than Pākehā, being the dominant culture, and Māori existed in Aotearoa New Zealand. And when the power to decide where money would go and to who, was far removed from local communities. Although the Fund is showing signs that a more localised and flexible model can improve access and equity, there were calls for a larger overhaul of the funding system, and the development of funding models based on Te Ao Māori principles.

Some discussions noted the shift towards more strategic grant-making towards investing in collaborative, long-term and innovative initiatives, programmes and organisations. Lotteries funding is constrained in this regard, and limited to more short-term, transactional funding, rather than purposeful investment towards outcomes. The Fund provides a signpost for a different form of grant-making, but more substantial change will require both system and legislative change.

### There is a need for more flexible funds

There was a recognition that there is a need for more flexible funds, with ‘quick fire grants’ for lower amounts. Such grants are needed because a lot can happen for an organisation in the life of two funding rounds; five month waiting times (as is the case with other DIA grants) can stifle community action; and for many communities, the needs can be fairly basic (e.g., they simply need food). Calls were made for flexibility to ‘gift rather than grant’, to be able to meet potential grantees ‘where they are at’, mirroring current arguments and shifts within philanthropy.

# Value of the Fund to grant-making processes

**KEQ5: What is the value that the fund offers to grant-making processes over business-as-usual approaches?**

This section provides reflection on the value that the Fund offers to grant-making processes over business-as-usual (BAU) approaches. Although there are still a number of areas considered still in need of adaptation, this section shares areas of value to have emerged from implementing the Lotteries COVID -19 Wellbeing Fund.

From Fund stakeholders, and community respondents’ feedback, the core value of this fund comes in the presentation of a more flexible, community grounded, and equitable fund. The Fund offers a model for how grant-making processes can evolve to support ease of access and support diverse communities.

Key areas of value are summarised in the mindmap below (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Key areas of fund value

Diagram

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## Capacity to work reflectively and adaptively

### The ability of the Fund to pivot activity helped ensure an equity response

From the outset, equity and focusing on drawing in hapū, iwi and Māori communities, Pacific communities and new organisations and communities to the funding process were priorities for the Fund. Interviewees spoke of being appreciative of the pause taken in order to ensure the system could adapt and better engage and/or respond to priority groups.

A lot of non-Māori organisations, or bigger regional organisations as well as national organisations who have the capability and the capacity to apply for funds, applied. So basically you were first in first served and we had that problem up here because each region was only allocated a certain amount of money and so when you're only allocated a certain amount of money and you're out there trying to encourage Māori or whomever to apply and then you can see your budget slowly but surely dwindling. (Fund stakeholder)

Hāpai Hāpori recognised the situation of who was applying, and that there was a need in communities that BAU funding processes did not support. During the pause they amended the process of what information was shared, increasing the emphasis on priority groups, and adapted the assessment process to ensure that priority groups were being prioritised in funding allocation.

Through pausing and reframing the review model, they were able to prioritise communities more readily and lean into focusing on Māori and Pasifika groups, with the backing of policy behind them.

One interviewee spoke of how focusing primarily on the kaupapa of the Fund allowed for community advisors to focus in on community need (note this may have been a unique reflection for that region).

We funded two Māori organisations, one was about two hundred thousand and the other [was] about a hundred and fifty thousand. So those are quite big chunks of our budget, but we did that because of the kaupapa… We just felt wow those are really good initiatives, that's what this fund was all about.... I don’t know whether or not that was the case right around the country because I've had meetings with advisors and I've told them[……] and they all went how did you get that over the line. I said we got that over the line because of the kaupapa, not because we’re worrying about the budget but because of this programme and the services that they were delivering to their community, into the whānau and the hapū. (Fund stakeholder)

## Enabling innovation

### Supporting social innovation in a challenging time

Some survey respondents felt the Wellbeing Funds’ focus on new social innovations, particularly during a challenging time, set it apart from other grants. These applicants appreciated the ability to be innovative, to test new ways of doing things, and use their knowledge to respond to evolving community needs.

*Even though we were only partially successful with our application, we loved the fact that innovation and transformative initiatives were being encouraged and supported. (community survey respondent)*

*I think this fund was more futuristic focused, supporting innovative projects as a result of COVID and the restrictions the lockdowns had on the way people had to work. I think COVID will also change how we work going forward and this fund helped us to be able to prepared for that. (community survey respondent)*

**New forms of engagement between agencies, communities and iwi were made possible**

Engagement between agencies was a strength of the Fund’s response, and which enabled a shift away from siloed funding approaches. As noted earlier, the Fund was part of a process whereby more collaborative funding channels were developed with other government agencies.

In addition, at a regional level, in some cases this agency engagement also extended to involvement of iwi and community leaders. One interviewee spoke of being on an interagency board where for the first time hapū and iwi were involved.

In terms of interagency discussions, that’s been going on for a while but actually bringing representation from iwi and community to the table, that’s relatively new. (Fund stakeholder)

## Testing and validating a high trust model

### Shifting decision-making closer to communities in need

Changing the funding model structure created a high trust funding environment, where community advisors were given more responsibility around funding decision making and communities weren’t required to provide as many supporting documents. This process required some training to help advisors understand the parameters of decision-making, and once in place, it was widely seen to move decision making closer to communities.

And so what's actually happened there's been a fundamental shift in the culture, what's happened is a lot of these advisors have become quite confident about doing what they're doing at the grassroots level and actually sort of looking at it and going actually yeah hold the beer I've got this, so off they go, and its brilliant, it’s actually brilliant to see. (Fund stakeholder)

### Flexibility in use of funds enabled communities to respond to identified needs

The degree of flexibility in terms of how grantees could use their funds was noted by community respondents, who indicated that this allowed them to work in ways that were agile and responsive to evolving community needs and aspirations. The way that the Fund provided support for harder to fund aspects of work was also highlighted, with respondents appreciative that they could use Wellbeing Fund grant money to cover various expenses, including operating costs, capital expenditure, wages and to ensure the continuation of existing projects. Also noted was the way that the funding model supported ‘non-traditional’ approaches to community development.

*The fund treated our initiative holistically and didn't put constraints on HOW we supported whānau - as long as the outcome was achieved. (community survey respondent)*

*Targeted to meet our greatest challenges in trying times. This enabled the organization to meet immediate needs as they became apparent and to keep up with these as they changed through time. It was helpful to put funding where we best needed it, as opposed to that of the funder. (community survey respondent)*

*Appreciated that this fund was not overly prescriptive. Many COVID response funds had overly detail criteria or eligibility that would have ruled out what has turned into a hugely successful initiative. (community survey respondent)*

Without the stress of managing applications and further requirements, fund applicants were able to focus on what is needed in their communities. One survey respondent noted that it felt like the funders really understood how difficult it can be for grassroots organisations to access funding for their work, and that support from an advisor and the provision for flexibility acknowledged that communities understand how to meet their needs and just require support to do so.

