



Use of Equity Funding:  
in Pacific Early Childhood Services →

October 2013

## Foreword

The Education Review Office (ERO) is an independent government department that reviews the performance of New Zealand's schools and early childhood services, and reports publicly on what it finds.

The whakataukī of ERO demonstrates the importance we place on the educational achievement of our children and young people:

*Ko te Tamaiti te Pūtake o te Kaupapa*  
*The Child – the Heart of the Matter*

In our daily work we have the privilege of going into early childhood services and schools, giving us a current picture of what is happening throughout the country. We collate and analyse this information so that it can be used to benefit the education sector and, therefore, the children in our education system. ERO's reports contribute sound information for work undertaken to support the Government's policies.

The Government is committed to increasing participation in early childhood education, including the participation rates of Pacific children. Through the Pasifika Education Plan, the Government sets out the strategic direction for improving Pasifika education outcomes over five years. Part of this direction involves making sure the right funding policies are in place to better support and encourage participation.

This report is about how Pacific services are using Equity Funding to increase participation and support Pacific children to develop their language, culture and identity. The report discusses the challenges and questions to what extent Equity Funding can effectively contribute to the Government's goals of increased participation, as well as increase the number of Pacific early childhood services teaching in a Pacific language or culture for more than 50 percent of the time.

Successful delivery in education relies on many people and organisations across the community working together for the benefit of children and young people. We trust the information in ERO's evaluations will help them in their work.

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## Overview

In this evaluation, ERO investigated the extent to which 15 Pacific early childhood services<sup>1</sup> reviewed in Term 4, 2012 and Term 1, 2013 effectively used Equity Funding to support Pacific children's participation in quality early childhood education. The findings are presented in relation to:

- awareness of receiving Equity Funding
- increasing Pacific children's participation in early childhood education
- supporting Pacific children's language, culture and identity.

ERO also investigated the availability of Pacific language resources to support children's language, culture and identity.

This report complements ERO's companion report *Use of Equity Funding in Early Childhood Services, October 2013* that presents the findings on the use of Equity Funding to support children's participation in quality early childhood education in 147 early childhood services.

### *Equity Funding*

Equity Funding for early childhood services was introduced in March 2002. The objectives are to:

- reduce educational disparities between different groups in New Zealand
- reduce barriers to participation faced by under-represented groups in early childhood services
- support services to raise levels of educational achievement for these children.

### *Pasifika Education Plan*

The Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017<sup>2</sup> (PEP) is one of the Government's key education strategies. It sets out the strategic direction for improving Pasifika education outcomes over five years. The PEP also contributes to achieving the Government's education priorities as part of the Better Public Services (BPS) targets for education.

The Government has a target of increasing the percentage of Pacific children starting school who have participated in early childhood education from 86.2 percent in 2012 to 98 percent in 2016. To meet this target, the PEP has an action: "*Change funding policies to incentivise better support for and participation by Pasifika children*".

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 2 for a description of these services.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Education, (2013) *Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017*, Wellington: Ministry of Education.  
[www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/PasifikaEducation/PasifikaEducationPlan2013.aspx](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/PasifikaEducation/PasifikaEducationPlan2013.aspx)

## Summary of findings in this report

Overall, ERO found that 11 of the 15 Pacific early childhood services reviewed were effective in their use of Equity Funding and understood the intended purposes of the various components of funding. In the remaining services the effectiveness of the use of Equity Funding was limited because of their lack of awareness of receiving Equity Funding, the intended purpose of the funding and/or its reporting requirements.

### **Equity Funding Component A and B<sup>3</sup> (for children in low socio-economic communities and for children with special needs or from non-English speaking backgrounds)**

Four of the 13 services that received Component A and B funding were highly effective in their use of this funding. They had several initiatives to ensure that Pacific children had access to, and participated in, early childhood education. This funding was mainly used to subsidise fees, provide meals or transport assistance for children enrolled in their services and engage with parents, families and communities. These services also supported ongoing professional learning and development for their teachers. In addition, they used self review to evaluate the effectiveness of their use of Equity Funding.

Seven services were effective in their use of the Component A and B funding to increase Pacific children's participation in early childhood education. They had a strong focus on developing positive relationships with the children and their families to understand their interests and aspirations. These services received informal feedback from parents and families. However, they did not always use self review to evaluate their effectiveness of their use of Equity Funding.

