

Adult & Community Education Newsletter



ĀKAU: providing a national resource for whānau and schools, page 13

Necessity driven innovation: ELP's unexpected win from Covid-19

By Nicola Sutton, CE, English Language Partners



'Necessity is the mother of invention', said Plato and we have found this to be true.

English Language Partners (ELP) work is teaching English to adults and until March 25th this work was done in face-to-face classes. All across New Zealand, learners gathered with the purpose of improving their language skills so they could participate more effectively in daily life and settle well in New Zealand.

Access to the internet and suitable technology were just some of the barriers to learning experienced by learners in lockdown. Limited language, which is important for engaging in English online, along with the responsibility of caring for family added to the challenge.

Despite the challenges, over 500 hours of online learning was attended in the first week of lockdown. Five weeks later attendance hours totalled 28,500 with 1,973 learners engaged in at least one of the 285 classes meeting regularly. Now, nine weeks after leaving their classrooms, learners are beginning to return. Attendance hours now total 60,190, which is about 53% of pre-Covid planned delivery. This was achieved by 2,036 learners attending 318 classes.

What made this momentous move from

face-to-face to online delivery a success? The teachers.

"The level of innovation by our teachers surpassed all expectation. The first lessons started the day after lockdown with teachers organising their own technology and phoning learners to tell them about classes and how to access them. All kinds of delivery started as we scrambled to provide training for our teams," said Jo Leach, programmes manager at English Language Partners New Zealand.

Teachers innovated. They made it happen. Their commitment to the learners saw them get started, teach themselves how to use the technology and adapt content to an online mode of delivery, take up training opportunities, and learn through their and others' mistakes. Teachers used a wide range of platforms, some they were familiar with and some learners were familiar with. Just two days after lockdown one of our staff saw on WeChat, a Chinese social media site, a friend's post with a photo of her parents in an ELP WeChat class.

An Auckland teacher reported that, "The learners have taken to Google Classroom like ducks to water and are already submitting work and making comments."

In addition to this, ELP trained teachers to use Zoom and provided licences so they could access all the features. By the 30th of March, 233 teachers had attended Zoom training. Teacher professional development did not stop there. Many then continued to



Grant, an English Language Group teacher, used fresh produce from his shopping basket to liven up a lesson for his intermediate level class on idioms.

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Whakatauki:

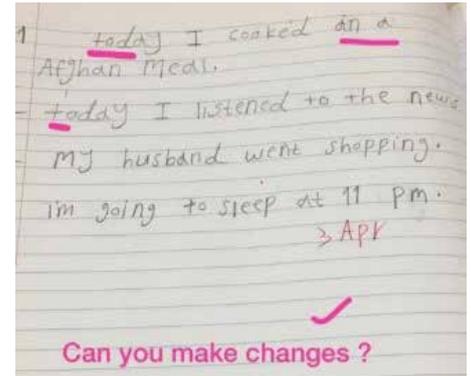
*E hara taku toa
i te toa takitahi
he toa takitini.
My strength is not
as an individual,
but as a collective.*

attend weekly drop-in sessions where they asked questions and shared tips. We also sourced free training for online ESOL teaching so teachers could further their skills and knowledge. And our programmes team started publishing weekly newsletters with resources and teaching tips.

Week by week classes became more polished as everyone got to grips with this new approach to teaching. Some classes merged with others; in one centre three learners from one class and three from another joined together. In other cases learners joined classes run by ELP centres in other parts of New Zealand. Centres also requested some national classes that learners could be referred to if the centre did not have anything to offer. Five classes are now underway with topics such as Kiwi English, Reading and Writing for Advanced

Learners, Grammar, and English for Customer Service.

Teachers used different tools to support learners. WhatsApp was used to provide written corrections (as in this example), and learners also used it



to annotate their own work before sending it back to the teacher.

Competent teachers are only part of the story though. We were amazed at the effort learners made to join online classes. Some had the skills and technology to get started without support and others relied on their families and ELP staff and volunteers to help them.

A surprising number of older learners and those with little or no literacy skills in their own language, let alone English, participated in classes. Christine, a teacher in our ESOL Intensive programme said, “Getting online can be a struggle for some older people with very limited access to data or technical know-how. I had two learners in their 70s with no skills or experience with online technology. Initially, it seemed neither would be able to join, but both were really keen to learn how and persevered until they were successful. They are now the most regular attendees, do their homework, know how to annotate worksheets, and one has also learned how to email me his homework. It’s the first time he’s ever sent an email!”

One teacher reported that when she had a new learner join the class she asked the other learners to explain how to use Zoom. She said, “It was a great way for the learners to practise English speaking skills, create a friendly rapport with the new learner, and for everyone to consolidate their Zoom knowledge.”

An advertisement for English Language Partners New Zealand. The top left features the organization's logo, a stylized red flower, and the text 'English Language Partners New Zealand Working with former Refugees and Migrants'. A red circular badge with white text says 'NOW ONLINE'. The main text reads 'Learn English with us'. Below this, there are two bullet points: 'Free for citizens and residents' and 'Classes for work, everyday life and study'. On the right side, there is a photograph of a smiling man with a beard, wearing a plaid shirt, sitting at a desk with a laptop. At the bottom, a red banner contains the website address 'www.englishlanguage.org.nz'.

Another teacher with a group of low level learners found the Zoom experience fun. She said, I love the breakout rooms. I'm amazed that my learners are managing so well in them. They think it's such a hoot that I can pop virtually in and out!"

Learning didn't just happen in the home though. One learner had to leave his class early for work because they were making silage. Once at the farm, he re-joined the class by phone to explain the process of setting up the silage pit. The other learners and teacher found it really interesting and it brought a different aspect to the lesson. They were keen to do something similar again.

For learners who could not access online learning, our teachers and other staff supported them with regular phone calls. Some calls included discussion about the content of learning materials that had been emailed or posted to the learner and other calls were purely pastoral care.

Learners were positive about the experience. One group of learners told their teachers they preferred online lessons. Another teacher reported, after her first lesson, "What a fantastic response with 14 learners joining their first lesson today. For many it was also their first time using Zoom. We worked through the lesson plan on how to use the Zoom features. Everyone was happy to talk to each other and connect again. They enjoyed it so much they even want to continue classes through the school holidays."

A group of learners in Dunedin organised themselves and made a heart-warming video for their teacher. Learners and their family members held up letters to form words wishing her a happy birthday.

Online learning was not just for our classes though. Some of our volunteer home tutors also got online with their learners. Angela Botha, our Hawke's Bay centre manager said, "Online learning was also a huge support for our volunteers and the learners they usually teach at home. WhatsApp, Zoom, text messages, emails and of course the telephone, meant our volunteers could stay connected to their learners, and continue to support their language learning. We will continue this support until one to one tutoring can resume."

Home tutor, Jill, dropped worksheets to her learner's letterbox and then used WhatsApp and phone calls for followup sessions. While Barbara, who used Zoom with her learner, sent us a photo (below) of her laptop set-up on the kitchen table surrounded by fruit and veges, letter tiles, and paper ready for a lesson with her learner.



Another home tutor made short videos in WhatsApp telling her learners what she was doing in isolation. She said, "They are just short snippets of what I'm up to, and I usually shoot them in selfie mode so they can see my face for most of the video. I always get a lot of lovely emojis back from them and sometimes messages in Arabic."

It was not only the teachers that used technology to keep learners engaged. Our office staff continued to match learners with volunteers and teachers using technology. Patricia, a coordinator in Auckland said, "I used 3-way video chat on WhatsApp for matching volunteers and learners from our recent training course. It is early days with a steep learning curve all round but getting there slowly."

ELP will look back on 2020 as the moment when a whole new way of delivering our services was birthed. We are excited by the possibilities. Learners can now choose to participate in face-to-face classes or join an online community; some might choose to do both.

Our vision, that former refugees and migrants can participate successfully in all aspects of life in Aotearoa, just got a massive boost.



Reflections on tutoring under lockdown – and Literacy Aotearoa connection across the motu

Compiled by a few of us in Literacy Aotearoa...

Maintaining our national connectedness, adaptability and a sense of humour became the mantra for Literacy Aotearoa during lockdown. For a national organisation that covers the motu from Cape Reinga to Bluff, it was critical for our organisation to have a sense of connectedness and continuity during this intense moment in our history – and lessen the anxiety and negative effects of lockdown.

Karakia became a daily channel for virtual face-to-face and a check in with everyone's wellbeing. All staff could Zoom in if they wished to as well as members of our Board. Naturally, with all the dynamic personalities of our people in the room, it wasn't hard to go into the day with a lightness of spirit. Who wouldn't smile at the light banter and teasing, the jostling to promote each other's area as the best place to be and pride for each one's local area shining through, the ingenuity of virtual backgrounds, the positioning to catch the best Zoom angles, the North Islanders (ok Aucklanders mainly) remarking on the cold when actually it was t-shirt weather in the South! There might be a closedown at the Kapiti Coast border soon as this sounded like the place to be as touted by our local peeps.

And not one for missing the opportunity, karakia was a perfect opportunity on a national scale to introduce Te Kupu o te Wiki in te reo

Māori and introduce some Pasifika Greetings. It became part of the morning ritual. Well done to all our staff for embracing this moment. We have champions of Ngā Kupu o te reo Māori and Pasifika greetings throughout the motu.