*The criteria had a wide enough scope to allow communities more flexibility to decide what support was needed for their own community as a response to the impacts COVID-19 on wellbeing. (community survey respondent)*

*The direct injection of funding into community without onerous requirements has been a relief. Many community orgs are capable of doing great things when funding is made available to get straight to work. (community survey respondent)*

**The value of advisors in working with communities.**

Having community advisors more involved in grant allocation positioned the Fund closer to communities and what communities needed. Some community respondents raised the availability of practical support from DIA staff, both to understand the aims of the Fund and submit applications, as a point of difference.

These applicants appreciated the availability of advisors and other DIA staff to explain fund objectives and acceptance criteria, with some noting the quality of comms (including around opening and closing dates), and the value of Zoom webinars, phone-calls and email reminders through this process. A few felt the community advisors were very invested in supporting the aims of the Fund and groups to make successful applications.

*What I really liked is that there was a zoom meeting/webinar available to those interested in applying to the Lottery COVID-19 Community Wellbeing Fund. This was very useful and most of the questions I had about this fund were answered during the webinar. (community survey respondent)*

## Simplified and accessible funding processes

### A more simplified process was highly valued

Simplified forms that were easy to access were highly valued by grant applicants, and provided an important foundation for equity and access. Developing these forms highlighted the established practice of drawing from fields in an established list; the learning from the Fund suggests that rethinking what is required and re-designing a simplified process may be an important next step.

Community respondents that had an understanding of the reporting requirements for the Fund overwhelmingly described the process as simple and straightforward. A few people expressed appreciation for the online reporting arrangements, while others noted that the current reporting questions work well. Some respondents noted that the process had been simplified, when compared to other Lotteries or COGS grants they had reported on.

This was a simple process that allowed us to focus our attention on our front-line services, not on administration. Thank you. (community survey respondent)

It was a very simplified process compared to Lotteries and COGS for the funding reporting. I think it was a very well run, easy to report fund which helped many people on our local communities. (community survey respondent)

The reduction in supporting documentation was highlighted by many, with a number noting that they appreciated this high trust approach during a stressful time. A few shared that this reduction in paperwork enabled their organisations to focus on supporting their communities. Some respondents noted that the application process was simpler and ‘less obtrusive and intensive’ that many they had completed, including previous Lottery Grant Applications. A few people also noted that accountability reporting was straightforward, noting however that this part of the process had not changed from previous funding processes.

It was swift and did not require a lot of additional information to be submitted so didn't take time away from other critical things

Straightforward application, without the need to provide a lot of evidence/budgets/ financial statements/referees etc which can be time-consuming to gather the information required for submission.

### Ensuring access for priority communities still required

There remained questions about if the process is designed specifically for the target communities, or if further tailoring is needed.

So, even though I don’t think that it’s an arduous thing to come on and apply, for some [communities] it could be and I think that we need to really look at that, that although, who were our systems created for? Were they created for us to make it easier, for us as agencies or advisors? Or were they created for, with our people in mind? (Fund stakeholder)

With this fund came structures that supported a focused and a rapid response. There were benefits to this process as it allowed funding to be accessed by communities quickly. However, should this model be utilised once more, structures need to be in place to ensure equity of access, as mentioned earlier in this section.

Part 2: Summative evaluation – impacts and overall value

# Contributing to community needs and aspirations

### KEQ6: To what extent has the Fund reflected the needs and wishes of participating communities?

*Overall, we made the evaluative judgment that the Fund is on the pathway to excellence – Te Puanga – with regards to reflecting the needs and wishes of participating communities. Although there is evidence that the fund is meeting some of the criteria at Te Puāwai, it’s not currently meeting all criteria. This is summarised in Table 3 below and detailed further in the sections that follow*

## Rubric assessment

Table 3: KEQ6 Rubric assessment

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rubric assessment** | **Key elements of assessment** |
| Te Puanga (the bud): On pathway to excellence  A picture containing text  Description automatically generated | * Relatively strong agreement in survey that the Fund is supporting innovation * Supported many grassroots community initiatives that were working from community-identified needs * Supported many Māori organisations to grow their impact * Supported adaptation in delivery to meet community needs * Some pockets for developing capacity for grant applications are evident, but not clear if this is widespread among new participants in process, and Māori and Pasifika communities * Strong agreement on supporting innovative delivery * Enabled creative responses, adaptations of existing approaches * Generally seen as a straightforward process and easy to access by most organisations |

## Community-led responses

### A wide range of community-led responses were enabled by the Fund

Across survey and grantee interview responses, there was a clear indication that the Fund supported many grassroots community initiatives, which were working from community-identified needs. These included:

* Community programmes developed and grown by local volunteers
* Enabling community outreach to the disabled community and older people, who have greater risk of isolation during COVID lockdowns
* Providing opportunities for community members to develop resilience in different ways (e.g. social connections, personal health, food security, employment, and support networks)
* Supporting access to services in person, and via online or transport connections

Many of the representatives of grantee organisations we spoke to explained the extent to which their services were established, and continue to evolve, in response to community needs.

The Fund was also seen to support organisations to adapt their delivery to meet community needs, through provision of online support and resources. For many organisations, the Fund supported them to meet community needs that were exacerbated by COVID, and where they were encountering peak demands in their services (these are discussed further in section 9).

The communities supported by Māori and Pasifika organisations that participated in interviews were from urban and rural communities, and low decile communities, many with large numbers of Māori and Pasifika populations or client bases. Due to COVID-19 there was an increased need in these communities for basics such as kai, social connectedness and supports around mental health and wellbeing. It was noted that families with young people from lower socio-economic areas were seen to be more adversely affected through losing income or having their hours reduced.

The main purposes for the funds and therefore the needs identified by representatives of Māori and Pacific organisations included the following:

* Enhanced outreach responding to COVID-19 impacts by creating greater social connection for isolated and low decile communities
* Purchasing equipment and vehicles to support food distribution and transport for isolated for Pacific and Māori peoples
* Employing core staff and new staff to support the increased demand for community centres, rangatahi programmes, counselling and community support
* Covering ongoing costs for staff and operations which enabled, for example, youth services to continue during COVID19, and marae to cover overheads such as insurance and power while their main income was significantly diminished
* Growing greater online connectivity to support clients and communities e.g., counselling services, online banking.

### For some organisations, the Fund enabled them to tap into community knowledge and strengths

Many community organisations spoke in interviews of their constant work in paying heed to community needs and concerns, and working through the efforts of local volunteers and supporters who themselves have broad-based community knowledge. For these groups, the Fund was an important conduit of drawing on these innate community strengths.

The women that facilitate are all local women, with lived experience – that’s one of our prerequisites. It’s community led within our community of women, they tell us regularly what they want, what other services they would like… each term we do a questionnaire… so there is a lot of community involvement. (grantee interview)

One organisation used their grant to identify what the needs of their community were after the first COVID lockdown.

We decided we’d really like to do a bit of a gauge, a bit of a consultation with the community to say hey how are you doing with all this stuff, what's been working for you, what's not working for you, how can we support you […], is there anything we can do to support you and your whānau better? (grantee interview)

Some of the initiatives drew on the skills and mana of respected local community leaders in running the programmes, and building connections across different groups.