In two services the effectiveness of their use of Component A and B funding was limited. This was mainly because staff were not aware that their service received Equity Funding, the intended purpose of the funding, and/or the reporting requirements.

### **Equity Funding Component C<sup>4</sup> (to deliver more than 50 percent of their programme in a language, including sign language, and culture other than English)**

Four of the 13 services that received Component C funding were highly effective in their use of this funding to support Pacific children's language, culture and identity. These services used the funding to create a strong sense of family and cultural identity, to purchase and develop Pacific learning resources, and to employ staff with Pacific language proficiency or cultural interest. They also encouraged regular interactions between teachers and children in the relevant Pacific language.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.lead.ece.govt.nz/ManagementInformation/Funding/FundingHandbook/Chapter10/10-2-ComponentALowSocioEconomicCommunities.aspx](http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/ManagementInformation/Funding/FundingHandbook/Chapter10/10-2-ComponentALowSocioEconomicCommunities.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> [www.lead.ece.govt.nz/ManagementInformation/Funding/FundingHandbook/Chapter10/10-4ComponentCLanguageCultureOtherEnglishSignLanguage.aspx](http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/ManagementInformation/Funding/FundingHandbook/Chapter10/10-4ComponentCLanguageCultureOtherEnglishSignLanguage.aspx)

Seven services were effective in their use of Component C funding in that their teaching programme offered opportunities for the children to be immersed in the Pacific language of the service throughout the day. These services were focused on developing strong relationships with parents and the wider community to support their teaching programme and children's language, culture and identity. However, they were not evaluating the effectiveness of their use of this component for its intended purpose.

In two services the effectiveness of their use of Component C funding was limited. Although they had purchased or made some Pacific language resources, they could not show the impact this had on supporting children's language, culture and identity.

All services indicated the need for more Pacific language resources to support children's language, culture and identity. Some services said that the availability of Pacific language resources was limited or they were difficult to access. In most services, teachers, parents and communities helped to make Pacific language resources to support children's language, culture, identity, and foster their literacy and numeracy skills.

### **Challenges raised by the findings**

Based on ERO's findings, this report's conclusion discusses some challenges about:

- the extent to which Equity Funding can be used by Pacific early childhood education services to target Pacific children who are not currently participating in early childhood education
- the extent to which Equity Funding can support the PEP target of increasing the number of Pacific early childhood services teaching in a Pacific language or culture for more than 50 percent of the time by 2016
- the availability, quality and relevance of Pacific language resources to support Pacific services to implement the early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*.

### **Next steps**

ERO recommends that Pacific early childhood services that receive Equity Funding use self review to evaluate the effectiveness of their use of this funding.

ERO recommends that the Ministry of Education:

- investigates the publication of baseline Pacific language resources to support Pacific children's language, culture and identity, particularly for those Pacific services that receive Component C of Equity Funding
- considers the findings of this report in relation to the PEP target of increasing the number of Pacific early childhood services teaching in a Pacific language or culture for more than 50 percent of the time by 2016
- promotes the objectives and reporting requirements of Equity Funding to Pacific early childhood services.

## Introduction

Equity Funding for early childhood services was introduced in March 2002 with a budget of \$8.5 million. The objectives are to:

- reduce educational disparities between different groups in New Zealand
- reduce barriers to participation faced by under-represented groups in early childhood services
- support services to raise levels of educational achievement for these children.

Equity Funding is ‘tagged’ and identifiable as an amount additional to a service’s Early Childhood Funding Subsidy and 20 hours ECE. It must be spent with the equity objectives of participation and quality in mind. Early childhood services that receive Equity Funding are required to report to parents and the local community about how they have spent such funds.

### The four components of Equity Funding

Equity Funding consists of four components. Services may be eligible for funding against one or more (or all) components.

Component	Eligibility confirmed by...
<b>Component A:</b> Low socio-economic communities	Equity Index Value
<b>Component B:</b> Special needs, and non-English speaking Backgrounds	Equity Index Value
<b>Component C:</b> Language and culture other than English (including sign-language)	EC15 Attestation Form
<b>Component D:</b> Isolation	Isolation Index Value

Eligibility for **Component A** is based on the early childhood Equity Index (EQI)<sup>5</sup> which measures the extent to which a service draws children from low socio-economic communities. Licensed early childhood education services with an EQI of 1-4 are eligible to receive Component A.