Added to this, it was a good time to remind everyone to take an ergonomic break and stretch as well as taking the opportunity to remind everyone to take a break from the computer and exercise.

Within no time, Zoom became the buzzword! If you were easing into Zoom before the lockdown, that went out the door. From karakia through to tuition, everyone became Zoom supercharged.

If the tutoring was going to be a challenge, I knew that it was one that we, as an organisation, would have to face together. It may not have been an easy transition, as one of Literacy Aotearoa tutors outlined his experiences, but it was definitely a time of experimentation as everyone explored this new and unfamiliar territory:

“Two days prior to lockdown I had little insight into what the implications for tutoring would be. I was skeptical about my chances of success; that the teaching would be engaging and effective. How to build the centrepieces of trust and rapport? How to structure the class? How best to support people online? Monitoring and helping out when needed is clunky at best.

“I contacted my learners, brought home a few resources, and checked in with students about the state of their connectedness. This ranged from full internet with laptop (👉) to a cellphone with no credit (uh-oh). There were casualties – a small high-needs group in the too-hard basket was placed on hold. The last day in the office saw me delivering a laptop to a young mum so that she could stay with her work-ready course.

“The first week was a blur of finding an online platform that worked, learning what works with teaching online, and connecting with learners under lockdown. Some, being essential workers, had other priorities. The responsibility to make teaching work and nine or 10 hours per day interacting with a computer screen did not make for a restful week’s sleep.

“Expectation setting and planning turned out to be key; we approached the first session as an experiment and I was frank with the students – if this is a waste of your time, then we don’t continue. It helped that the groups were small but the range of connection and capability made things challenging. Some creative solutions came out – dialling in to lessons both with cellphone and computer in order to have sound, vision and screen sharing.

“There was a LOT more admin and prep than I gave credit for. Everyone needed emails, calls, texts, links, reminders, more calls...

“Maths was simplest: watch online videos (a different voice and saves your own) and solve problems together. It helped that the group was at a similar level. The group of eight healthcare workers doing introductory computer skills was a disaster! We split the group and the levels. This worked better.

“The Work Ready programme was compromised. A lot of the informal learning is raising self esteem, facilitating discussion of the anxiety resulting from the job-hunt and supporting the job-hunt. This was unrealistic under Level 4 with a melting employment market. We focused on unit standards and on the introspection that you need to do in order to know the work that you are suited to and how to present your most employable side to the world. They

enjoyed the communication, especially those who lived alone.

“So we found that tutoring by distance is not like face-to-face, but it can work. It works best with learners that self-manage; it is a much harder job when they need support that is best done in person, kanohi ki te kanohi.”

Literacy Aotearoa learners speak:

Catherine

It’s OK, sometimes it’s frustrating as I only have a cellphone. I miss interacting with my classmates but at least I can still see them online. I am more independent now I guess. I can source the info I need online. It’s good that I can do a class while sitting in my living room.

Charmaine

I have been receiving tutoring at Literacy Aotearoa with Cameron to help with my numeracy and literacy in preparation for my psychometric assessment testing for the Police. Even though our classes have been running online due to Covid-19 we have had no disruption to our learning. The transition from face-to-face to online was smooth, professional with a twist of humour from my tutor which makes learning easy with Literacy Aotearoa! If you are wanting that little bit of extra help then Cameron’s your man.

We all, staff and learners alike, have come so far. We are Zoomers now – in all stages, some being more advanced than others. Zoom training and other online platforms were explored and tested. We are excited about the prospects of online training and delivery.

On a serious note, it was important for Literacy Aotearoa to acknowledge the constant challenges and changes this lockdown period created for staff, on top of learning how to sustain this new Zoom way of life, and to be aware of everyone’s state of wellbeing. To this end and in response to the request from staff, a daily ‘Update 2.30pm’ bulletin was provided to everyone. It was a dedicated channel for responding to staff queries about the alert levels, forum and opportunity to flag the potential implications to the organisation about delivery, information about wellbeing and Covid-19.

We continue to ease into a new normal as we cautiously allow some of our people back into some delivery sites throughout the motu.

The light-heartedness of some of the comments above may give the perception that we weathered the lockdown well. We did in some aspects. However, we also came away with a greater sense of reality in that we urgently need to improve some other aspects of our work. If Covid-19 is to provide a lesson, it is that for Literacy Aotearoa, the health of our national organisation remains one of being interdependent and interconnected in all aspects of our work. We are grateful for the fortitude and continuing commitment of Literacy Aotearoa staff and learners across the motu.

13 REAPS: connection, inspiration and innovation

By Hayden Maskell, Marketing and Communication Manager, REAP Wairarapa

REAPs across the country are deeply connected with their communities, and the Covid-19 lockdown presented a significant challenge. With rural communities especially affected by the isolation, the 13 REAPs managed to quickly find inspiration and innovation.

For many people, the most significant challenge was in having children home. All 13 REAPs actively sought ways to help parents in their time of need, by connecting schools, educators, parents and children with useful resources and activities.

Of course, home-schooling wasn't the only significant change to result from the lockdown. It meant a dramatic shift to video conferencing at all levels, including adult community education, job applications, health appointments, and more. Through it all, REAPs around the country worked tirelessly to lead their communities through uncertainty.

Tutors step it up a notch

Adult community education has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 lockdown and social distancing rules, but some tutors have worked harder than ever to keep groups together.

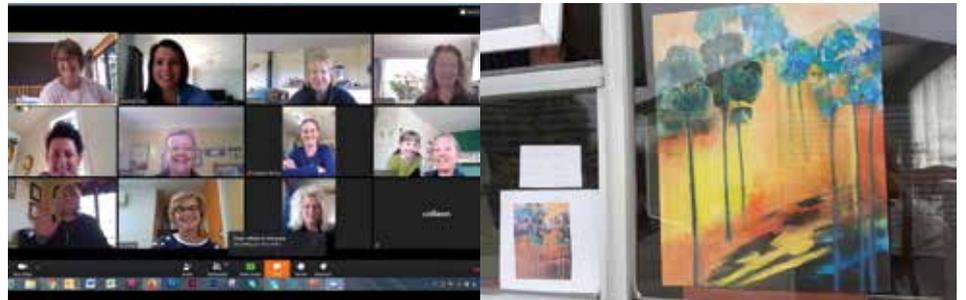
WestREAP's Art4Me tutor Kate Buckley spent lockdown keeping in constant contact with her three learner groups, using every tool and channel possible to ensure the quality of their learning stayed high. Not all learners have internet access, and so Kate made it a priority to call every single learner at least once a week and catch up with them.

She set up a website for sharing work and got her learners to send her finished or in-progress pieces to display online. WestREAP also included the work in social media posts and their newsletter, ensuring the artwork was seen and shared.

For many adult learners, their regular classes have been their main or only social outlet; the continuation of their learning was about not just art lessons but staying connected with others at an especially isolating time.

Social media and social learning

Southern REAP were quick adopters of social media during the lockdown and



made a conscious decision to explore how Facebook could benefit their community. With schooling the most significant challenge for many parents, Southern REAP used Facebook in a unique way: up-skilling and reassuring parents.

Neuroscientist and educator Kathryn Berkett had already been locked in to run parenting workshops in 2020, so Southern REAP reached out and asked her to share videos aimed directly at parents. These resources were shared on the Southern REAP Facebook page, and proved popular with principals and parents, reaching over 1400 people. They also shared video content from Parenting Place, Nigel Latta, Te Karere, Nathan Wallis, and even other REAPs, such as Central Otago REAP's content on creating routines to make lockdown easier for children and parents.

Responding to community need is a REAP strength, but the Covid-19 situation meant shifting gear with remarkable speed. For much of the community, the changes to daily lives presented enormous upheaval, and Southern REAP (along with other REAPs around the country) made significant, rapid changes to meet these needs, helping educate parents and teachers on not just coping but thriving under the new circumstances.

Now on video

Many REAPs embraced video technology, but Central Otago REAP stepped it up by launching a whole new site. The team developed a new platform to encourage people to learn, offering a range of tutorials on their coreap.tv site. Staff have developed tutorials, read stories for Early Childhood and presented footage from previous U3A series held in Alexandra. New series continue to be added weekly, and the setup has the potential to last well into the future

as an online learning platform.

Central Otago REAP also started using new technology with Adobe Spark, creating the digital Lockdown Connector Newsletter, which not only aimed to keep the community in the loop but to share helpful resources.

While videos and online learning will never replace traditional learning completely, great strides have been made to ensure that distance and isolation are no longer barriers to opportunity.

Zooming through work

Youth employment programmes have often relied heavily on one-on-one coaching and individualised support, and programme coordinators across the country immediately recognised the barriers created by the lockdown. REAP Marlborough's community education organiser Ailsa Carey says the Youth Employability Programme made a successful shift to video conferencing.

"I have never run this programme via Zoom...I had barely been on it," she says. "But we had six youth jump on our first call, and three weeks later...the same six youths attend every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. They've completed five modules in the Youth Employment Programme book."