## Developing capacity for applying for grants

### Developing capacity for applying for grants appears unevenly and opportunistically offered to applicants; this is an area that could be strengthened further

As noted earlier, there was reasonable agreement from organisations participating in the survey that they felt better prepared to apply for other funds in the future (76% agreeing overall). This was stronger among tranche two applicants, but there were no differences between Māori and Pacific organisations, and other organisations.

To some extent this signals an increase in capacity, but the extent to which this was actively intended by the Funds’ processes is unclear; i.e. did the Fund seek to comprehensively build capacity, or was this opportunistically built by completing the applications and receiving occasional advice from community advisors? Interview feedback suggests the latter was more common, and that this could be developed more comprehensively in the future. For example, one grantee contacted the 0800 number seeking advice, but found this was this was not sufficient for her needs. This grantee reflected on how valuable tailored advisor support would have been for this, her first grant application:

What never occurred to me is that I could’ve potentially spoken to someone at DIA and gotten assistance. That just didn’t even occur to me at the time, whereas now that I’ve spoken to other people and I’ve just put in a big grant application for a capital works and I did have help with that and I was able to go to the community advisor and say, “How’s it looking?” and get some advice before I submitted it. I didn’t know that that was possible and that would’ve really helped. (grantee interview)

The grantee also noted that the 0800 support did not add substantially to what was already available on the DIA website, and that access to more tailored support would have been of more value.

There is only a small amount of evidence to suggest that communities, particularly iwi, hapū and Māori communities are developing capacity for applying for grants. However, there were communities that applied, which had not done so previously. Having criteria that focused on Māori, hapū iwi and Pacific organisations supported some communities in considering applying as they knew that they met the criteria.

There were some pockets of very positive feedback on community advisor support, where participants were individually coached in the application process, empowering people in organisations to be more involved in the grant processes. Some grantees were also alerted to the availability of the fund by their local advisor. These instances provide directions for future development, ideally supported by online/in-person resources and a more accessible portal.

## Supporting innovative delivery

### Many organisations pointed to inherent innovation in their activities

Among grantee interviews, there was strong agreement their grants allowed their organisations to deliver new or innovative services or initiatives.

Many organisations pointed to ways in which their offerings were innovative, ranging from new service models, new partnerships, multiple tailored service offerings, and strengthening te Ao Māori delivery. For these organisations, the Fund enabled creative responses to the COVID challenge, from adaptations of existing approaches to entirely new offerings that had not previously existed.

And so really what that money allowed us to do was to go right we've got a fund, we've got some money altogether to activate in a particular part of the community, come with us, join with us, we’ll apply together and like 12 months on it’s been one of the most amazing things we’ve done, straight up. (grantee interview)

It [the fund] allows us to keep dreaming. (grantee interview)

A common response by many organisations was the ability to reach into or expand their digital delivery, by providing or expanding their online services. In other cases, the new service models developing have acted as successful seed initiatives that have since grown significantly and become more permanently established.

### Building new partnerships

Some organisations described significant partnerships and community connections that were forged through the Fund, either in preparation of a grant application and subsequently delivery, or which was enabled subsequently through receiving a grant.

I've been doing sports administration for 20 years and … I've had partnerships with one or two but to get 12 signed before an application was due in was pretty special.

So you know, so it’s been quite good just to be able to make connections with some of the other community groups.

## Structure of fund suitable for purpose

### The Fund generally was well structured in its approach and suited to its purpose

Widespread feedback from community respondents in the survey, as well as interview feedback from grantees, indicates that the Fund was generally seen as a straightforward process and easy to access. Many grantees valued the flexible nature of the fund, with criteria that was clear and focused on community needs and outcomes, rather than having a strict compliance focus. Grantees also indicated that the turnaround between notified of grant success and receiving funds was satisfactory.

In a few cases, some interview feedback indicates that advice to grant applicants may be inconsistent between regions, with one for example indicating that they had to provide additional information that was outside criteria. This does not appear to be widespread however.

The direct support by Hāpai Hapori, where it was received, was generally highly valued, with many who had received support describing it as invaluable. However, some were unaware of the possibility of support, and there was substantial variation in Hāpai Hapori engagement by both interviewees and survey respondents.

In line with its purpose, a wide range of groups benefited from the fund, with Māori and Pasifika organisations well represented among grantees, along with organisations representing a range of other diverse interests including whānau whaikaha (disabled people), different age groups, migrants and people with mental health and addictions needs.

In some cases, challenges emerged in the application process. For some smaller organisations, the sign-off process was challenging, and a few found the forms frustrating to complete (one describing it as ‘wordy and long-winded’. A more common complaint was the DIA grants portal, which was often seen to be clunky or even difficult to use, inflexible in how grant information is collected (e.g. inability to format applications), inputs not being saved, and no confirmation of successful submission.

# Impact of the fund among successful recipients

### KEQ7: What has been the impact of the fund among successful recipients, including hapū, iwi and Māori communities?

This section explores survey (including open-ended) and interview responses to explore the different impacts of which the Fund in grantee organisations. Key themes for this KEQ are summarised in the mindmap below (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Impacts of the Fund

Diagram

Description automatically generated

## Selected impacts

### The fund was widely seen to help respond to the impacts of COVID-19 in communities, help improve community resilience, and improve local community services

Those who were successful with their grant application were asked to rate a series of statements using a scale of 1-4, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 4 indicating strongly agree; don’t know/not applicable answers were also possible (Figure 17).

Overall, respondents agreed that the grant had a positive effect on the organisation and intended communities:

* Nearly all agreed (96%) that the Fund helped organisations respond to the impacts of COVID-19 in their community (79% strongly agree, 17% agree).
* Likewise, most agreed (96%) that the Fund helped improve the resilience of their community (77% strongly agree, 19% agree).
* There was high agreement (92%) that organisation’s services in the community had improved (73% strongly agree, 19% agree).
* Most participants agreed (88%) the Fund enabled organisations to reach more people than before (65% strongly agree, 23% agree).

Statements where the strength of agreement was slightly lower included:

* Most agreed (85%) that usual services were maintained because of their grant (61% strongly agree, 24% agree).
* Similarly, most agreed (83%) the grant allowed their organisation to keep going (57% strongly agree, 25% agree).
* There was also agreement (82%) that the grant allowed organisations to deliver new or innovative services or initiatives (60% strongly agree, 22% agree).

Statements with agreement at lower levels were that the grant allowed organisations to improve their systems to apply for funds in the future, and that the grant allowed them to recover some, or all of the funds lost because of COVID-19.