Eligibility for **Component B** is also determined by a service’s EQI. Services receive Component B if they meet eligibility for Component A. Eligibility is not based on individual children.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.lead.ece.govt.nz/ManagementInformation/Funding/FundingHandbook/Chapter10/10-2-ComponentALowSocioEconomicCommunities.aspx](http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/ManagementInformation/Funding/FundingHandbook/Chapter10/10-2-ComponentALowSocioEconomicCommunities.aspx)

Licensed early childhood education services are eligible for **Component C** if they provide early childhood education in a language (including sign language) and culture other than English during more than half of the formal education and care programme.

Eligibility for **Component D** is based on the Isolation Index.<sup>6</sup> This rates a service's 'relative isolation' and is worked out by measuring the service's distance from towns/cities of three different population sizes (5,000, 20,000, and 100,000).

Licensed early childhood services with an Isolation Index of 1.65 or greater qualify to receive Component D.

### **Changes in eligibility since 2002**

In 2002, only licensed community-based services who met the criteria were eligible to receive Equity Funding. An evaluation of Equity Funding in 2006<sup>7</sup> provided information on the changes in quality and participation that were related to Equity Funding, as well as conditions that supported positive impacts.

From 1 July 2011, Equity Funding became available to all licensed early childhood services who met the eligibility criteria. The Government announced a corresponding increase in budget of \$21.5 million over four years. In 2012, an additional increase of \$47.9 million over 4 years was announced in place of the annual cost adjustment. In 2013, an additional increase of \$41.3 million over four years was allocated to support vulnerable children in most need to access quality ECE.

In the 2012 financial year, 90 percent of Pacific early childhood services received at least one component of Equity Funding.

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<sup>6</sup> [www.lead.ece.govt.nz/ManagementInformation/Funding/FundingHandbook/Chapter10/10-5-ComponentDisolation.aspx](http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/ManagementInformation/Funding/FundingHandbook/Chapter10/10-5-ComponentDisolation.aspx)

<sup>7</sup> Mara, D., Mitchell, L., Tangaere, A.R., & Wylie, C. (2006). *An Evaluation of Initial Uses and Impact of Equity Funding*. Wellington. Ministry of Education.



## Findings

This section includes ERO's findings in relation to the following questions ERO investigated at each centre:

- *Did the service know if it received Equity Funding?*
- *How effectively is Equity Funding used to increase Pacific children's participation in high quality education?*
- *How effectively is Equity Funding used to support Pacific children to develop their language, culture and identity?*
- *What resources are available to support children to develop their language, culture and identity?*

This section includes:

- a discussion on services' use of Equity Funding
- self-review questions for services
- examples of Pacific early childhood services that were highly effective in their use of Equity Funding.

## Awareness of receiving Equity Funding

### Did the service know if it received Equity Funding?

Fourteen of the 15 services were aware of receiving Equity Funding. One service had changed its leadership team and the team was not aware that the service received Equity Funding or the associated reporting requirements. Another service was aware of receiving Equity Funding but not aware of the intended purpose of the funding or the reporting requirements.

## Increasing Pacific children's participation in early childhood education

### How effectively are Equity Funding Components A and B used to increase Pacific children's participation in high quality education in this service?

ERO made an overall judgement<sup>8</sup> about how effectively each service used the components of Equity Funding it received.

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 2 for criteria used by ERO to make judgements.

Thirteen services received these two components of Equity Funding. They had several initiatives in place to ensure that Pacific children had access to, and participated in, quality ECE. These included:

- subsidising or not charging fees (5 services)
- providing meals and transport assistance (7 services)
- engaging with parents, families and communities (6 services)
- teachers participating in relevant professional learning and development (6 services)
- employing additional administration or specialist staff so teachers could focus on teaching (1 service)
- purchasing additional learning resources and equipment (5 services)
- developing transition programmes for children up to two years and over four years of age (2 services).