While the numbers were down slightly from those expected for the face-to-face course, they were also significantly higher than expected – and, significantly, there was a 100% retention rate. This meant the work could be efficient and effective, and youth all connected in meaningful ways, becoming more confident to share their ideas in the new context.

There are already plans in motion to secure work experience and placements as the country's alert levels drop, but Ailsa says the most interesting thing she uncovered

during the course was that, for the youth involved, the video meetings were as much about social connection as anything else.

“Something I noticed in speaking more in-depth each time with these youth is that none have a ‘tribe’ at the moment,” she says. “I think this YEP has provided more than an employment programme, and been a protective factor in their lives.”

To stay connected, get connected

REAP Wairarapa identified a significant barrier to online learning: internet connectivity. Many families in Wairarapa’s residential and isolated rural areas lack broadband internet, with both cost and network access significant barriers. REAP Wairarapa worked with Skinny Jump, a low-cost prepaid broadband service for eligible homes.

The partnership with Skinny Jump aligned neatly with the REAP values and mission, including the eligibility criteria: Having school-aged children at home; or people looking for work; or new New Zealanders with English as a second language; or seniors.

Caring for the more vulnerable sectors of a community is a REAP speciality, especially the provision of access to quality education. Skinny Jump allows people to connect with 30GB of data for a monthly fee of \$5.00; this, coupled with the government’s rollout of devices for students, provided families with a great deal of stress relief and access to education.

It was also great for those wanting to access REAP Wairarapa’s own online courses, including the Learn Te Reo Māori through Waiata. This was the first REAP Wairarapa ACE course to be delivered entirely by Zoom, and while latency presented challenges for group singing, the exercise proved the potential of digital and video resources for future courses.

While the impact of COVID-19 on rural communities will continue to be felt for some time, REAPs around the country have shown the power of innovation, creativity and resilience. Through video learning, social media connection and community development initiatives, REAPs have not only continued to work for their communities but to expand their reach. There are promising signs that this work might just be helping rural communities do more than just survive the crisis, and to thrive in the rebuild.



Life under lockdown: schools rise to the challenge

By Linda Melrose, Director of Adult and Community Education – Onehunga High School and Aorere College; President of CLASS – Community Learning Association through Schools



Term one for our school programmes had been a steady one. Programmes filled up and school-based providers had rolled out their adult education courses for the term. This is traditionally our biggest term with adult learners keen to enroll in classes and optimism in the community. A new year, a new challenge and new opportunities.

However with the sudden announcement of a Level 4 lockdown we had to immediately cancel classes that were going ahead that night and every other day and night of the following weeks. It was heartening to see how school-based coordinators pulled together to support each other, to share information and knowledge and to do what we could to support the huge numbers of learners and students who attended our school-based programmes. Many hours of phone calls, virtual meetings and emails resulted in confidence in the sector to work through the issues and do what we could to support learners and teachers.

Every roadblock or challenge presents an opportunity and at Onehunga High School and Aorere College we have used this time to re-connect on a personal level with every tutor. Early on we decided that providing online, distance learning classes was vital for our marginalised communities. Many were facing weeks of isolation, uncertainty about jobs and families, loss of incomes, homes and businesses and most certainly challenges around anxiety, depression and mental wellness.

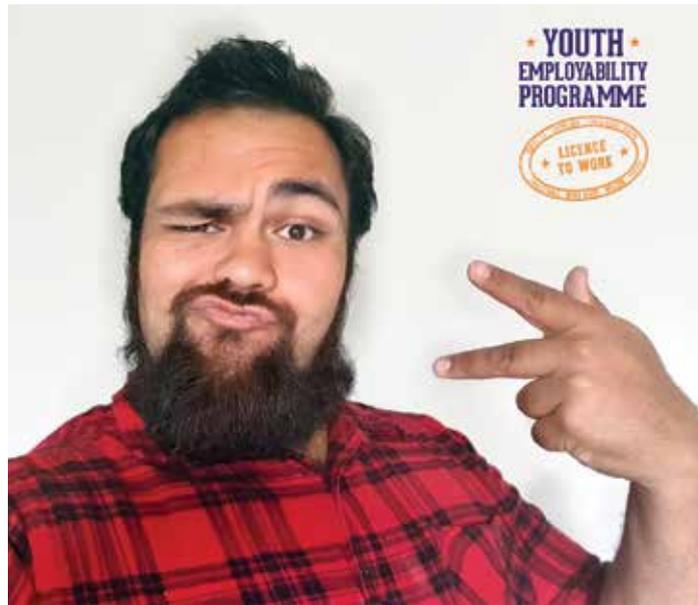
In the second week of lockdown we rolled out a comprehensive programme of adult learning courses via virtual classrooms. Every course provided learner access to free learning while in lockdown and within a few days the programmes were full

with over 600 enrolments. ESOL classes, particularly Conversation and Business English classes, filled up with learners expressing a desire to stay connected. Business and Language programmes, First Aid and Music proved popular; far beyond our initial expectations. We had to close down all registration as the classes were full because of the unprecedented demand. A second round of online classes was rolled out the following week; proving that learners wanted to take the opportunity to upskill, learn something new, stay engaged, develop new relationships or to just take time for themselves when they lead such busy lives. For many it was a lonely time when they could tap into learning something. For others it was an opportunity to improve their employability or confidence.

What we have learned has shaped how we will adapt in the future. More and more learners want quick and convenient access to classes. They want short courses that equip them with the skills they need to compete in the workplace; either to progress through to management positions, or to seek new employment. We have learned what we can achieve by offering some programmes through virtual classrooms. However it has also been evident for many adult students, that face-to-face learning optimises their experience and they have a preference to be in a physical classroom setting. We will continue to work on creating programmes going forward that cater to different needs.

‘Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today’ – Malcolm X

COMET’S YEP Guy – and youth self care



During the lockdown close to 1000 young people currently enrolled in the Youth Employability Programme (YEP) were able to access a range of online resources to continue building their skills, including a series of short videos by ‘That YEP Guy’.

YEP was established by COMET Auckland five years ago and now operates in 12 regions/areas around the country. It is designed to make it possible for all 14-24 year-olds to gain the insight, confidence and skills to get work, keep work and create careers.

Prior to the lock down, local providers were struggling to think of ways they could support their learners once they were no longer able to have face-to-face contact. They were delighted to receive a package of online self-care resources from COMET.

Shirley Johnson, Director of Youth Employability at COMET, said the first component of the self-care pack is a questionnaire that helps young people assess where they’re at with their self-care, then there are a range of resources and activities they can access to build their skills in this area.

A series of fun and useful videos have been produced by Māori actor, Karlton Laing, ‘That YEP Guy’. The videos are

based on the seven employability skills in the national Employability Framework. The first covers the importance of self-care.

“We went as broad as possible, looking at topics like fitness and exercise, mental health, what they were eating, whether they were smoking or not, screen time, how to be a good friend to yourself,

meditation... The feedback that we have had from providers is that the resources are just what they need, and they tell us that young people like Karlton. He is funny, he’s entertaining, and he gives them information without lecturing them. We find that different age groups use different parts of the resource, depending on where they are at. There has also been feedback that they like the questionnaire because they often find that they are doing better than they thought. The cool thing is that we know this resource has been passed on locally, to other youth groups, because it helps young people feel connected, supported and hopeful.”

Around the country YEP providers also used platforms like Zoom to connect with their learners.

As usual, one of the barriers for some young people was lack of connectivity. COMET found that MSD, TPK and Women’s Refuge were all helping young people with this by either paying for an internet connection – or providing laptops.

The other ‘That YEP Guy’ videos in the series are designed to support young people to build the skills they need to get a job and enable them to progress into higher skilled work.

The online resources, including all the videos featuring ‘That YEP Guy’, can be found on COMET’s website, the YEP Facebook page and on Instagram @thatyepguy. COMET is an Auckland City Council Controlled Organisation and Charitable Trust.

Support for refugee learners at Hagley College

By Tara de Coninck, Learning Leader, English Language Learning, Hagley College



As part of our English Language Learning (ELL) programme/curriculum, our students are introduced to online learning platforms, so they have the opportunity to take the learning outside of the classroom. One of these e-learning platforms we use is called SEESAW. SEESAW is a platform for student engagement where teachers empower their students to 'create, reflect, share and collaborate'. Students and teachers can 'show what they know' using photos, videos, text. Another positive of SEESAW is that it is an app that can be downloaded onto the students' phones (although not all of our learners have access to computers, 100 percent of our learners have smartphones) and it is very user friendly, even for low-level language learners.

When Covid-19 became a pandemic, we started preparing our students for online learning, in the event schools needed to close. We did a Student IT survey to find out what types of technology our learners had access to at home. The survey showed that all students had access to smartphones. This was also the case for the English Language Composite (ELC) class, where all the students are refugees. The survey showed that only 3/17 students in the ELC class had a computer in the home. This meant we needed to work with platforms that were accessible on their phones. After some research, another user-friendly e-learning platform was found, Studyladder. During that time, teachers made sure all students were familiarised with both SEESAW and Studyladder. Hagley College uses Microsoft Teams as a communication and collaboration platform, but we did not introduce this to our learners at this point. When New Zealand was placed in Alert Level 4, we felt confident our learners would be able to continue their learning from

home. During the two days we were still at Level 3, the teachers collated additional resources, including work booklets and reading materials to send to the students' homes. The teachers of the ELC class decided to go to each students' home and personally deliver the resources. The reason for this was to check in with our most vulnerable students in ELL, our refugee community, as well as to make sure they understood what the requirements were of



being in Level 4. We did this by including a booklet of information, downloaded from the Easy Read Resources at the Ministry of Health, to our delivery pack, assuring our students had very clear, accurate, easy-to-read information about Covid-19 and Level 4 isolation. All students appreciated this gesture.