Figure 17: What the grant from the Lottery COVID-19 Wellbeing Fund allowed participants to do

#### Differences between tranches

Tranche two participants were more likely to agree with the statements (*p* < 0.01):

* The Fund has enabled us to deliver new or innovative services or initiatives to the community (89% tranche two, 79% tranche one)
* Enabled us to improve our systems so we can apply to other funds in the future (72% tranche two, 56% tranche one)

Tranche two participants were less likely to agree that ‘The Fund enabled us to recover some or all of the future funds we lost due to COVID-19’ (48% tranche two, 61% tranche one). The range of agreement is detailed in Figure 18 below:

Figure 18: Impacts of grants, analysed by the two funding tranches

*\* Statement with a statistically significant difference*

## Regaining revenue lost due to COVID-19

### Many grantees reported that the Fund supported recovery of some revenue lost through COVID

Many organisations bore the brunt of revenue loss as a result of COVID-19, such as through loss of regular face-to-face fundraising channels and events, koha for services, or other ongoing revenue sources. Commonly, these organisations would try to maintain delivering services to their communities in different ways, whilst looking for new approaches to filling the funding gaps. In these circumstances, the ability to use grants from the Fund to restore some lost funding was highly valued. In particular, this enabled continuation of existing services and ongoing employment of staff.

It was perfect timing because…we were pretty much out of funds by then, so it’s kept us going. It’s given us more of a lifeline because by keeping us going for the short period leading up to the [funder] coming onboard… I had no idea how we were gonna maintain the operation for another year let alone six months but having the money from DIA, I knew we were good for six months, but we would concentrate on making sure we got other sponsors or funding opportunities to enhance that. (grantee interview)

It provided support at a time when we saw a reduction in income, lost the ability to apply to some trusts and provide ongoing support as we navigated through different ways in responding to COVID-19. (community survey respondent)

## Supporting organisational resilience and viability

### For many organisations, their grant was an important platform for their ongoing viability

Many grantees discussed the importance of the Fund for providing financial support that enabled continuity in the face of COVID. For these organisations, their grant supported organisational continuity and retaining or employing new staff.

I think having that buffer there, especially for the lockdown period for the staff - we’re a very small team and we manage our money very carefully because predominantly we want it for the wages of the staff because that’s our service – the admin which is me predominantly and the counsellors. They need to be free to do their job. Counsellors are hard to find. (grantee interview)

Probably the biggest impact [was] we wouldn’t have been able to employ more [staff], we’d have to turn people away because we don’t have the capacity to help people pretty much. (grantee interview)

Some interviewees spoke of the importance of the Fund in supporting operational expenditure, such as for ongoing staff employment; this is less attractive to many funders as they often have a project focus.

We were able to maintain our staff and volunteers, who are the life blood of our organisation. Without them we wouldn't be able to continue with providing to our community. (community survey respondent)

The fund gave us some certainty to continue to deliver not only the services we already do, but to help essential workers and families/youth in need. This demand changed and became quite a challenge to meet prior this grant, at the time of receiving the grant and still at this time. The community are struggling in many ways, we can be flexible to support re-growing our community’s stability and wellbeing. (community survey respondent)

Some Māori and Pacific grantees highlighted the contribution of the Fund to keeping their organisations going, keeping their people on board by supporting them financially, and having room for other opportunities and strategising. Supporting these organisations meant that they were able to continue to support their communities, and maintain their physical base and staffing resources (such as administrative backbone support, and venues in communities like community centres/marae buildings).

when we get back to business our teams are still with us. (grantee interview)

minimised burn out, freed up capacity to enable other opportunities to be taken. (grantee interview)

we were able to get on with it rather than scramble for other means to support our organisation and staff. (grantee interview)

Other key areas of impact noted were the ability to maintain cultural wellbeing by supporting marae; the ability to expand staffing and programmes and to support innovative approaches such as the development of quality digital services and systems to meet online capability.

### In some cases, grants supported building and facilities maintenance to ensure their longer-term presence in communities

An important part of the viability of some organisations was the ability to keep their facilities in workable order, in so doing future-proofing them for ongoing community value. For these organisations, the Fund enabled important upkeep to continue to support their communities (for example, marae upgrades or heating in a church community). Organisations could invest in equipment and make key changes that would result in positive impacts that carry on long-term.

By future proofing the market we are ensuring that the benefits continue and with the renewed energy and enthusiasm enabled by the grant we are looking at ensuring the wellbeing of our whole community through a thriving and attractive farmers market in the heart of our community every week. (community survey respondent)

It means that we are future proofed to support our schools and tamariki in the community should adverse events happen again - i.e., COVID lockdowns, flooding etc (community survey respondent)

This is about the enhancement of our marae and our whānau. To implement plans and enable succession. To evolve for the better of our people and hāpori. (community survey respondent)

## Acknowledging/building Māori responsiveness and capability

### Grants from the fund enabled activities by Māori, hapū and iwi organisations, many of whom were new to Lotteries funding processes

Successful Māori and Pacific grant applicants noted the ability to continue to maintain connection and support to Māori and Pacific communities, especially in the wake of COVID-19, and in many cases providing dedicated responses to community needs. It also helped organisations to see the struggles of people in their communities because they were connected in.

The community centre is becoming overrun daily with people coming, they are comfortable coming to see us, when they are in difficult circumstance. Food deliveries are weekly to 90 families, services are having a good impact. (grantee interview)

Most have improved wellbeing, feel better, less headaches, better backs. Some work hard and so this has been good for their physical wellbeing. Now they are more mobile and also meeting together more. (grantee interview)

[The grant] created opportunities for fun, joy, and laughter at a time when many were suffering from isolation and loneliness. (grantee interview)

The grant has helped with capacity to meet the needs and demands of our community. More people fed, more people content, more people connected and engaged in on and around our marae. (community survey respondent)

The less stringent nature of the fund helped support Māori and Pacific community and organisational needs during the COVID lockdowns and beyond.

### Grants also supported improved cultural responsiveness by funded organisations

For some organisations, the Fund gave them the opportunity to strengthen their responsiveness to Māori, through developing new resources or service offerings. One organisation was able to use the grant to completely update its online and school-based resources to incorporate a te Ao Māori perspective, and to hire a someone to lead this work and bring a Māori perspective to the wider organisation. A community garden was similarly able to apply the funding towards employing a staff member who would weave a te Ao Māori perspective throughout their teaching garden, and strengthen their overall practice.

the [person] we've just employed is Māori and as an organisation we are very much all working towards increasing our Te Ao Māori knowledge and there are several Māori on the team. We work with mana whenua and we're building… our own knowledge as a team in that space. … Within that role it's welcome to anybody…, but there was definitely a lot of the Te Ao incorporated into the practice and we are developing that knowledge and that's part of what this role will bring. (grantee interview)

Our videos have not been redone since 2008, … and we just didn't have the funds to do that moving forward. So this is a huge opportunity to really and because it's, they're for schools throughout New Zealand, it's a great opportunity just to be able to provide the best possible kaupapa. (grantee interview)

Another organisation that trains health professionals who provide perinatal services to whānau in Tāmaki Makaurau noted that the funding had allowed them to continue contracting a Māori role for which there were no funds left, and thus continue to increase cultural responsiveness amongst those they trained.