In these 13 services, the majority of the children were of Pacific heritage and the initiatives were responsive to the needs of enrolled children. Four services were highly effective in their use of this funding to ensure that Pacific children had access to, and participated in, quality early childhood education. Seven services were effective and two services were limited in the effectiveness of their use of this funding.

### **Highly effective use of funding to increase Pacific children's participation**

Four of the 13 services used self review to evaluate their effective use of Equity Funding. They also used self review to make decisions about teaching practice, programme planning and children's wellbeing. Leaders in these services focused on ongoing improvement, building capacity among their staff and sustaining effective practice.

*Where services used this funding mainly to provide meals or transport assistance and to subsidise fees there was some improvement in regularity of children's attendance. This improvement was closely associated with parents' increased involvement in the service and their understanding of their child's learning.*

Teachers in these services had opportunities for relevant and targeted professional development which led to improved teaching practices. Management and staff worked together collaboratively to establish an agreed approach for making decisions, reviewing their initiatives and planning further interventions.

The following example is of a service that was highly effective in its use of this funding to ensure that Pacific children had access to, and participated in, quality early childhood education.

### **Early childhood service: Increasing participation of Pacific children**

This early childhood service is licensed for 40 children and located in a provincial city. Fifty-five percent of the children currently enrolled identify as Pacific. The centre is adjacent to a service that caters for children up to two years of age and community facilities that support after-school programmes for children.

The philosophy of the centre is grounded in Christian beliefs and Samoan cultural values. The centre is governed by a management committee that includes church, staff and parent representatives. Their child-centred programme is supported by teachers' knowledge and community aspirations.

Centre managers are focused on ongoing improvement, building capacity amongst staff and sustaining effective practice. This was reflected in their decisions about the use of Equity Funding. Management identified transport as a major cost to parents for their children to attend the service. By providing transport, the centre was able to support children's regular attendance and participation in early childhood education. This also supported parents by keeping transport costs low and increasing participation by their children.

Teachers are proficient in the Samoan language and use it throughout the programme and in their conversations with the children. Equity Funding was used to employ an extra staff member to assist with making Pacific language resources such as picture and story books. These language resources helped children to improve their Samoan language and become more confident in using and understanding the language.

Teachers blended basic te reo Māori in the learning programme and acknowledged the Treaty of Waitangi. The treaty concept helped the teachers and children to develop their own treaty of centre expectations.

Equity Funding was also used to support teachers' professional learning and development which assisted teachers with their daily review of the learning programme. Teachers used their evaluation to make decisions about teaching practice, programme planning and for children's learning and wellbeing.

Children responded well to the support teachers were able to provide as a result of their professional learning and development. They were more comfortable about participating in a variety of learning approaches such as leading mat times and being responsible for daily routines. The learning programme was focused on children's interests and was regularly informed by ongoing teacher discussions and meaningful conversations with children and their parents.

The centre adopted an improved approach to strategic planning and self review that included staff and parents' input. Clear reporting lines were established between staff, the supervisor and the management committee. This ensured that there was good information to support decision-making.

## **Effective use of funding to increase Pacific children's participation**

ERO identified a further seven services that were effectively using Equity Funding. They used the funding mainly to build positive relationships between teachers, children, parents and families. These relationships were based on a shared understanding of Pacific culture and traditions, including respect and Christian values.

Teachers' knowledge of the children, their families, and their local communities helped to develop a shared sense of wellbeing and belonging. They also knew the children and families well enough to understand the constraints faced by some families.

These services had an open-door approach where parents were welcome to participate in centre activities and support their child's learning and development.

Many services had received informal feedback from parents, families and their community but did not use self review to evaluate their effective use of this funding.

## **Limited effectiveness in the use of funding to increase Pacific children's participation**

In two services the effectiveness of their use of this funding was limited. One service had new staff that were not aware of their service receiving Equity Funding and/or the reporting requirements. One service was aware of receiving Equity Funding but not aware of the intended purpose and/or the reporting requirements.

### **Self-review questions for early childhood services**

- Do we know the objectives of the various components of Equity Funding?
- How are we using Equity Funding to support Pacific children to participate in high quality early childhood education?
- What processes do we use to find out about the interests and aspirations of Pacific children and their parents?
- How do we inform Pacific parents, families and communities about the use of Equity Funding?
- What evidence do we have about the impact of professional learning and development on our teachers' capacity to support Pacific children to participate in high quality early childhood education?
- How do we use self review to evaluate what is working well and to identify what we could do to improve our practice in supporting Pacific children to participate in high quality early childhood education?