The first days of being at Level 4, we could see the students were responding to the posts on SEESAW and most of them were doing the work on Studyladder. However, we realised that we were missing instant and social connection with our learners and we were concerned our students would feel extra isolated. As

Teams allows us to communicate with our learners in real time, we decided to also connect our ELC class to this platform. After some effort, we were able to connect all ELC students onto Teams which really promoted the feeling of connectivity amongst our learners. Teachers created group chats and during the term break, students connected with each other daily, for a video call or a chat. This also gave the teachers the opportunity to check-in with their students to see if they were doing okay.

On April 15 we started Term 2 with online learning, teaching our students from home. We have grouped our learners according to their ability and we have created work groups based on student level. Work is set for each group or individual and teachers provide face-to-face contact through video conferences making sure students receive guidance, encouragement and constructive feedback. This way of connecting also allowed us, during lockdown periods, to check in with our students and their families' wellbeing, to see if they needed anything or

if they had enough food. We felt confident that our most vulnerable learners' learning needs were being met.

The English Language learners in the composite class (ELC) consist of two males and 15 females. The students come from Afghanistan (12), Somalia (4), Eritrea (2) and Ethiopia (1). They vary in age between 22 and 67 years old. All students have received limited formal education in their home countries. As part of their full-time English Language course, they have 20 periods each week – 16 periods of English (with a focus on literacy) and 4 periods of Maths (with a focus on life skills/practical purposes).

Whenua Warriors: supporting community-led food security

Kelly Francis (Ngapuhi), who started Whenua Warriors in South Auckland in 2017, now has a long-term plan that will build resilience and sustainability into our food supply.

When we wrote about Whenua Warriors in 2018 they had already established over 280 gardens in people's backyards, papakāinga, schools, kohanga, marae, emergency houses, women's refuges and community spaces.

Since then they have received a grant from Foundation North to implement their four-stage strategic plan: stages 1 and 2, research and planning have been completed and they were just about to start the Doing Phase when Covid-19 hit. With no vegetable seedlings available Kelly's Covid-19 plan didn't stop at helping people get through this crisis, it was designed to support a community-led process to build food security and connect people to their whenua.

At the beginning of the lockdown Kelly told us:

"What people are realising now is the importance of food and gardening at home. Not only are the stores that sell seeds and seedlings closed, I have noticed the heritage seeds websites are not supplying either. Even seed banks are saying they have no seeds available. That defeats the purpose for which they were created! In the lockdown I have not been successful in getting supplies from our local seed suppliers. What this tells me is – seeds are the new currency. You only have to look at the power that Monsanto has, to start worrying about the control of seeds. So we want to grow our own, teach people in our South Auckland communities to collect their own seeds for themselves and for us to buy or purchase, and start our own seed raising hub."

Kelly lives at Ihumātao, and that's where Whenua Warriors plans to grow seeds. There's an old cow shed there and by using some of the Foundation North grant set aside for the purpose, they will be converting this into the seed hub.

Whenua Warriors has been running community education sessions on how to grow vegetables since it began. In the lockdown they produced videos so that people could join in online. The Facebook page and blogs also educate people about



what they can do, and how to do it. All the online classes have been, as usual, in response to what the community say that they need to know.

There are also plans, Kelly says, to ramp up the backyard vegetable garden building: "We have a backlog of 100 gardens that need building – about 30 in Manurewa, 30

in Otara and the rest in Mangere. We have applied to the council for a multi-board grant – \$10,000 for each of the communities."

Post lockdown Kelly, actively supported by Board members, has got on with their vision of building community food sovereignty based on taonga tuku iho, or Māori heritage.

Board member Grayson Gosse calls it "a prototype for a collaborative whenua war" and says that the fact that the movement is community-led will be the key to its success.

Kelly links Covid-19 and the climate crisis and sees this time as transformative:

"We are adding to the conversation about how to navigate climate change and the mental, physical and spiritual benefits that there are to whānau in being connected to our environment. Redundancies, the loss of livelihoods and the capacity of people to put food on the table is being lost. It is important that our communities become accountable for what is in their food system: how they feed their children, their grandparents and themselves. Now, under the pressure of this pandemic, this is the time to do it. We have been blaming other people for our health, now our community must be accountable, or it will never happen. There is a lot to lose. We need to stand on our own feet and the way to do this is through food.

"I also want to say how amazing it was during the lockdown to see people in the community coming together to ensure the survival of the people round them. It's been so impressive. We are very lucky to have this. We have created an attitude around donating and receiving without shame. We have opened our hearts to help neighbours, creating a habit of giving naturally. Making gardens will now come easily, so that we can have food that is clean and healthy – that we can be proud of, that will secure our future. There is a Māori saying, Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi: If your food basket is full and my basket is full, we will all eat."

Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust – keeping kaumātua connected, informed and entertained (as requested)



Hamilton's Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust was set up by Kaumātua in 1997. Now, over 20 years later (in normal times), a staff of 18 provide culturally focussed health and education services for over 600 kaumātua.

Rangimahora Reddy, the CEO, says that about a third come to the trust for health and welfare support, a third for community classes and information and a third for social connection – although of course some come for more than one reason.

So when Covid-19 struck, the trust had a job to do.

On the 18th March, staff held a brief consultation with kaumātua from a lifestyles programme and their Kotahitanga Committee to find out what they wanted Rauawaawa to do in the lockdown. Kaumātua asked that they be helped to stay connected, informed and entertained. Facebook was the platform chosen as the means to do just that.

On the following day all the community education programmes were closed down and staff, with the exception of those over 70 or with underlying health issues, completed the only online training they could find – a free WHO course on Covid-19 so everyone could give consistent advice to kaumātua if any questions were asked.

A telephone survey was carried out to help inform the scope of need and the capacity that would be required to serve kaumātua. The need, they discovered over the course of level 4 lockdown, went far beyond their ordinary boundaries of kaumātua living within Hamilton to include those from Raglan and Whatawhata through to Gordonton and Tauwhare.

Funding was received from multiple stakeholders, including

Whānau Ora and Te Puni Kōkiri, to support Rauawaawa taking on the role of a packaging and distribution centre for kai and hygiene packs. An 0800 number was implemented to reduce the cost to Kaumātua who needed to phone in with requests for support. Transport was provided so they could get their flu injections and kaumātua were phoned regularly to check on their needs.

By early May Rauawaawa staff had completed over 800 nursing encounters with kaumātua, delivered over 1000 kai packs and over 400 hygiene packs.

Staff produced over 50 videos which were put on the Rauawaawa Facebook page. In the early days of the lockdown there were videos on safety topics such how to wash your hands properly, or how to use a hand sanitiser or mask – or replacing handkerchiefs with carefully disposed of tissues. Then staff started producing videos on exercises, on nutrition and healthy food ideas, and lots on how to keep fit. Rangimahora says that keeping kaumātua moving during the time they were confined to their homes was really important for their ongoing mental and physical health, so staff produced exercise videos on topics like how to breathe properly, how to improve circulation, upper body exercises, strength and balance exercises and lots on dance – such as zumba, hokey tokey and the twist: all with the music that the kaumātua were known to love.

During the lockdown Rauawaawa's Facebook followers increased by over 400 and there were over 90 posts, as staff turned into actors and increasing numbers of kaumātua logged on to keep connected, informed and entertained.

Rotorua Community Youth Centre: opportunities for real connection

The Rotorua Community Youth Centre is a youth-one-stop-shop providing development workshops, support for transitioning into employment and health services specifically for young people. Their strap line is 'Enabling youth to reach their full potential by helping them to be happy, healthy, safe, and moving towards a great future'.

Prior to the lockdown the centre was running over 15 workshops for Rotorua youth – and they had just launched a by-youth-for-youth community radio station, Power 88.3 Rotorua.

Steve Holmes, the Youth Development Manager, says that most of these workshops use creativity to engage young people – programmes such as Music Factory; Performance Factory; Dance Factory; Radio Factory; Vlogging Factory; and a DJ Factory. "We know creativity works, it gets them engaged and it teaches them basic skills such as problem solving, team-work, communication skills, self-belief and a positive attitude – all skills that an employer is looking for."

At the beginning of Alert Level 4 his team selected four programmes to go online, providing opportunities for young people to connect during isolation.

These online programmes were

developed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to increase connectedness, build the confidence, creativity, and resilience of young people, and to create a platform for young people to develop skills over the lockdown period.

The priority was the radio station, but in a modified form. Power 88.3 Rotorua live broadcasts 24/7 and during lockdown was run by the young people who had completed the first 6-week radio workshop from their own homes. Steve says that the aim of this programme is to give rangatahi a platform to express themselves and communicate with their peers, whānau and others in the broadcast area – exploring their ideas, opinions, culture, values and identity. The station also regularly broadcast Covid-19 alert level messages and promoted the Rotorua Community Youth Centre services.