We asked the question since the training what have you changed in your practice and a lot of people are sort of talking about the reassessment of their responsibility to bring the Māori world view into the mahi/work that they're doing on a day-to-day practice as well. People are aiming to use more Te Reo so just even getting somebody’s name right and actually using their name is so important. (grantee interview)

## Dealing with COVID impacts in the community

### The Fund was an important enabler for many organisations to respond to heightened community needs in the wake of COVID

Many community respondents in the evaluation highlighted the impacts of COVID in their regions, both during the lockdowns and since then. These included anxiety and mental health impacts, family stressors and family violence, emergency housing access, and personal financial impacts. As a result, many organisations were dealing with spikes in demand during the 2020 lockdowns and in their aftermath. These organisations both stepped up to maintain their services to their communities, and also adapted delivery to provide online services where feasible.

The ability of the fund to ‘plug’ gaps for organisations and groups was highlighted. A few people noted that this fund offered support to non-legal entities, groups non-eligible for the wage subsidy, or those not in receipt of other government funding.

The funds received through the Lottery COVID-19 Community Wellbeing Fund, enabled our organisation to be able to employ a new part-time paid staff member, in a Crisis Response and Helpline Operations Coordinator role, which is part of a pilot programme to have Crisis and Early Intervention Triage Service in each regional centre. This funding has enabled our organisation to continue to support rangatahi in Aotearoa who have been impacted by COVID-19 and persisting life challenges. (community survey respondent)

## Ability to respond to general community needs

### The Fund supported a wide range of new or existing community services to meet local needs

The Fund had a specific COVID focus, but also had a broader remit to support collaborative community or social initiatives that strengthened and increased resilience in communities. In this respect, the fund was able to support a wide range of community services and initiatives. These included:

* Services that improved resilience in both physical and mental health
* A range of services to support the lives of migrant communities (such as skill building, career development and supporting migrant women experiencing domestic violence)
* Continued connection and extended outreach with/for communities (e.g., elderly through new online platforms)
* New and/or strengthened partnerships and connections, both across communities, and between communities and the funded organisations
* Continued access to and awareness of services (including transport, rural services and support services for older and younger people)

As noted in the previous section, the Fund also enabled community knowledge and strengths to be channelled into organisation and community activities.

### For some organisations, the Fund was able to extend their services into new areas or more challenging activity

Some organisations were seeking a step change in how they could respond to more complex or challenging needs. Examples include one organisation that was able to extend its peer support into more complex cases, and another was able to develop housing solutions for whānau. Some of these extended responses encompassed digital offerings to meet a larger number of people.

So far this year, through our student support centre, which is what the hub accesses, we would normally have around 600/700 student interactions by this time of the year. This year so far, we’re over 1,200 so masses of students and a lot are coming through that hub so it is being able to create this digital space for people to get help and support. (grantee interview)

Organisations noted that the number of vulnerable individuals increased during the pandemic and therefore the Fund allowed organisations to accommodate the increase in demand. Services that organisations provided for their community included food parcels, mental health support and social services.

We were able to fund an additional part-time Coordinator which enabled our [programme] to reach more children specifically with the programmes purpose of assisting children in coping with the losses and changes brought about by COVID-19. (community survey respondent)

This allowed us to grow our capacity and provide more therapy services to children in Canterbury. We were able to take on a therapist who specialises in trauma and a kaiarihi who delivers mentoring to youth using violence within the family. (community survey respondent)

## Strengthening community capacity

### A further impact of grant funding was to build community capacity in a variety of ways

Through a range of different innovative and locally-based initiatives, grantees were able to build community capacity to strengthen the overall resilience of community members. This included locally-based mental and physical health and wellbeing initiatives, food security initiatives, technology training and provision, and employment training.

The teaching garden’s taken off and a lot of what we do is teach, working with volunteers and courses and stuff, teaching people to grow their own food and composting and food resilience, food security, and we're working with community houses too. (grantee interview)

They found that by coming together in a group and doing these health workshops that improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing, their resilience improved in terms of having the group to connect with each time. (grantee interview)

# Delivering value to communities

### KEQ8: In what ways does the Fund deliver value to participating communities?

This final section explores the specific points of difference and added value that the Fund provided to successful grantees, drawing on survey responses and grantee interviews. Key themes in terms of value for communities, and areas to strengthen value of similar funds in the future, are summarised in the mindmap below (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Delivering value to communities

Diagram

Description automatically generated

## Ease of access and straightforward completion

### For the most part, grantees valued the ease of access to the Fund and the straightforward application process

Grantees commonly valued the application process, generally finding it straightforward, with clear criteria for review. Grantees who had completed previous Lotteries applications generally found the Fund application process more straightforward than other Lotteries applications, although a common view was that Lotteries funds tend to be relatively easy to complete. Many survey respondents saw the simplicity of the application process as a key point of difference, noting that it was quick, simple, user friendly and ‘incredibly uncomplicated’. Many noted that the application form was ‘streamlined’, with a simple layout and a lower number of questions, which were seen to be clear and concise. Clear guidelines on the required information were also appreciated.

This process was sublime. It was clear, easy. You knew what you needed to know. It was very clearly expressed and a really simple process to go through. It was awesome, and how it really should be. (community survey respondent)

Straightforward application, without the need to provide a lot of evidence/budgets/ financial statements/referees etc which can be time-consuming to gather the information required for submission. (community survey respondent)

It was lovely, easy, really good. I mean I spend a lot of time writing grant applications and some of them are horrendous but this, on the whole it was quite simple. (grantee interview)

The speed of decision-making and payment was similarly appreciated, and reporting requirements were not seen to be too onerous (noting however that few had completed reporting at the time of interview or survey completion). Many noted funding was received within days of hearing their application was successful, with a number of grantees sharing how this enabled them to meet increased demand or strengthen their organisations during uncertain times for their communities.

It was made available very quickly which was needed given the speed at which the demand for our services grew. (community survey respondent)

Clear purpose and objectives. Speedy decision making. Funds came when we needed them, not six months later. (community survey respondent)

It enabled us to get the staff in the right places, it enabled us to make an impact quicker, it enabled us to be more mobile and flexible on our feet. (grantee interview)

The reduction in supporting documentation was highlighted by many, with a number noting that they appreciated this high trust approach during a stressful time. A few shared that this reduction in paperwork enabled their organisations to focus on supporting their communities. Some respondents noted that the application process was simpler ‘less obtrusive and intensive’ than many they had completed, including previous Lottery Grant Applications. A few people also noted that accountability reporting was also more straightforward.

### Personalised support in completing applications was highly valued by those able to access this

A further key enabler in terms of access noted in responses is the support offered by DIA staff in guiding groups through the application process. Comments indicate that this support covered two main areas – working with groups to understand the fund’s purpose, including intended target communities, along with practical, often bespoke guidance in developing and submitting applications. Grantees shared how advisors supported them to develop a rationale, focus their application, and to ‘be precise’ in their submission. One person said they ‘would have been lost’ without the support. Some took the opportunity to note and praise the support they received from individual DIA staff.