## **Supporting Pacific children's language, culture and identity**

### **How effectively is Equity Funding Component C used to support Pacific children to develop their language, culture and identity?**

Thirteen of the 15 services received Equity Funding to provide early childhood education in a language (including sign language) and culture other than English during more than half of the formal education and care programme.

These services employed mostly Pacific staff and had a strong focus on supporting the development and retention of Pacific children's language. They did this by:

- creating a strong sense of family and cultural identity (10 services)
- engaging with parents and community members who are fluent in relevant Pacific language and culture (5 services)
- including Pacific elders to review and advise on the cultural and language content of programmes (3 services)
- fostering strong community relationships and involvement (3 services)
- employing staff with Pacific language proficiency or cultural interest (9 services)
- promoting interactions between teachers and children in the relevant Pacific language (9 services)
- supporting teachers attendance at relevant Pacific language/cultural professional learning and development (2 services)
- purchasing and/or making Pacific language resources (10 services)
- fostering partnerships with other Pacific early childhood services in New Zealand and the Pacific region (1 service)
- encouraging cross-cultural learning and sharing (2 services).

Four of these services were highly effective in using Component C funding to support Pacific children's language, culture and identity. Seven services were effective, and two services were limited in their effectiveness in the use of the funding.

### **Highly effective use of funding to support language, culture and identity**

Four of the 13 services used this funding mainly to create a strong sense of family and cultural identity, to purchase and/or make Pacific language resources, and to employ staff with the relevant Pacific language proficiency or cultural interest.

As a result of these initiatives, some improvement in the quality of cultural interaction and language development for the children was recognised by the services. The involvement of parents, families and community leaders who were fluent in a Pacific language and culture also supported children's language, culture and identity.

The physical environments in these services were well resourced and inviting, promoting children's identity, culture and language, and celebrating Pacific culture and New Zealand's bicultural heritage.

Services focused on culturally relevant teaching contexts, such as localising legends, so they were relevant to children's understanding of their culture. This ensured that planned improvements were responsive to the interests of the children and aspirations of their families. This focus was reflected in the time which teachers, staff and parents invested in purchasing and making culturally responsive materials to support children's language, culture and identity, including fostering their literacy and numeracy skills. These services

had extensive language resources which facilitated cross-cultural learning and sharing. One service had ‘partner’ early childhood services in New Zealand and the Pacific region which enabled them to share resources and learn from each other.

Pacific ways of being, thinking and behaving were modelled by skilful teachers. In one service, three Pacific languages were spoken and the children could play in their choice of rooms, each one focused on a different Pacific culture. Teachers skilfully wove te reo Māori and aspects of tikanga Māori through diverse Pacific contexts.

Community leaders were often included in these services’ activities and programmes. This involvement served a variety of purposes, beyond just participation in activities. A shared understanding was promoted about children’s learning, increased awareness of centre management matters, and relationships between children, teachers, parents and families.

The following example is of a service that was highly effective in its use of this funding to support children’s language, culture and identity.

#### **Early childhood service: Supporting language, culture and identity**

This centre is an education and care service licensed for 40 children in a small provincial city. Forty-five percent of the currently enrolled children identify as Pacific. The centre caters for a diverse Pacific community, with a specific focus on Samoan, Fijian and Cook Island Māori cultures and languages.

Since its establishment, the centre’s management has provided a strong foundation to ensure that children’s interests are the primary focus of improvements. Equity Funding was used to provide the children with a variety of learning opportunities and to increase the language and cultural relevance of the programme.

Every year children and families participate in annual trips to an early childhood or ‘partner’ service in one of the different Pacific Islands represented at the centre. Parents are closely involved in determining the purpose of these trips and their active commitment contributes to building a community of learners. These annual trips also facilitate cross-cultural learning and sharing, and enable the centre to become well resourced to support children’s language, culture and identity.

Equity Funding provided teachers with opportunities for relevant and targeted professional development such as understanding Samoan culture and supporting children with autism. Teachers shared their learning with each other which increased their opportunities to take ownership of different areas of curriculum development.