Then there was an online Game Build and Live Stream Workshop which created a space/platform for young people to develop their game building skills over the lockdown period. The workshop taught them how to create custom maps and custom 'game modes' with one of the most popular games. The building process could be live-streamed and once completed their map is tested at the end of the week,

by the group as well as by special guests. The game has also been live streamed to the public via the centre's Facebook page. This online game build programme aimed to develop teamwork, cooperation, communication; encourage craftsmanship and offer youth a sense of achievement.

The Online Music and Rap Workshop provided music lessons for various instruments and rap lyric writing and recording, teaching participants to create and record pieces which will later be mixed, and a track created. Lyric writing aims to help young people express emotions that are important to them, provides a forum for real connection with young people in isolation, and builds motivation and confidence.

Finally, there has been an Online Video Recording Programme which provides a platform for young people to develop their vlogging skills. They were asked to create a 30 second plus video per week documenting their everyday life in a way that encourages others.

Since the lockdown levels finished young people have been able to carry on with the online workshops or integrate into other online or face-to-face workshops within the Rotorua Youth Centre.



Christchurch's Enabling Youth Programme: keeping households supported and calm

Youth with serious anger problems are a risk to themselves, their whānau and the wider community. In Christchurch, Stopping Violence Services has an Enabling Youth Programme, funded by TEC ACE, to help young people 16 years and over and not in fulltime secondary schooling, develop the emotional and cognitive skills they need to change their lives.

Getting It Together is a 12 week programme providing individual support. It is usually run face-to-face. The course has a strong emphasis on developing learners' emotional resilience and intelligence, helping them to understand their own self-defeating beliefs and to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately so they can use emotional information to guide their thinking and behaviour.

Brian Washington, the Enabling Youth Services Manager, says that most of these young people have grown up experiencing family harm, so they are victims too, learning to cope with what life has dealt them: "Often their learned behaviour is problematic, as they have experienced dysfunctional, abusive behaviours, from adult/adults in their formative years."

During the lockdown Morgan Hopcroft who is one of a team of seven at the front-line, was in regular touch with her learners:

"Not many use Zoom, so it is mostly by phone or Facebook Messenger.

"During alert Level 4 most of my learners still wanted to engage which was awesome. At this time there was a lot more stress in their lives. They were having to manage relationships with everyone at home and financial pressures were, and still are, often heightened.

"Basically I was doing a lot of checking-in and finding out how things are, helping them identify early warning signs and triggers, discussing what they can do such as removing themselves, if they can, to another room or an outside space. In Level 4 having a plan was especially important, for example for learners with children—one person will look after the kids, while the other goes out and has a breather.

"We talked about other mental health issues, and positive things they can do if they are feeling low. Sometimes people ran out of medication and we could talk to them about a plan to go and get that organised e.g. make an appointment with their doctor. Some needed help managing alcohol and drug addiction.

"Working at a distance allowed us to provide support and education, which was really important, but I definitely think it is a lot more difficult. Face-to-face sessions usually last about an hour. Some of my clients don't like their face on screen, and if we are using video calling, they sometimes have the camera pointed at the ceiling. There is some kind of barrier there for some clients. Also I found that we were not talking for so long."

From Queen's Birthday weekend, services returned to normal.

Brian Washington says that prior to opening the office to clients, staff spent two weeks organising safety protocols for themselves and their clients – while still working remotely: "There was no pressure for any learners to come back into our offices. Some have social anxiety issues and we know that they find it difficult to leave home even for basic tasks like shopping, so video calling will still be useful for this group – and for people living outside of the city, who have transport issues. For those who find video calling is a bit of an invasion into their personal space – they are now able to come back and continue with their programme face-to-face."



Morgan Hopcroft and Brian Washington

SkillWise and systemic change

By the last week of Alert Level 4, SkillWise, a Christchurch community organisation providing TEC-funded training and education for around 80 people with an intellectual disability, was nearly ready to offer an online learning resource to other similar organisations around the country.

This swift response comes from an organisation that, since the Christchurch earthquakes, has focused on systemic change. At that time, when it was obvious life in Christchurch had changed forever, they seized the opportunity to do things differently, moving to an approach that helps their learners take on valued social roles as citizens within their communities.

Part of the new approach has been a strong investment in research. One recent participatory research programme has been in partnership with Canterbury University, evaluating an internship-based employment training programme. A feature of that was a closed Facebook page for participants to share experiences, resources and information – so when the lockdown started, the tech savvy staff were able to scale up and create an online interactive learning resource using a number of platforms including their closed Facebook page and their own YouTube channel. Some material is live streamed. Resources include interactive sessions on cooking and baking, gardening, gentle exercise, a craft group and an art group. Learners are encouraged to post their own videos of the things they have been up to.

Victoria Ross, the Acting GM of SkillWise, sees these developments as a direct response to an education system that fails people with a disability: "We are really focussed on systemic change and pushing the boundaries of online learning because we often hear about learners who have been marginalised by the education system. It is a failure of the system rather than a failure of the individual. So we are constructing something inter-active, from the ground up and based on our core values. It's learner-centric. It has to be."

These days they find many of their learners have a smart phone, a tablet and/or a computer. Others might need some training on how to use the devices, but people with a disability are increasingly engaging with technology. "Face-to-face is still important and will remain a core feature of how we work – they are not mutually exclusive, they are complementary. Long term we

will continue with the online option. We expect that this will mean that more people have access to the training that will better suit their learning needs and will create pathways to further learning and employment.

“We found with support from family members that some of learners who had no experience of Facebook or social media are now starting to really engage with this and posting videos of meals they have prepared, cakes they have baked, raking up autumn leaves and folding washing to help out in the family home.

“Within the wider organisation SkillWise provides community support and employment support to over 200 people. The employment team are currently supporting 34 people in work, all of whom have retained their jobs which is fantastic.”



SkillWise is in final stages of a research pilot in partnership with the University of Canterbury. Work Active is an internship-based employment training programme and is a concept SkillWise is looking at further developing post lockdown. This approach helps to bridge that gap between education and employment in a way that works for people with an intellectual disability. The approach is based around experiential learning whereby the workplace experiences (through the internship) helps to inform the classroom based work at the university. This includes taking actual experiences such as dealing with a ‘grumpy customer’ and role playing this with the wider group of learners.

Victoria says that they are working at integrating what they are doing on the platforms with what they offer face-to-face:

“We are still getting our head around some of this stuff. We have moved relatively quickly, learning as we go. We’ve surveyed staff to get feedback about what works well and why and what we can integrate moving forward.

“Now we are at Level 2 SkillWise is able to run some programmes out of their premises on Manchester St. This includes art, craft, model making, using technology, movies and much more! However, at this time numbers are significantly limited due to ensuring physical distancing and ensuring a robust contact tracing system.

“SkillWise is committed to the idea that having a range of skills gives people the power of personal choice, a sense of identity and the ability to form meaningful connections and create lasting relationships. Skillwise staff, from group coordinators to community facilitators, have the training, community awareness and resilience to assist in creating meaningful outcomes for people.

“We want to be a force of positive change in our society, helping to create a more accepting and inclusive community for all.”



ĀKAU: providing a national resource for whānau and schools

On ĀKAU’s website this Kaikohe design and architectural studio sums up their approach to community education: “We value the ideas young people have for making their environment more awesome. By using design to engage taitamariki we hope to walk alongside them from exclusion, to inclusion, to greatness.”

Their process, they explain, is to – “empower taitamariki around Aotearoa to feel more connected and creative so that they can navigate the future with confidence. We help taitamariki recognise and harness the creativity of their tupuna by involving them in tangible projects that have real impact for taitamariki, their whānau and their community.”

Their ĀKAU Futures programmes provide tamariki with the opportunity to learn through a practical and hands on approach. Ruby Watson, one of the co-founders of ĀKAU ,says that some of the tamariki they work with are pretty disengaged with traditional education: “At ĀKAU their ideas are encouraged and respected and tangible outcomes mean they have something they are proud of, something to show their whānau. Learning a design process doesn’t necessarily mean we are teaching all taitamariki to be designers per se but we are showing how the design process, decision making, testing, ideas, development etc are all important factors in any part of life. We have found that working within schools has great impact on students, teachers and also on our ability to reach more taitamariki.”

So the approach has been to go into schools and run workshops in the community, including on marae, helping young designers realise their vision. For example, they have

“We value the ideas young people have for making their environment more awesome. By using design to engage taitamariki we hope to walk alongside them from exclusion, to inclusion, to greatness.”



designed and built forts and been involved in the design of a local petrol station.

At the end of 2019 ĀKAU developed a Kete Kaiako, providing information for teachers to deliver the design programme with their classes. When the lockdown began, they turned this kete into an online resource so that whānau can do the activities, or teachers can use them as part of their online teaching curriculum. “The great thing about making it online,” says Ruby, “is that we’ll be able to give this to teachers when we’re back to ‘normal’ rather than the more low-tech version we had developed. And it will be available nationally.”

One of the tasks in the kete is for tamariki to design a flag that represented their bubble and create a sense of kotahitanga, or unity, while also getting involved in fun activities.

