

September 2023

Understanding impact in philanthropy:

Te Tiriti o Waitangi considerations

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Te Tiriti o Waitangi and philanthropy

Kia irimārō te pupuri i te mana o Te Tiriti o Waitangi hei tumu arataki i ngā mokopuna ki tua o te paewai o te rangi.

Let us continue to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the cornerstone of intergenerational security, ensuring a legacy of kotahitanga (unity), tōnuitanga (prosperity) and kaitiakitanga (guardianship) for our people and our land.

– Thomas Aerepo-Morgan, 2023

In 2022, [Foundation North](#) commissioned the [Centre for Social Impact](#) (CSI) to strengthen its practice around understanding the impact the Foundation supports. CSI associates interviewed funders and evaluators, reviewed relevant literature and explored Te Tiriti o Waitangi¹ implications for understanding impact.

Exploration of the implications of Te Tiriti o Waitangi for philanthropy in Aotearoa New Zealand is currently limited, but steps forward are being taken. One example is [Kī Te Hoe](#), a partnership between Philanthropy New Zealand, Tōpūtanga Tuku Aroha o Aotearoa and Tūmanako Consultants Haimona Waititi and Kate Frykberg. Its aim is to build funder capacity to support Māori aspirations in a mana-enhancing way, so that philanthropy plays a growing part in nation-building that honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Another indicator of progress is the increasing number of funders who are developing formal commitments and improving their practices in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi².

Consideration of Te Tiriti o Waitangi within philanthropy occurs in the context of our colonial history, the inherent power dynamics in philanthropic giving and the need to honour te ao Māori world views and approaches. This report highlights Te Tiriti o Waitangi considerations for understanding impact in mainstream (non-iwi based) philanthropy.

Two companion reports³ address:

1. basic good practice in understanding impact
2. leading thinking in understanding impact.

¹ In this report we defer to te reo Māori version of te Tiriti o Waitangi.

² For example, employing Kaumatua, Pou Arahi and other Cultural Advisors, developing formal Statements of Intent, making commitments around Tangata Whenua staff and Board representation and cultural competence training.

³ Available at <https://www.centreforsocialimpact.org.nz/knowledge-base>.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

We acknowledge [He Whakaputanga](#), the Declaration of the Independence of New Zealand, signed by some Māori chiefs in 1835, which proclaimed the sovereign independence of New Zealand.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Reo Māori version) and the Treaty of Waitangi (English version) were signed in 1840⁴. The intent was to establish:

- the right of the British Crown to govern this country
- the authority of Māori over things Māori
- equal rights for Māori and non-Māori
- respect for and protection of Māori custom and English beliefs (faiths).

Both versions forged a critical pathway from colonisation towards partnership in New Zealand between distinct cultures and world views. How this pathway has developed reflects degrees of misinterpretation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and a lack of respect paid to the indigenous party in the document, rather than anything inherent in the document itself.

Although not legally binding, and always reliant on interpretation from different perspectives and agendas, Te Tiriti o Waitangi is foundational for this country as a commitment arising from colonisation processes.

A more equitable and just New Zealand requires better definition and application of considerations emanating from Te Tiriti of Waitangi.



4 There are two texts and the Māori version is not an exact translation of the English. There has been much debate over the differences – how they came to be and what they mean.

Te Tiriti considerations in understanding impact

Kaupapa Māori evaluation frameworks and approaches help to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi articles and principles⁵. There is also a fast-growing body of international Indigenous evaluation frameworks⁶. Drawing from this knowledge base, here are key Te Tiriti considerations for funders when understanding impact, and what these might look like in their evaluation practice.

Te Tiriti considerations for funders when understanding impact

Te Tiriti consideration for funders	Description	What this might look like in funder evaluation practice
Relationships and engagement with Māori	Establishing trusted and enduring relationships with mana whenua and Māori communities Engagement with Māori with and by the right people is paramount. Engagement requires community interest and buy-in, becoming a known face, being accepted and ensuring reciprocity	Māori involved in co-design of funder monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) processes and reporting requirements Utilising kaupapa Māori MEL approaches
Worldview knowledge	Nurturing understanding of te ao Māori in tangata tiriti philanthropic organisations	Culturally appropriate monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) processes, ‘asks’, capacity support and engagement
Tangata whenua representation, cultural competence and safety within funder organisations	Embedding te ao Māori cultural understanding, competency and safety over time in philanthropic organisations, from governors to staff, and ensuring that Māori kaimahi within funding organisations are culturally safe and well supported	MEL processes strengthen rather than weaken relationships with Māori Data sovereignty and intellectual property protected
Enabling Māori-led and by Māori, for Māori approaches	Enabling mana whenua/Māori leadership, to support balance of power, shared and mutual purposes, capability and impact	Funding grantee access to kaupapa Māori and culturally competent evaluation and learning support
Partnerships and power	Partnerships that have a balance of power, that are based on mutual interests and purposes	Māori are supported to tell their own stories of impact and learning in their own ways, including through appropriate capacity support. Māori report on their terms
Participation	Whānau and community empowerment stems from participation	
Whānau speak for themselves	Whānau identify, define and articulate aspirations and impact (immediate, short term, long term, intergenerational)	

5 See for example <https://www.katoa.net.nz/kaupapa-maori-evaluation>; <https://whatworks.org.nz/kaupapa-māori/>; [Kaupapa Māori Evaluation in Aotearoa New Zealand](#) (2018).

6 For example [Raven Indigenous Impact Framework](#) (Canada); Manulani Meyer [Holographic Epistemology: Native Common Sense](#) (2013); [Indigenous Evaluation Toolkit](#) (USA).

Challenges to achieving impact and honouring Te Tiriti in understanding impact include:

- **Navigating mindsets and political landscapes**
– relationship management within the funding organisation at all levels and with Māori communities, including managing expectations, world views, bias, different levels of understanding, commitment, skills and practices.
- **Resources** – are we investing enough in our people and in our organisation to apply Te Tiriti authentically across our organisation?
- **Capability and capacity** – do we have capable te ao Māori leadership – governance, staff, evaluators, engagement specialists and capacity support?

Understanding impact is both a challenge and an opportunity. Applying a Te Tiriti lens to understanding impact in philanthropy demonstrates commitment to a more equitable and just Aotearoa.

Kia kaha, kia maia, kia manawanui.

Be strong, be brave, be steadfast.



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