The staff member was absolutely amazing and continues to offer support around our new initiative. (community survey respondent)

[Advisor name] was awesome, took us through step by step, the original application to MPP was already there at MSD. [Advisor] checked my changes and made suggestions. Very respectful as she made an effort to speak directly to my father (whose English is a second language). She made him feel like she could be trusted so he felt it was safe. (grantee interview)

As noted with regards to survey responses, the Zoom webinars, workshops and presentations hosted by DIA in relation to this fund were highly valued by those who attended. Attendees appreciated the opportunity to ask questions and found the provided examples of how complete individual application form questions particularly useful. Some grantees noted that comprehensiveness of these sessions meant that further advisor assistance was not required.

What I really liked is that there was a zoom meeting/webinar available to those interested in applying to the Lottery COVID-19 Community Wellbeing Fund, this was very useful and most of the questions I had about this fund, were answered during the webinar (community survey respondent)

### Māori and Pacific organisations valued the ease of access

There were a wide range of groups accessing and benefitting from the fund. There was a notable response from Māori and Pacific applicants, and also people from the disabled community, variety of age groups, migrants, amongst others.

The majority of the Māori and Pasifika applicants found the application process to be simple and relatively straightforward. Most applicants spoke of hearing about the fund through a colleague or local community advisor.

One Pasifika interviewee, who found out about the fund through a community advisor, based in Auckland, questioned how many applications DIA received from Pacific organisations as they knew of no others. They applied after the funding pause, and found the process to be simple. The interviewee also spoke of the enthusiasm that other Pacific organisations had for the fund once the interviewee mentioned the ease of access, however, they missed the deadline to apply.

Many of the organisations do not have the skills and the people that are well versed in grant applications. This grant was appealing because they did not need to have specialist knowledge of grant applications to apply. Even so, there remain many barriers to Pacific organisations applying:

I can understand why some don't apply, they need a device to get into the portal, they need someone like me who can understand the processes. They won't ever reach out that way. Language is also a barrier - we had a person who spoke Samoan via zoom, which helped build trust with the old school people.

The ability to access funds quickly was seen by Māori and Pacific organisations as very valuable, by helping with providing much-needed services in response to the COVID situation.

It was short sharp and quick. We needed to get things up and running. Every single bit helps. (grantee interview)

It was quick and effectively rolled out - able to access it at a real time of need for us. (grantee interview)

## Feeling acknowledged and trusted through the Fund

### The high trust model was valued by many grantees

Many grantees pointed to the high trust model underpinning the Fund, noting the ease of access, and the relatively low level of compliance inputs needed for both application and reporting, compared to many other grants. As part of the application process, grantees commonly indicated that they were able to tell their own story in a way that aligned well with criteria.

The application process was a lot simpler to do while being clear and specific. It was also seemingly more generous than some of the other applications we apply for that seek a lot of information for very little money. We were happy with the process and appreciated the more "high trust" model of this fund. (community survey respondent)

The degree of flexibility in terms of how grantees could use their funds was also noted, with grantees indicating that this allowed them to work in ways that were agile and responsive to evolving community needs and aspirations. Some noted that fund provided support for harder to fund aspects of work, with grantees appreciative that they could use grant money to cover various expenses, including operating costs, capital expenditure, wages and to ensure the continuation of existing projects. The way the funding model supported ‘non-traditional’ approaches to community development was also noted by some grantees.

The fund treated our initiative holistically and didn't put constraints on HOW we supported whānau - as long as the outcome was achieved. (community survey respondent)

It was really considerate of what organisations needed to respond to the COVID situation and not be prescriptive to certain outcomes or measures or how to do it. (community survey respondent)

I think the most valuable aspect of this funding from Lotteries is the fact that it's not specific, project specific. So it gives us a little bit of movement. (grantee interview)

One interviewee spoke of their organisation having previously been declined by the Lotteries grant process 15 years prior; at the time, they were told that they should not be providing the service as they had a personal connection to the aims of the service. The interviewee spoke of this being particularly traumatising. The account below highlights the challenge that applying again to the same funder can pose after being declined previously; notably, from having been accepted, to this Fund, the interviewee felt encouraged to apply again.

If you had asked me, I would have just bawled my eyes out because it was truly traumatic, truly traumatic because what happened, in our eyes what was happening is that we were being marginalised and we were actually told that we were dangerous because [we had had similar experiences to those we were working with]. And so it was slightly before these times where they recognised the fact that if you've been through something you're probably quite a good supporter. So yeah, it was pretty bad. So in fact it took us a lot to apply for that. I thought we were gonna be declined. I really, really truly did. (grantee interview)

Another noted the challenge of applying after being declined previously:

Some people are scared and don’t know how to. They've been rejected and so don't try applying again. (grantee interview)

This suggests there is a further need to establish trust within communities, particularly with Māori and Pasifika communities, where the memory and lived reality of many decades of poor or non-existent relationships with Crown agencies still carries an imprint.

Even though most had a positive experience, some Māori organisations/community groups were not given the correct information, and there were some misunderstandings of what was required of them. One rōpu were encouraged to trust the process and be willing to share fully and openly, even with parts of applications where they were not required to complete. These additional requirements can place undue process burdens on small community organisations, and even signal mistrust.

### Some grantees highlighted the sense of validation from receiving funding

Many of these applicants noted that this model demonstrated trust in their organisation to deliver and meet the needs of communities they know well, rather than try and ‘mould what we do to meet the funding criteria’. Grantees appeared to greatly appreciate this discretion and felt their knowledge and expertise were valued by the fundholder.

A point made by some interviewees was that their success in gaining funding created an important source of pride in being part of the COVID response and acknowledged the work they were doing in the community. Having their application accepted built confidence in the process and their own capacity, and gave encouragement to others to participate in these processes.

The fund recognised that there were other impacts on us, even if it wasn’t directly COVID infection – it was the flow on of the lockdown and the stressors that everyday Kiwis were experiencing. I think it was an incredibly timely, appropriate and well received grant to be put in place at that time and it helped Kiwis recognise that even though they weren’t accessing health services for a COVID infection, that the impact of the virus was actually recognised on them for other reasons which helped gel for us – the team of five million. We were still part of it, we had our bit. (grantee interview)

Targeted to meet our greatest challenges in trying times. This enabled the organization to meet immediate needs as they became apparent and to keep up with these as they changed through time. It was helpful to put funding where we best needed it, as opposed to that of the funder. (community survey respondent)

One interviewee noted the sense of pride and reassurance that Government support has meant for her small community that is deeply invested in the grantee organisation:

… you hear them mention it to someone else, “You know that [organisation name] got some of the wellbeing fund so that’s wonderful, isn’t it?” … I think from a community point of view, it has been quite reassuring that we’re not just relying on small donations and small grants to come in from the local community… and that we are supported from a wider pool. They like that, it reassures them that we’re sustainable as well. (grantee interview)

### Some Māori and Pacific grantees noted their confidence had grown for future grant opportunities

A few Māori and Pacific grantees indicated that a key impact was more personal, and that by being successful this gave them confidence to try for other grants.

This was the first time I applied to anything, and I feel very happy about the outcome. Gave me confidence to try other places. Would like to try if I knew there was another fund. (grantee interview)

A Pacific organisation representative spoke of sharing that their application had been accepted with other Pacific organisations. These were organisations that had minimal experience with applying for funding, and their success encouraged others to consider applying for similar grants. This was particularly significant due to the time and resource constraints many community organisations face.