Back in 2015, when ĀKAU started their community education programme, they were bringing rangatahi into their studio and helping them through some foundation design studies, preparing them for a career in design. While the kaupapa has broadened, there are still opportunities for taitamariki to get onto a design career pathway: The ĀKAU Leaders! Programme provides an opportunity for young people to get a paid internship at ĀKAU to develop their skills, experiences and connections through contributing to the ĀKAU kaupapa. They learn how to be an ĀKAU facilitator and work on real projects within the studio and get regular mentoring.

To increase access to career opportunities the organisation facilitates an online network called ĀKAU Professionals! – connecting creative professionals in the design and architecture industries with taitamariki around Aotearoa.

The lockdown has moved ĀKAU further along the continuum from a local or regional organisation – to a national one.



Do Good Feel Good: engaging Pasifika youth

Do Good Feel Good is a movement of Pacific young people in South Auckland. They have three principles or ideas that inform their work: systems change, design thinking, and critical thinking, all through a Pacific lens and delivered by The Cause Collective – a Pacific social change agency in South Auckland.

Just prior to the lockdown, the leadership team worked hard to identify key principles for their work to transition online: safe spaces, authenticity and vibe.

On the first day of lockdown they launched their Instagram Takeovers. At that time Chillion Sanerivi, the Youth Systems Innovator explained:

“We are using Instagram Live to engage with our young Pacific people. We put together a ‘to do’ list and designed a roster where every young person takes responsibility for a Takeover on Instagram. We are using these 3-7 second snapshots of things that young people can do throughout the day. It might be a word of the day, an encouragement of the day, tips on what to do during lockdown, games, exercise, cooking... People are also able to drop some questions into the Instagram Takeover, so there is some interaction.

“I suppose how we know that it is working is that the global organisation Active Citizens, which is a programme of the British Council, has picked up on what we are doing and put it on their global platform.

“Also Ara Taiohi, the national peak body for youth development, which has been following us on Instagram, asked us to partner with them in their Don’t Burst Your Bubble campaign, breaking down the Level 3 messages for young people, because these can be confusing.”

We spoke with Chillion again at the end of May and he picked up their story: “As a movement it has been important to create an online hub that was safe and authentic for all our members. When we started with Instagram Live we had over 800 followers. Now we have over 1300. We’ve used Zoom multiple times for talanoa, where young people have dialogue on all sorts of topics such as Covid-19, young people as essential workers, youth voice and concerns about the apathy amongst some young people who are not following the government rules. As we are a solution-focused movement, we also took the lockdown as an opportunity to incubate virtual ideas within our movement to quickly learn if they will be successful to eventually scale up to our wider followers. This is right across our nine squads focusing on different issues that are important to them.

“During lockdown of Level 4 and Level 3, we had 10 young essential workers. We recognised very quickly that many young people were doing extra hours to meet the community demands and we wanted to talk about how they need to look after themselves.

“As we slowly transition into the lower levels as a nation, we will be introducing new strategies to ensure that our members are well informed of new safety measures and practices. We want to ensure that the movement is still well connected and strong balanced with everyone’s safety. We don’t see this as a hindrance to what we do but an opportunity to be innovative and creative while maintaining who we are and the aspirations for leading social change in South Auckland.”

Te Aroha Noa: support in the rāhui

*Kia ekengia te waka i runga
i te moana pukepuke!*

*The sea may be choppy
but it can still be navigated.*

Te Aroha Noa was established over 30 years ago in the low-income suburb of Highbury in Palmerston North. Today it has 48 staff, many part-time, some of whom have moved from being learners to tutors. It is an active community hub, providing services to people of all ages.

As an essential service Te Aroha Noa continued to support their community during the Alert Levels 4 and 3.

As the Level 4 came into place, the staff running He Ngākau Mātua, the young parents' programme, worked with each of the whānau to develop a plan. They helped people get Skinny Jump free modems, delivered resource/activity packs and a new mobile phone. During the lockdown there were texts, group chats and phone calls. Their phones were regularly topped up and internet connection maintained, so the communication could continue. As Donna MacNicol, the CE, explains: "We kept a close supportive eye whilst not overwhelming our māmās and their wider whānau during this time. The young women call when they need anything and we are able to respond quickly and efficiently. We also, unlike most of the country, kept our HIPPY programme going. Before the nation went into lockdown our team made up four weeks' worth of HIPPY resource packs for our 39 families and dropped them to their front doors. This has enabled us to still continue our weekly HIPPY visits with our families via Messenger, Zoom or telephone."

Meanwhile the Community Engagement team was running interactive sessions on the Te Aroha Noa Facebook page, including aerobics and coffee catch-ups. The page also provided tips around mental health and fun ideas to keep whānau positive and inspired.

The Family/Whānau Development team of social workers also continued to keep in touch with families through phone calls, emails, Zoom and FaceTime, as well as providing families with essential resources.

The Counselling Team has provided support via phone calls, Zoom or Skype. Some parents/caregivers took up the challenge of starting their own regular special playtimes with their child and then discussing how these have gone in their weekly phone call. People newly referred to the service were offered 1-3 sessions, helping them deal with the issues that they were facing during the lockdown period, including parenting support.

Dan Torea has been a learner at Te Aroha Noa – and he is now on the Board. He has no doubt about the importance of the organisation, especially in times of crisis: "This place is vital to Highbury. It has helped to change many people's lives, over many years. It helps our whānau. Everything from the computer courses that help people who don't know how to use technology – I see them get confidence after those courses – to the parenting courses and the work with rangatahi. The lockdown has meant that the way we work had to change, but I think it has also meant that people got even more personal support for whatever they needed. Perhaps it was a power bill that needed paying. The organisation was reaching out to everyone. Te Aroha Noa has shown its true heart. It's been awesome."

We are coming to you live!



- 10am Kids aerobics with Ashleigh
- 12pm Stories and learning with the HIPPY team
- 8pm Evening cuppa with Chris

AN EVENING FOR THE ADULTS TO
SPIL THE BEANS

with CHRIS & WHANAU
TONIGHT 8 PM

LET'S CATCH UP

**NEED TO TALK?
WE ARE HERE FOR YOU**



f Search



WELLfed – building on an investment

Responsiveness and a systems approach have made this Porirua NGO an award winner and an essential service during the lockdown.

Rebecca Morahan and Kim Murray started the community-led organisation just over four years ago because they discovered that many people in their community wanted to learn how to cook. Since then WELLfed has moved from a cooking class once a week for a small group of mainly Maori and Pasifika women, to an organisation with four day-time classes per week, over 50 volunteers and a large community garden, teaching 150 Porirua East households how to prepare healthy, affordable meals.

About 40 percent of those in their classes are Māori, 50 percent Pasifika, and 10 percent other or migrant.

Rebecca says that the true benefits of WELLfed are clear when a crisis, like the Covid-19 pandemic strikes: “Our collective mahi has invested in individuals to be able to get through this difficult time. WELLfed provides skills, confidence, equipment and support for families to feed themselves well using basic, low-cost, seasonal ingredients.”

At Level 4 the organisation was part of the Porirua Civil Defence Emergency Welfare Response and supported families across the city with recipes, videos and tips to surviving lockdown with families underfoot. During this time WELLfed staff and volunteers checked in with many past and present learners to see if they were OK and arranged emergency supplies for some where needed.

Their cooking classes, for those already enrolled in the programme, were run remotely by video. Prior to the classes the ingredients were dropped off at people’s homes.

In Levels 4 and 3 some of these households had in their ‘bubbles’ a large number of older people, people with current significant health conditions, and large families.

At Level 3 WELLfed started purchasing \$12 packs of fruit and veggies from the local coop and their team dropped these off to doorsteps of 50 households. Once again they hand-picked recipes to go with the produce in the bags each week – and recipes were supported by videos. People who had recently joined the class were phoned to make sure they had all the necessary cooking equipment. All the videos encourage children to be involved in the preparation of family meals and many people posted the results of their cooking on the WELLfed Facebook page.

“The WELLfed community,” says Rebecca “are supporting and inspiring each other.”

Because they could not hold their usual cooking classes when there was a limit of 10 people, Level 2 provision was the same as Level 3. The next step is to start back with a small group of graduates that they call Seniors, to make more videos of new recipes. These Seniors are women who now have the confidence and skills to move into teaching roles.

Rebecca says that she knows from the feedback they are getting that the support WELLfed gives to their high-need families provides some calm in this storm. “WELLfed has a special way of building community connections and will continue to ‘transform lives using food’ . This support, care and manaakitanga is especially critical at such a time of need and increased stress and pressure. WELLfed provides not just food but the confidence, skills and equipment to set people up for success and to be able to cook for themselves and their own families. The coming months will be a time of hardship for many – but what an opportunity we could turn it into for families to connect over food, learning and growing intergenerational life-skills!”



Whau ACE: “one more string to our bow”

Whau ACE provides community education in West Auckland. Their programmes include English Conversation, Computer and Technology for Beginners, Starting Your Own Business, Money Matters, a Jobcafe, and a Job Hub – as well as ILETS Preparation, Te Reo Māori, and art.

With the exception of the last four, all programmes were offered online at the start of the lockdown, and the Whau ACE Facebook page became a go-to place for up-to-date information and messages.

