

## 6.1 Education<sup>1</sup>

There is a range of views as to the efficacy of education about the Treaty. However, Treaty education will have to be provided as long as the New Zealand education system does not ensure that all students have the basic information. Some would argue that it does not lead to fundamental change and that critical incidents are more likely to have an effect. The effects of both education and critical incidents can be positive or negative depending on how they are handled. It is also argued that, because fairness is an important value for most New Zealanders, Treaty education often leads to a shift in attitude. While a workshop does not often lead directly to action, sometimes it will inspire people to become proactive in their own organisations.

Treaty education is not an end in itself, but a practice to support Treaty application. Education can also be very important in making sure that all members of the organisation are kept informed about where the organisation is going and why.

When organising Treaty education activities, there are a number of factors to consider. Probably the most important is choosing the right facilitator/s for the group. The characteristics and experiences of the facilitator/s are important in order for them to have credibility with the participants (particularly ethnicity, but also age, gender, skills/experience in areas important to the group, etc). Other factors that may lead to a successful workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Considering what outcomes are wanted – this will be affected by current knowledge and attitudes of participants and by the amount of time available;
- Whether participation is compulsory, expected or optional;
- Whether ways are found to recognise prior learning;
- Whether methods are used to make sure the learning is on-going, and that new members of the organisation are supported to 'catch up' with the others.

Further information for organisational approaches to Treaty education are in the 'resources – implementation' section of the Treaty Resource Centre website ([www.trc.org.nz](http://www.trc.org.nz)), including a guide for workshop organisers and reflections on Treaty education in organisations generally over the past twenty years.

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<sup>1</sup> From: *Treaty Journeys: International Aid Agencies respond to the Treaty of Waitangi*. Council for International Development. 2007. Used by permission.

## Reflecting on Experiences<sup>2</sup>

- **Treaty education is seen as important for different reasons**

CID was offering Treaty workshops and so we went to one. It was a revolutionary experience because I really had very little background, being brought up in New Zealand in an era when no, or very little if any, Māori education was done in schools or in the tertiary sector. So it was critical for me personally and because of the human rights of indigenous peoples in the projects where we work. How could I not think about how it connected with what we are doing here and what is happening in our country? It certainly gave me a far greater understanding, sympathy, empathy.

(participant from Leprosy Mission)

We thought, 'How do we begin to shift organisational culture so that we can get more of a united voice on the importance of this?' The logical step was to get staff, particularly management staff, to understand their own personal shift and see the relevance at an organisational level so there are more voices saying, 'Well come on, we need to be doing something here'. With a New Zealand programme committee we could put a level of responsibility at a domestic level that could work underneath the governance policy level of the organisation. Then we could say, 'We want to see these things happen with regards to the Treaty for our work here in New Zealand'.

(participant from Save the Children New Zealand - SCNZ)

No matter how many times you've done Treaty training there is always a relevance to the current context. Coming together as a group and having that shared experience of exploring the Treaty in relation to your context is really, really valuable. At the moment at board level there is a little bit of that resistance with, 'I've done Treaty training therefore I don't need it again'. Well at a personal level, no, you probably don't, but in the context of the organisation yes, you do. You actually need to explore how it fits within your organisational context.

(participant from SCNZ)

Listening to the perspective on the Treaty of someone who has come to live in New Zealand was interesting and very valuable. It actually gives you a much broader perspective. When you've lived here all your life it's just part of it, you just hear about it, you don't actually think about it.

(participant from SCNZ)

An understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi is one of the organisational competencies in most job descriptions at VSA so over the last few years there has been a range of training courses for staff, council members and outgoing volunteers. A lot of New Zealanders have grown up with a blank spot in our education about the Treaty of Waitangi and the outcomes of colonisation.

(participant from Volunteer Service Abroad - VSA)

The membership changes so much that we felt the first thing was to have another round of Treaty workshops, but make it clear that it's only step one of the journey, and not an end in itself. And people who embarked on the journey could get off the train at any stage if they wanted to, but there is an element of commitment in it.

(participant from Council for International Development - CID)

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<sup>2</sup> NOTE: The views expressed here are the participants' own, at the time of the interview, and do not necessarily represent their current views or those of their agencies.

## Reflecting on Experiences<sup>3</sup>

- **but everyone agrees that it's important to keep improving how we do it so people have a positive response**

The 1980s style of looking at the Treaty meant we were all terribly ridden with guilt about anything that went on. It wasn't because people were telling us we had to feel guilty, but because it's our natural reaction to feel guilty when on the wrong side of the argument and confronted with injustice. Many people had negative experiences at that time.

(participant from Caritas)

What influenced some of us through this process were our experiences of Treaty work in the 1980s. Some went through some really awful times as tauwiwi in that process. We had to acknowledge that and make it safe for people. The approach that Denis took, starting off with the creation stories, spirituality and an underpinning of the Māori worldview was really critical to setting the scene for what actually happened with the Treaty.

(participant from Development Resource Centre - DRC)

It is not that we don't need the education – it's how we present it to people. For years we sent discussion kits out to parishes for people to talk about it themselves, or we sent someone out to them with the title of 'Treaty educator'. People are just not responding to that now, so offering more and more things called Treaty workshops isn't going to bring in more people. If you say 'Treaty workshop' now, you'll either get enthusiasm from people who have already been to one, or a turn off from many people who haven't. So finding new ways to present the same information to people does seem to matter.

(participant from Caritas)

We canvassed the staff to see whether they wanted to take part and there was an overwhelming interest in it. What contributed to that was the positive and open experience that the managers brought back about their own personal learning and the relevance to the organisation. So people went, 'Oh, I want to experience that too'.

(participant from SCNZ)

When we hear about CID workshops we look at our projects committee and our staff, and work out who hasn't been, who'd like to go and who needs to go. Marketing staff go to media workshops, so if there's another Treaty workshop, and there are new staff members who would like to go, that would be encouraged.

(participant from Leprosy Mission)

Bringing in somebody who doesn't present a threat enables those difficult questions to be asked in a way that feels comfortable. It's the only way that you're going to get through those barriers. What is often seen in the Pākehā world as a very negative tool is something that is actually not that at all – it has a lot of positive things that it can bring to an organisation.

(participant from SCNZ)

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- **sometimes, dual delivery is a useful approach for achieving this**

The Urban Council to Counter Racism ran Treaty workshops, not with Māori and Pākehā, together, but separately. The philosophy was that if you're going to challenge racist attitudes then it had to be those of like race challenging racist behaviours or institutional practices and culture.

(participant from YWCA)

At the session on colonisation issues facilitated by a Māori person there's inevitably the comment, 'Yes, but it would have been nice to have a Pākehā view as well'. It's interesting what a Māori person can't say versus what a Pākehā person can say. Once there was a very controversial Pākehā person taking the session on colonisation and the Pākehā members of the group were comfortable with what she was saying, but the same things would not be allowed to be said by a Māori facilitator. I've seen a wonderful Māori speaker saying things in a much less challenging way who was unfairly slated by the group as being a very angry, negative person. So the educator needs to be a good fit with the group and a good cultural fit with the organisation, because if a group is uncomfortable with a facilitator then the message is just not going to be heard.

(participant from VSA)

When we did the base Treaty training everyone was involved, staff and all of the board members. For the trainer and facilitator there's always that issue of do you do a dual delivery, and in this particular case it wasn't necessary because of the composition of the core group and because there was support from the rest of the board.

(participant from DRC – External Māori consultant)