In addition, by receiving the amount asked for with minimal reporting obligations and having to justify their applications, Māori and Pacific community respondents felt trusted and respected. This instilled confidence as they moved forward in serving whānau and their communities.

It was quick and effectively rolled out - able to access it at a real time of need for us. We got the full amount we asked for in two rounds - initially 30,000 then another 50,000. Can move forward with confidence, and expand because we've had these opportunities. (grantee interview)

## Ability to meet community needs

### The flexibility of the Fund to support a range of community-identified needs was seen as a point of difference

Grantees noted the flexibility of the Fund in supporting communities in different ways, often meeting needs that were identified by community members themselves, or implementing innovative ideas generated locally. The grant was less project-focused so funds could be used for multiple activities across the organisation and could be utilised in areas of need. A few participants referred to the Fund allowing them to focus on the current needs of their community.

Appreciated that this fund was not overly prescriptive. Many covid-response funds had overly detail criteria or eligibility that would have ruled out what has turned into a hugely successful initiative. (community survey respondent)

This grant meant our organization could access funds when we needed them, to best meet the immediate needs of our community. Flexibility in funding freed up staff capacity to focus on quality-of-service delivery and reaching those most at risk. (community survey respondent)

So I think it started as being what we perceived to be a community need but then when we went out into the community, ever since we went to the [mall] we've just kind of responded to where they’ve asked us to go next, so it’s kind of been community-led since then. (grantee interview)

Other grantees highlighted their work with particular communities of interest that were enabled by the Fund, including tamariki/rangatahi, migrant communities, senior communities and whānau whaikaha (disabled people), which allowed them to maintain their delivery and continue to do the work that their communities themselves value.

Participants felt valued through receiving grants and were grateful that they could serve their communities as it allowed key services to continue during the pandemic which targeted the most vulnerable.

Health, wellbeing, and safety issues became high priorities almost 'overnight'. The COVID-19 Community Wellbeing fund meant that we could continue with our core business while investing in essential items that helped us meet new targets for health, wellbeing, and safety. This made us feel valued, and provided us with confidence as we continued to work in the community. (community survey respondent)

All successful Māori and Pacific applicants agreed that receiving a grant made a positive difference to their organisation and or community. For some this came in a small scale, providing salary relief or the purchase of a vehicle. For others, it meant that they could focus on supporting community in a real and focused way that targeted need. One example is a housing initiative in Northland that was able to leverage further funding from MSD, and then embed their activities permanently in the area.

For one iwi organisation, having the fund meant that they could work to address and minimise the very real hardship facing their people. The primary purpose was housing. They noticed at the time of applying that there was a huge demand for whānau in the community needing housing – any form of housing:

There were a lot of kuia living in lean-to cow sheds with no running water, no hot water. There were families, with kids with no socks, no shoes living out of cars, living in the communities under trees. Some of them still are. (grantee interview)

At the time, not many services were available, so these people were fending for themselves. The iwi are now moving to create a strong and long-term housing plan to support whānau in need.

I see the impact on the community being an initial pathway for all our whānau to have access to sustainable housing in the future…. It started off trying to find emergency accommodation and other services, now it's moving to sustainability and thinking about the long term. We now have a housing project underway for 160 new properties. (grantee interview)

For some Māori and Pacific organisations, their services were not responding to the immediate challenges of covid 19, but were more providing services to bridge provision and maintain care. They talked about the value of funding that enables their service to look at the big picture in the context of pandemic.

What we are doing is not urgent, but it is important. It allows us to keep dreaming. (grantee interview)

### Grantees valued the opportunity to extend their scale and reach through the Fund

As alluded to elsewhere, the Fund enabled greater scale of delivery and extended reach to new communities and client groups, and also allowed some grantees to enhance their quality of offerings, such as through online delivery, video content for online resources, and culturally responsive offerings. The COVID fund also enabled new partnerships that helped extend scale and reach.

## Organisational viability

### The Fund's contribution to support organisational viability was a key area of value

For many grantees, the Fund was seen as a critical enabler of their financial viability, supporting their operations and continuity of delivery, and maintaining staff in employment. The grants often enabled operational activity that would have to be (or had been) covered by baselines otherwise, and for many, recovered at least some funds that had been lost through COVID lockdowns and flow-on effects.

## Enabling innovative responses

### The fund enabled innovative responses in grantee communities

For many grantees, the opportunity that the Fund gave to implement innovative activities, including community-led innovation, was a key point of difference. This included extending activity to include online outreach and capability, implementing grassroots ideas, and creative ways to develop stronger community connections. Others also commented that the grant allowed organisations to transition to be more digitally accessible by providing online support and purchasing devices to maintain connection with the community.

We have purchased new chrome books and laptops for our students to use, as we are delivering some of our student's learning tasks online. We are now able to improve and accelerate our student's learning at the [study programme] or at home electronically, as most Pasifika families don't have electronic devices at home. (community survey respondent)

Some grantees felt the Wellbeing Funds’ focus on new social innovations, particularly during a challenging time, set it apart from other grants. These applicants appreciated the ability to be innovative, to test new ways of doing things, and use their knowledge to respond to evolving community needs.

Even though we were only partially successful with our application, we loved the fact that innovation and transformative initiatives were being encouraged and supported. (community survey respondent)

I think this fund was more futuristic focused, supporting innovative projects as a result of COVID and the restrictions the lockdowns had on the way people had to work. I think COVID will also change how we work going forward and this fund helped us to be able to be prepared for that. (community survey respondent)

Some Māori and Pacific organisations highlighted the way the funded supported sustainability and growth of their organisations and their programmes and services, and in some cases, being able to innovate.

We really need it - great to have it available on a yearly basis. A huge help. It will support us as we grow. Communities rely on their own time - that's a lot - if we want to be a sustainable organisation the support is much needed, to sustain the resources and grow. (grantee interview)

Allowed us to build new strategies quickly, and action these for communication and quality of experience for our clients. Made us realise that our key focus is about how we train online, how we invest in IT to develop our services and maintain them… COVID exposed a weakness in the area of IT that we started to fill with this fund - testing out strategies and developing a sustainable IT strategy going forward. (grantee interview)

## Potential areas for extending value for similar funds in the future

### Some quick wins were identified by community respondents to improve the funding experience

Some relatively simple adjustments to the process included:

* Automated application submission acknowledgement
* Videos available on the funding portal to advise what to expect when completing an application
* Clearer signposting of community advisor support with preparing applications.

### A range of improvements to the portal were suggested by community respondents

Ideas for improvement included the ability to format applications with bullet points and bold text to improve clarity and readability; ability to save applications and return later; including a guide word count; indicating what sections of the form must be completed; and downloadable templates for pre-submission preparation. One grantee felt that the pre-application information should indicate that applicants need to login RealMe under their own name.