Theresa Christie, who is the Manager at Whau ACE, says they saw Level 4 coming so they actually began the Computers and Technology course before the lockdown started: It is a course for mature learners, older people who perhaps get a new phone and other device and want to know how to use them. So the tutors organised the classes, and got everyone their Zoom links. Each week there were between 13 and 18 in the classes, with tutors picking up on what participants want to talk about. The break-out room was used, so people enjoyed some more intimate time. It meant, says Theresa, that they got to know each other a lot better than they often do in a physical classroom.

Since the lockdown, the online Intermediate English Conversation classes for more confident speakers, have been offered on Zoom both during the day and in the evening. These sessions provide an unstructured conversation time, where people can talk about whatever they like. Attendance has been high, especially in the evening session.

Two programmes that have been particularly useful during this time are Start Your Own Business and Money Management programmes.

People can sign up to Start Your Own Business if they want to get some practical help on how to turn an idea that they have into a business, bringing a bit more money into the home. The tutors help them work through their idea and decide whether it is going to work. If it looks a possibility, they



can be provided with information on things like legal requirements. During Levels 4 and 3 they had five people getting help with this, one of whom had recently lost their job as a result of the virus.

Money Matters is another programme, rather than a course. It often begins with one member of a family asking for help, but always moves to include the whole whānau getting involved in the process of everyone getting on the same page in terms of the way they value money as well as jointly developing a budget and tracking expenditure. During Levels 4 and 3 Whānau ACE had five families working on their finances, all done through regular Zoom meetings.

During the lockdown the Job Cafe for people looking for work was also transferred onto a weekly Zoom meeting. Each week 15-20 people joined this session which provided support for people during these difficult times. People came and could then drop out as their needs were met. One to one support on the phone or via email was provided to each person as required for things like cv assistance and career counselling.

The Job Hub remains as it has always been – a place where vacancies are listed.

When Alert Level 2 was introduced staff went back to the office and people could come in, providing they had an appointment. “However,” says Theresa “on day one the phone was busier than normal, with people saying that they had a preference for phone or digital interviews.

“Being forced to move into online learning has been positive. Technology is a big part of our lives, but we have been afraid to use it. We’ve found that in fact it suits a lot of our learners. For example, our seniors in their computer and technology classes appear to be happy and confident learning in Zoom meetings and we now have more people than ever before in the intermediate English conversation classes. This is because they now have the choice of two times, they don’t need to leave home and they can fit the classes around work. Prior to the lockdown we were taking these English classes out to libraries – and people like that too – so we will go back to it if we can. Online learning is another string to our bow – and we are not short of being able to meet our contracted learning outcomes.”

Canterbury WEA: maintaining a grand old tradition

On March 25, when the lockdown began, Canterbury WEA cancelled all their remaining Term 1 courses and took an early recess so their small team (2 FTE) could prepare an online programme for Term 2, which started in early May and continued into June.

All the online courses are free.

Lottie Vinson, the Coordinator at Canterbury WEA, says that they made a decision to offer the Term 2 classes for free, (while continuing to pay their tutors), both as a public service and in recognition of the fact that online delivery would be a new challenge for both tutors and learners.

The Term 2 programme had 14 courses. It was a much smaller programme than usual but still reflected the categories that are usually on offer. So there was a lifestyle course (Fermented Foods at Home); courses for those who love handicrafts (two levels for crocheting and a knitting course where participants knit woolen items for the Christchurch Neo-Natal Unit while listening to interesting podcasts); an art course and an art history course; Singing for Pleasure at Home; a course on current affairs (Understanding the Treaty in Post Lockdown Aotearoa); Japanese language and Haiku; as well as Environmental Science courses (Blue Green Algae is more Important than you Think, Introducing Sustainable Development Goals, Covid-19 and its Impact on Global Waste, and Soaking up Co2 – our Global Warming Escape Mechanism? Or Not?).

Most courses were delivered via Zoom, instructional videos or regular email. Support was provided to help participants, many of whom are in the older age-brackets, to get online.

The courses which had a lecture format were videoed and, as usual, made available as podcasts on PlainsFM.

While these online courses had proved very popular, Lottie says that no decision has been made at this stage about delivery in Term 3, although the online experience may lead to some special online courses being made available to their 250 or so members.

The Workers’ Educational Association (WEA) was a pioneer in adult and community education in Aotearoa. The organisation was founded in the UK in 1903 and established in New Zealand in 1914. The NZ Federation of WEA was formed in 1920.

WEA lost their government funding in 1991. There are now six WEA in New Zealand. Each has a commitment to the advancement, encouragement and provision of continuing and community education that promotes a just and equitable society, in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Learning Centre and Whānau Family Support Services – two new online classes to meet the need

This organisation, working in a low-income part of the Hutt Valley, usually runs community education classes on subjects like literacy, financial literacy, computers and technology and te reo and tikanga Māori. They also have a kaumātua support programme: Serenah Nicholson the CE of the Learning Centre and Whānau Family Support attends kaumātua days at Te Mangungu Marae in Naenae and the Wainuiomata Marae, linking people into financial support programmes, and to a group of grandparents raising grandchildren.

When Alert Level 4 was announced, Serenah moved quickly to get two free courses online: a Kaumātua Dance Fit session and a Health and Wellbeing class.

For over 11 years Kokiri Marae has been running Kaumātua Dance Fit classes as part of their Whānau Ora programme – first at their own marae and more recently at a marae in Naenae. Serenah knew about them because she had joined the classes herself and had met the volunteer tutor, Bridgitt White. She asked Bridgitt if she would run the class online and this young woman, a runner up in the 2018 Hutt City Awards for Health and Fitness, stepped up to the challenge of running sessions while looking after two young children.

Bridgitt's online Kaumātua Dance Fit started early in Level 4 and will continue, if the demand stays the same. There is also now an option, taken up by a smaller number, for a normal class.

Each week about 20 kaumātua log on to the class. The sessions can last up to an hour and include a range of dance forms, finishing up with some gentler yoga and tai chi.

Brigitte says that she gets heaps of thank you emails about the class – “they say it gets them up off the couch and stops them feeling sorry for themselves when they are isolated at home.” One of the participants, Wini Haenga, said that for her, being able to continue with Kaumātua Dance Fit, was important for her mobility: “I have two hip replacements and problems with one of them, so my balance isn't good and I need to use my walker some of the time. The Dance Fit exercise helps with my balance.” Once Wini came out of her bubble she asked a friend who had no exercise during the lockdown, to come and join the Dance Fit class too.

The Health and Wellbeing Class, which was about to start as the lockdown arrived, has had very regular weekly attendance by five families – all of them with grandparents looking after grandchildren.

In the meantime, and continuing into Level 2, Serenah and her team have partnered with local organisations to provide food and support for families, including: Takiri mai te Ata; Whanau Ora Programme; Kokiri Seaview Keriana Olsen Marae; Orongomai Marae; Kaibosh Wellington; Petone Maori Wardens and Te Huinga o te Whānau.

International: Covid-19 and ACE across the globe



By Colin McGregor,
Director, ACE Aotearoa

Covid-19 has impacted Adult and Community Education across the globe. In response to this a number of zoom meetings and webinars about Covid-19 and the ACE sector have been facilitated by organisations including UNESCO, DVV International, PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia) and PIMA (PASCAL International Members Association). The best framework for describing ACE in Covid-19 was provided by Robbie Guevara, Associate Professor at RMIT in Melbourne. Robbie is a former President of ASPBAE (Asia South Pacific Association of Basic and Adult Education) and the newly elected President of the ICAE (International Council of Adult Education).

Robbie sees a four-part framework.

Learning about the crisis: This involves the role of Adult Education to find out about the nature of the crisis from experts to help people understand the complexity of the situation.

Learning during the crisis: Not just responding to social media but learning from each other and capturing this learning. This has an emotional health and mental health dimension.

Learning how to adapt Learning during the crisis: How to teach and facilitate using new tools – in particular online learning utilising platforms such as zoom.

Learning to advocate: Advocating to ensure that no one is left behind. Adapting learning through the crisis is all well and good but falls down when learners don't have access to devices or broadband. Related to this last point is the word 'resilience'. Robbie is concerned that the concept of resilience could actually be described as re-silience. Don't ask– we will provide for you.

Across the globe difference countries have had different experiences but there are some common themes.

In parts of Asia the experience has been very daunting. Not only is there either no or very limited economic support to those laid off but access to devices is often tightly controlled and women in particular cannot access training. In some countries those based in the city have had to return to their villages to try and survive. The problems can be summarised as equity, quality and inclusion (Marie Kahn, President of ASPBAE). Due to a lack of state funded ACE the task has fallen to volunteers and NGOs to support communities.

Arab Nations have faced similar issues with loss of jobs, women stuck in houses and families needing help in how to deal with children 24 hours a day. An interesting point raised was the concern that worker rights might be violated in the future and there would be a real need for civics education.

South Africa suffers from poverty, inequality and associated violence. In order to respond to government requirements, the NGO sector has formed a Peoples Coalition on Covid-19. This includes NGOs from sectors such as education and health. With ACE provision there is a move towards a digital approach which includes rethinking the curriculum to focus on social pedagogy.