The curriculum offered opportunities for the children to be immersed in the Samoan, Fijian and Cook Island Māori language throughout the day, as well as when children were playing in separate rooms where each of the cultures had a specific focus. Teachers developed the programme collaboratively and based it on children’s interests, with parent feedback provided through learning profiles and regular informal conversations.

Equity Funding enabled the wider community to support children's learning such as providing advice on the cultural aspects of the learning programme. This engagement and relationship building, together with the teacher's knowledge of each child's family, also helped to develop a shared sense of family and history in the centre.

### **Effective use of funding to support language, culture and identity**

Teachers in the seven services that were effective in their use of this funding were proficient in a Pacific language. The teaching programme offered opportunities for the children to be immersed in the Pacific language of the service throughout the day. Teachers consistently built children's confidence in using and understanding the relevant Pacific language by speaking entirely in the language or through bilingual responses. Consequently, children conversed confidently with adults and one another.

Parents were encouraged to contribute to their children's learning and development. In some services, the wider community was also involved in enriching the teaching programme. This community participation in children's learning supported effective learning conversations between teachers, between teachers and children, and between teachers and parents/families.

While these services were focused on including parents and the community to support their teaching programme and children's language, culture and identity they were yet to evaluate their effective use of this funding.

### **Limited effectiveness in the use of funding to support language, culture and identity**

Two services were limited in the extent to which they made effective use of this funding. It was mainly used to purchase and/or make some Pacific language resources. These services could not demonstrate how these resources were effective in supporting Pacific children's language, culture and identity.

#### **Self-review questions for early childhood services**

- In what ways are we using Equity Funding to support Pacific children's language, culture and identity?
- In what way is our teaching programme supporting Pacific children's language, culture and identity?
- What teaching strategies do our teachers use to support Pacific children's language, culture and identity?
- How do we use our self review to evaluate what is working well and to identify what we could do to improve our practice in supporting Pacific children's language, culture and identity?

## Resources to support children’s language, culture and identity

### What resources are available to support children to develop their language, culture and identity?

As part of this question, ERO asked services about:

- the types of Pacific resources they had access to and used
- any challenges they had with accessing Pacific resources
- any innovative approaches they had for accessing/using Pacific resources.

#### *What did ERO find?*

All 15 services invested time to make Pacific language resources to support children’s language, culture and identity. The majority of available resources were Ministry of Education funded such as the ‘paused’ Tupu<sup>9</sup> series from Learning Media Limited, and some audio compact discs and puzzles. Some services used generic Pacific language resources available from their local libraries.

The lack of and difficulty in accessing Pacific language resources meant that teachers, parents and sometimes communities had to make culturally relevant resources. Some services had made extensive Pacific language resources to support children’s language, culture and identity, and foster their literacy and numeracy skills. Other services were increasing their capability to develop appropriate resources.

Despite the efforts of individual services to make Pacific language resources for use in their teaching programme, the associated costs were often higher than the allocated Equity Funding. It was also time consuming for teachers to make these resources as it often took them away from their teaching duties. Some services depended on centre staff, parents and communities to assist them with making relevant resources. These were barriers faced by Pacific early childhood services when trying to deliver more than half of their formal teaching programme in a Pacific language.

In addition, issues associated with the quality of centre-developed resources and their relevance to *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum, were raised by some services.

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<sup>9</sup> The Tupu series has been under review by the Ministry of Education, since 2009.



## Conclusion

In this evaluation, ERO was interested in how effectively Pacific early childhood services used Equity Funding to:

- increase Pacific children's participation in quality early childhood education
- support Pacific children to develop their language, culture and identity.

The findings indicate that most services were effective in their use of Equity Funding. They had several initiatives to maintain the participation of currently enrolled children and support their language, culture and identity. These initiatives were responsive to Pacific children's interests and their parents' aspirations. These services could also demonstrate the impact of their use of Equity Funding to parents, families and communities. A few services were generally not aware of receiving Equity Funding, the intended purpose and/or its reporting requirements.

ERO was also interested in the availability of Pacific language resources to support Pacific children's language, culture and identity. The limited availability of, and difficulty in accessing, Pacific language resources to support children's language, culture and identity is an ongoing issue for Pacific early childhood services. The lack of these resources makes it hard for Pacific services to implement more than 50 percent of their formal teaching programme in a Pacific language.