### Greater flexibility to support applicants who struggle with applications for many reasons

Some applicants noted the difficulties faced by people for whom English is not a first language, or who struggle with the written format. It takes longer for these groups to complete applications, and many worry that their use of language makes them look less professional. Suggestions included offering a verbal process in such instances, or allowing applications/supporting material to be included in audio or video format.

### There is enthusiasm for this form of innovative grant-making to be replicated and enhanced further

The simplicity of the process, and the active intent to support innovative activity and more equitable funding processes all gave rise to support for enabling this way of working more widely. Community respondent and Hāpai Hapori feedback all point to an important opportunity to build the strengths of the process and spread capacity more widely.

The one-year funding envelope was challenging for some, and many would value being able to receive grants that extended for longer periods of time.

### Strengthening the relational practice in grant-making support will be an important area of further development

We feel there is a need for building a more consistent relational practice between grant applicants and the grant-making system, so that the gains made in reaching priority communities can be developed further.

Not all community respondents received the guidance they felt they needed to submit a strong application. One person noted the absence of advice in terms of ‘what amount was reasonable to apply for, or for what specific type of project’. Another highlighted the difficulty faced by a new organisation with little track record to apply for this funding. A further applicant felt that targeted, individualised support should be offered to groups working specifically with the fund’s priority communities. Another challenge for this applicant was in being able to connect with a representative for the fund; when they tried to call, they found they were bounced between different Fund personnel.

Those aware of support valued it highly, including webinars on the grant application process that were delivered. However, it is also important to note that many were unaware of the support available through community advisors. Building greater knowledge of and access to support processes among priority communities will enable more to benefit in the future, and would be consistent with a continuously improving public sector.

### Intentional capability building will strengthen equity in grant-making

If this form of grant-making is to become embedded, it will be important to intentionally build capability by continuing to support new organisations/communities coming into the process, by expanding capacity building on grant applications (e.g. targeted support and workshops, including online).

### Improving the consistency of advice

There appears to be some inconsistency in advice, perhaps reflecting the rapid and innovative approach to grant-making, but it will be important to ensure that grant applicants receive consistent advice on criteria, application requirements and other areas of advice. Although all interviewees were grateful and happy to have received the grant funding, for those that did not receive the full amount, the reasons for this were often unclear.

### Improving tracking and monitoring capability in grant-making systems

It was apparent in this evaluation that there were some significant limitations of the technology and systems behind the grant-making process. Many patterns of grant-making only became evident once survey data was able to be confidentially linked to grant applicant data.[[4]](#footnote-4) This suggests that the systems fall critically short in understanding the extent to which grants are reaching priority communities, as well as broader patterns of grant distribution.

# Conclusions

The COVID-19 Wellbeing Fund has demonstrated a range of innovations in planning, communication, implementation and decision-making, that are unique to grant-making within the Lotteries system. The Fund has demonstrated that innovation is possible in a highly structured system and organisation. At the same time however, the constraints revealed by the Fund’s implementation indicate there is room to take innovation further in both systems and legislation.

The experience of the Fund highlights the breadth of thought and activity that is required to give effect to an equity response to communities, particularly a clearly defined purpose and activation of resources, knowledge and personnel to implement grant-making – and crucially, an ability to adapt delivery when it is clear the purpose is not being achieved.

The high-trust model that emerged was an important enabler of this more adaptive and reflective approach that the Fund undertook. This approach also required a greater tolerance of risk, but one that had woven within an intentional learning process; so that grant-making decisions could be reviewed by the Fund’s governance, and future courses steered to ensure robust decision-making.

Working equitably in grant-making extends beyond the distribution of funds to communities, it is about how grant-makers work with communities and support them to succeed and make use of funds to deliver the intended benefits. In a system that has traditionally favoured well-established organisations, an equitable response requires intentionality in its purpose and adaptability in its response, in order to shift grant-making towards better outcomes for communities.

Community advisors emerged in this model as having central importance, in their role as people who understand their communities and who could support community organisations, many of whom were new to funding processes, apply for and make effective use of funding opportunities. There are clear instances where this relational practice has been to the benefit of priority communities, and there is potential to develop this further in the future, and to ensure greater consistency of outreach.

The funding pause became a pivotal moment where greater equity of grant-making was able to be achieved, and offers signposts for future grant-making to ensure that priority communities are given the best chance of benefiting from grants processes. A reversion to business-as-usual grant-making processes could well lose the gains that have been made through the Fund, particularly in building relational approaches.

The work to date in this evaluation raises questions for further reflection on practice and grant-making systems change:

* To what extent is Hāpai Hāpori seeing ‘learning about’ its experience of the Fund as a precursor to ‘keep testing and trying different’ in its wider activities?
* Who are the other teams within DIA and more widely that need to be part of creating more far-reaching change in grant-making?
* What are the opportunities available for deeper systems and legislative change to support greater equity in grant-making, and impacts in communities?
* What are the wider lessons, such as from strategic philanthropy, and Māori entities managing grant processes towards whānau/community investment – that Hāpai Hāpori can learn from?

The theory of grant-making that underpins this evaluation outlines the progression of the Fund’s goals, its resources and activities, the critical of value that it offers, and ultimately the outcomes it delivers. This evaluation highlights many of the strengths of the Fund’s foundations, including local knowledge and connection; targeted investment; adaptability; innovating delivery; equity of access; simplified processes; and transforming internal systems. We can see from grantee feedback many signals that the Fund’s approach has delivered positive outcomes for communities, including Māori and Pacific communities, across Aotearoa.

# Appendix: Additional survey data

### Types of organisations participating

Figure 20: Type of organisation

### Regions where organisations were based

Figure 21: Region where organisation's activities are based (multiple answers possible)

### Age and gender groups that organisations work with

Figure 22: Age groups organisation mainly works with (multiple answers possible)

Figure 23: What genders organisation mainly works with (multiple answers possible)

### Staffing and volunteers in participating organisations

Figure 24: Estimated number of staff

Figure 25: Percentage of paid staff in each tranche

*\* Statement with a statistically significant difference*

Figure 26: Estimated number of volunteers

Figure 27: Percentage of volunteers in each tranche

*\* Statement with a statistically significant difference*

### Learning about the Lotteries COVID-19 Wellbeing Fund

Figure 28: How participants found out about the Lotteries COVID-19 Community Wellbeing Fund

Figure 29: How participants found out about the Fund in each tranche

*\* Statement with a statistically significant difference*

1. Davidson EJ. 2005. *Evaluation Methodology Basics – The Nuts and Bolts of Sound Evaluation.* Sage Publications, CA. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. King J, McKegg K, Oakden J, Wehipeihana N. 2013. Rubrics: A method for surfacing values and improving the credibility of evaluation. *Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation*. Vol 9, No. 21. <http://journals.sfu.ca/jmde/index.php/jmde_1/article/view/374> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For the purposes of this evaluation, we were only able to explore this issue by firstly, asking survey respondents if they were from Māori or Pacific organisations, and secondly, by linking their responses to the grant data. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Note that no individual grant applicant survey data is shared with Hāpai Hapori; the linking with grant applicant records was solely for the purpose of identifying grant-making patterns across the Fund. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)