Scotland has been very proactive, undertaking surveys with the ACE sector to identify both the response and the funding

impact. Learning Link Scotland also organised a zoom meeting with providers to share coping strategies. Concerns include learner access to devices and provider ability to adapt to online learning. The funding impact was the equivalent of about NZ\$60,000 and about 800 learners who have missed out on learning.

The city of Limerick in Ireland had Digital Inclusion as part of its 2017-2020 strategy on Building Irelands First Digital City. As such they were well placed for Covid-19. They say there was a 10-fold increase in the use of Microsoft Teams (similar to Zoom) and a 2-fold increase on the use of Moodle (Online learning tool). Most students had some to excellent engagement with online learning. Free online courses were available and research is being carried out to identify how effective their response was. Their 2020 Annual Festival of Lifelong Learning will be a virtual festival.

The PRIA seminar summarised the best response to COVID-19 as: Building local capacity – build up the skills in communities to cope; Building the infrastructure for digitisation; Advocate for equitable and inclusive access to education; Advocating for public provision of digital learning; Building the capacity of teachers and facilitators; and Investing in developing participatory learning methodology – face-to-face as well as remote.

ACE News

Adult Learning and Covid-19: a survey conducted in April 2020

By ACE Aotearoa Director, Colin McGregor

ACE Aotearoa and the ACE Sector Strategic Alliance conducted an online survey over the initial two-week period of the 2020 lockdown on the impact of Covid-19 on adult learning organisations and learners. We wanted to find out how the ACE sector was responding to the crisis, the challenges, and what support was needed to continue operating from home.

We received 61 responses to the survey, and a few responses by email. The information collected was used to inform our professional development activity resulting in the offer of online workshops with specific topics primarily aimed at learning to meet and teach online. The information was also shared with key stakeholders including the Ministry of Education, and the Tertiary Education Commission so that they could better understand the situation for our sector.

We found that the most common form of provision, at that time, was through online platforms and social media (70 percent of all respondents). Others said they used the telephone (54 percent), and using apps (20 percent).

Challenges

When asked what challenges their organisation faced in continuing to operate, the responses fell into two groups: the challenges for providers working remotely and the challenges for learners.

Provider difficulties in working remotely included: staff having to learn how to use online platforms and how to facilitate sessions – this can take time; volunteer tutors not being confident with online delivery; not being able to access resources in the office; difficulty in accessing digital devices or mobile phone for learners; poor connectivity; demands on wifi in the home, with multiple family members using the internet; the fact that teaching online is more demanding in terms of time; the difficulty in teaching practical skills

online; difficulty in providing pastoral support on the phone; difficulties in assessing learner needs remotely; and uncertainty about funding.

Learner difficulties in working remotely included: learners not having the necessary digital skills; the competing need to look after children; not being connected to the internet; low literacy, and low incomes – for example some learners cannot afford to use their minutes on their Smartphones to do any online activities or send and receive information.

Support

When asked what support organisations need to continue to operate during this period, the responses fell into the following main themes.

Future Focus: Attention to life after the lock down and the tools for people to transition to new ways of working which is not likely to be business as usual.

Funding: Some organisations said that they need reassurance about income. Others said that extra funding is needed to buy software and hardware for staff – and to buy laptops or tablets plus vouchers for learners so they can access the internet.

Staffing: this included support for staff working from home trying to maintain home/work balance; digital upskilling for volunteers; and reassurance that tutors will be able to resume classes.

Resources: Staff do not have the resources they need, for example, staff who live rurally have found their internet speeds don't support video calling or downloading of large files which means no matter what organisations do, productivity will decrease. The following resources would be great: Basic IT support; devices for staff and learners; support with upgrading IT systems; information on and assistance in getting materials, resources, access to learning platforms. Innovative resources and ways of connecting with people virtually; Technical and digital platform for mentoring.

Skills: Most responders indicated a need for professional development – particularly in zoom, online learning, web platforms and adapting courses to go online.

Other Issues

Respondents identified a few other issues including the possibility of working together more, and concern about future funding.

There were also positive comments such as: TEC flexibility; the fact that they have been 'forced' to become more technologically literate, the team support that the REAPS enjoyed; and the support of ACE Aotearoa.

As one respondent put it: "The crisis is proving that long distance learning – with the right supports – for our communities can happen."

Professional Development

People over platforms: PD during lockdown

By Analiese Robertson., ACE Aotearoa Professional Development and Networks Manager

Our sector prides itself on being people focused and having strong relationships in person. Since 2008, ACE Aotearoa has encouraged learning of digital skills in preparation for a digital future. We had ACENet which was an online community of practice hosted on Ako

Aotearoa website, and later introduced webinars to increase the reach of sharing good practice. Successively, new workshops were introduced to develop sector thinking about including social media in communication strategy and learning how to use online tools for learning and teaching. Back then and over the years, the online uptake was challenging, slow and minimal.

Covid-19 and the lockdown changed all that.

Following a sector survey during lockdown to understand how the sector was responding to the Covid-19 situation, the responses told us that providers had moved quickly online to maintain business as usual during this unusual time, continuing meeting and learning where possible. Most were staying in touch by phone, many using Zoom as the primary online platform, together with Facebook Live, and fewer using apps such as WhatsApp, Google Suite tools and Microsoft Teams. During the month of May, our ACE team scheduled weekly online workshops targeting the use of Zoom and Google Classroom to start. It was important for us to ensure that the topic selection considered accessibility, use of free or reasonably priced platforms, mindful of learners and staff internet service at home, particularly in lower income and rural areas, and access to reliable technology.

The uptake has been phenomenal, reaching capacity of 100 people in one session. Interest in learning about Zoom has been in high demand, with urgency, many providers and educators were keen to get up to speed quickly so that they could stay a step ahead with working from home. The sessions were tailored to instruction for meeting and teaching, keeping focus on building skill and knowledge for use – such as considering online platform functions to replace or renew in person practice. The Google Classrooms and Suites offered new ways of thinking about file storage, keeping engagement, and exploring different ways for activity based online teaching.

In addition, we added online workshops, learning Te Reo Māori, covering basic knowledge of pronunciation and greetings, karakia and whakataukī, to deeper understanding of Te Ao Māori including concepts and ideas for everyday use in education. This has also been well received, observing a steady attendance of return participants scaffolding their reo learning across the three offered sessions.

In the month of May, we reached over 500 participants. Participants noted that working from home allowed them to create new routines and dedicated time to commit to their professional development. Staying connected and visible has been a welcome outcome of the lockdown.

Being online has drawn interest from colleagues in the adult education network, in Australia and as far as Kabul!

What we have learnt through lockdown –

We have learnt to value people over platforms; the importance of having a plan and process for working from home; the importance of making sure that staff/volunteers have wifi access, quality technology devices and office furniture; the need to take into account the fact that many people still use their phones to communicate; the importance of providing training on how to use technology and online platforms; and the value of staying connected on a regular basis to check in and keep each other motivated.

Good teaching practice online

We've identified five good online teaching practices:

Focus on the pedagogy, not the platform. Take time to think about what you are teaching

and how. Online does not replace face-to-face style thinking. We still need to be considering creating an environment online where learners feel comfortable and confident to participate. Think about what strategies you use in person and how they may transfer to an online environment. Be mindful that alongside learning new content, learners may be learning new skills such as using technology and online platforms.

Set up for success: Take time to understand what your learner's ability is using online technology, and if they have good internet service at home, and a reliable device to use. Also check they have somewhere quiet and well lit in the house for learning. These quick checks will aid planning and minimise disruption.

Establish online etiquette. Similar to setting ways of working with learners in person, this is an opportunity to create an effective learning experience by introducing “ways of working online”. You should still provide good information before learning, explaining what you will cover. You should also give direction on how learners can participate during an online session, for example if using Zoom –How you will start a session? Karakia? Whanaungatanga (introductions) being mindful of larger groups and timing and don't be afraid to use the chat function to get to know everyone; Using the “mute” function to keep focus on the person speaking; Using the “raise hands” reaction to ask questions or answer questions/ speak; Using the “chat” function to ask questions or ask for help

Aim for interaction. This is an opportunity to be creative. Think about what you are trying to achieve and your usual activity plan, then consider an online alternative. For example: Finding out what people know (use polls, quiz, surveys); Create or use online content such as audio/video material that responds to learning styles and supports knowledge gain; Host discussions live (using Zoom/Facebook Live) encouraging use of chat features; Explore and experiment with a range of online engagement tools such as Kahoot, Quizlet, and EdPuzzle.

Give yourself a break, remember everyone is learning how to learn online: We have adapted quickly to an overnight situation and have been humbled by the sector determination and care, to get online and get on with it. As we move forward and into Level 1 and what we remember as normal, take the time to consider the lessons learnt during lockdown and new ways of working. What will we go back to doing? What will we do differently?

Noticeboard

Applications have re-opened for funding to run events and activities celebrating the Year of Lifelong Learning and our annual Festival of Adult Learning. **For application forms, organiser's guide and information about event safety, go to <https://www.aceaotearoa.org.nz/year-lifelong-learning> or <https://www.aceaotearoa.org.nz/events/festival-adult-learning>. You can also follow us on Facebook and Instagram.**

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