### Challenges for policy makers and services

The findings pose some challenges for policy makers and Pacific early childhood services in relation to the PEP's targets and the equity objectives of participation and quality. These challenges are related to:

- the extent to which Equity Funding can be used by Pacific early childhood education services to target Pacific children who are not currently participating in early childhood education
- the extent to which Equity Funding can support the PEP target of increasing the number of Pacific early childhood services teaching in a Pacific language or culture for more than 50 percent of the time by 2016
- the availability, quality and relevance of Pacific language resources to support Pacific services to implement *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum.

The first challenge is related to services' current use of Equity Funding to maintain enrolled Pacific children's participation in early childhood education. In many of the 15 services Equity Funding improved the regularity of attendance by enrolled children but did not target Pacific children who were not participating in early childhood education. This could have an impact on the PEP's target to **increase Pacific children's participation in quality early childhood education** by 2016.

ERO identified the limited availability of, and difficulty in accessing, Pacific language resources to **support Pacific children's language, culture and identity** as an issue in all 15 services. A related matter is the high costs associated with services producing their own Pacific language resources. These factors could have an impact on the PEP's target of increasing the number of Pacific early childhood services teaching in a Pacific language or culture in more than 50 percent of the time by 2016.

An evaluation of Equity Funding in 2006<sup>10</sup> reported a similar finding. Pacific services felt their focus on language and culture was affirmed by Component C funding, but the amount received was small in the light of their focus, the need for fluent speakers who were also early childhood teachers, for parents' and families' involvement, and for resources in a Pacific language.

The final challenge is the **quality and relevance of Pacific language resources** in relation to *Te Whāriki*. In the absence of 'official' Pacific language resources that align with the strands of *Te Whāriki*, there is a risk that centre-developed Pacific language resources may be of insufficient quality to support services to implement *Te Whāriki*. In an earlier study,<sup>11</sup> researchers commented on the few storybooks available in Pacific languages when compared with those available in the English language. They also raised questions about the quality of centre-developed resources in relation to *Te Whāriki*; and the encouragement of children's thinking through open-ended questions, building on their knowledge and skills and working with them to develop understanding.

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<sup>10</sup> Mara, D., Mitchell, L., Tangaere, A.R., & Wylie, C. (2006). *An Evaluation of Initial Uses and Impact of Equity Funding*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

<sup>11</sup> Burgess, F., & Mara, D. (2007). *Early literacy: Quality teaching and learning in Pasifika early childhood education*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

## **Next steps**

ERO recommends that Pacific early childhood services that receive Equity Funding use self review to evaluate the effectiveness of their use of this funding.

ERO recommends that the Ministry of Education:

- investigates the publication of baseline Pacific language resources to support Pacific children's language, culture and identity, particularly for those Pacific services that receive Component C of Equity Funding
- considers the findings of this report in relation to the PEP target of increasing the number of Pacific early childhood services teaching in a Pacific language or culture for more than 50 percent of the time by 2016
- promotes the objectives and reporting requirements of Equity Funding to Pacific early childhood services.

# Appendix 1: Methodology

## Data collection

During each service's review, ERO collected information from a variety of sources including:

- management of the service
- teachers at the service
- informal discussions with parents, families and communities
- observations of interactions
- documents related to the operations of the service, including self-review information.

## Evaluation Framework

1. How well is Equity Funding used to improve Pacific children's participation and language, culture and identity development in your service?
  - a. does your service know if it receives Equity Funding? (Yes/No plus comment)
  - b. how much funding has your service received?
  - c. which component(s) is this funding for? (A, B, C, D – tick all that apply)
2. How well is the funding being used to increase Pacific children's participation in high quality education in your service?
  - what initiative(s) does your service have in place to increase Pacific children's participation?
  - would your service have been able to do this without Equity Funding?
  - how does your service know that your initiative(s) has supported Pacific children to participate in high quality education in your service?
3. How well is the funding being used to support Pacific children to develop their language, culture and identity?
  - what is your service doing to develop the children's language, culture and identity?
  - how does your service know that it is supporting children to develop their language, culture and identity?
4. What resources are available in your service to support children to develop their language, culture and identity?
  - what resources for Pacific children are used?
  - are the resources mainly government issued?
  - what challenges/issues does your service have in accessing resources for Pacific children?

## Appendix 2: Sample of services

ERO gathered data from 15 Pacific early childhood services reviewed by ERO in Term 4, 2012 and Term 1, 2013. They represent 16 percent of the 95 Pacific early childhood services<sup>12</sup> New Zealand.

Pacific early childhood services are managed and run by communities of Pacific peoples and educate children in at least one Pacific language and culture. Depending on the goals of the community, the service may be bilingual or immersion, with some being multilingual and multicultural. A service is considered Pasifika bilingual if Pasifika language was used as the language of communication for at least 12 percent and up to 80 percent of the teaching contact time. A service is considered Pasifika immersion if Pasifika language was used as the language of communication for at least 81 percent of the teaching contact time.<sup>13</sup>

The breakdown of the services by the Pacific language and culture of the service are:

Samoa	Cook Islands Māori	Tonga	Niue	Tokelau	Multiple Pacific languages
5	4	2	1	1	2

Two of the 15 Pacific early childhood services in this evaluation are bilingual services. All the services are located in the North Island - 9 services in Auckland, 3 services in Wellington, 2 services in Palmerston North and 1 service in Whanganui.

The Equity Funding received by the 15 Pacific early childhood services is as follows:

- 11 services received Components A, B and C
- 2 services received components A and B
- 2 services only received Component C
- None of the services received Component D.

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<sup>12</sup> According to the Ministry of Education's database of Pacific services.

<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/ece2/pasifika-in-eces>

## Appendix 3: Criteria for making overall judgement

	Criteria for making judgements
Judgement	About Participation
<b>Highly effective</b>	<p>The service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has, in place, multiple strategies to increase Pacific children’s participation and these are regularly reviewed</li> <li>• knows about the effectiveness of their strategies to increase Pacific children’s participation in high quality education</li> <li>• is able to demonstrate their active engagement and collaboration with parents, families and the community to maintain optimum levels of participation by Pacific children</li> <li>• meets all of the criteria for “effective”.</li> </ul>
<b>Effective</b>	<p>The service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has, in place, several strategies/initiatives to increase Pacific children’s participation in high quality education</li> <li>• is able to show how it is increasing Pacific children’s participation</li> <li>• meets reporting requirements –<i>“Services are required to report to parents and the local community about how they have spent their Equity Funding”</i>.</li> </ul>
<b>Limited effectiveness</b>	<p>The service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is aware that it receives Equity Funding</li> <li>• has a small number of or one-off initiatives to increase Pacific children’s participation</li> <li>• has maintained or had at least a small increase in Pacific children’s participation</li> <li>• is not able to show what impact Equity Funding is having for children and their parents, family and local community</li> <li>• has not met reporting requirements for use of its Equity Funding.</li> </ul>
<b>Not effective</b>	<p>The service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is unaware that it receives Equity Funding</li> <li>• has no initiatives to increase Pacific children’s participation</li> <li>• is not able to account for use of the Equity Funding it receives</li> <li>• has not reported on its use of Equity Funding.</li> </ul>

Judgement	About Language, Culture and Identity
<b>Highly effective</b>	<p>The service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knows about the effectiveness of its programme in developing language, culture and identity of Pacific children, including knowing how well: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- teachers understand the benefits of, and have the ability to promote, bilingual and bicultural education</li> <li>- teachers understand the importance of engagement in meaningful conversations with children full of open-ended questions and provide opportunities for pushed out conversations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• is able to show the positive impact of Equity Funding to enhance language development efforts for Pacific children with their parents, families and community including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how teachers continually liaise and collaborate with families in planning and evaluating their education programme</li> <li>- their active involvement of fluent Pacific language speaking elder(s) in programme delivery.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• meets all of the criteria for “effective”.</li> </ul>
<b>Effective</b>	<p>The service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is able to deliver a formal education programme, more than half of which is in a Pacific language</li> <li>• is able to recruit and retain teachers with high language proficiency in both the Pacific and English languages</li> <li>• meets reporting requirements – <i>“Services are required to report to parents and the local community about how they have spent their Equity Funding”</i>.</li> </ul>

