



**Community**  
RESEARCH

**ComVoices Covid  
Govt. Social  
Research  
presentation**

7 September 2022  
Royal Society  
Presenter: Janie Walker

Whakatairangatia i te mana o te rangahau ā-hāpori me te mahi tahi  
Raising the mana of community knowledge – together



# ABOUT US

- Community Research was born from sector needs, during a paradigm shift in the way the Tangata Whenua, Community and Voluntary Sector saw themselves working together:
  - The Community Sector Taskforce
  - The desire to have research done **by** and **for** communities, and not **on** them or **to** them
  - A New Way of Working – created [a two-house Governance](#) model to action Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
  - We are a tiny yet hugely impactful community group, based here in Poneke, with [five part-time staff](#), and a great passion for our work. We are funded by DIA, philanthropy and Community Trusts. We are under resourced.



# WHAT DO WE DO?

- We don't do research
- We have a range of social justice and equity tools, online and some face to face
  - [Our main collection](#) - free and equitable access to research
  - [Podcasts](#), [webinars](#)
  - [Special collections](#)
  - [Resources](#) to put new ideas into action
  - Always validating lived experience and knowledge alongside academic research.



## We support communities of researchers

- [Researcher database](#) of community researchers
- Pacific research and researchers: Allyship, creating a hub for Pacific researchers
- [Support for former-refugee and ethnic-migrant researchers](#): Supporting them to work collectively to:
  - Identify methodologies that attract non-extractive research
  - Advocate for participants as equal contributors to a research project
  - Creating research spaces where communities can lead and produce their own stories.



# WHAT'S NEXT FOR US?

- We've created attitude, behaviour and system change for a long time. Now we need to future-proof ourselves so we continue to be relevant and support what is needed
- We are re-engaging with our sector, nationwide
- We are co-designing a Knowledge Collision Symposium event for next year where we will ask?

**What are your community and whānau aspirations for research?**

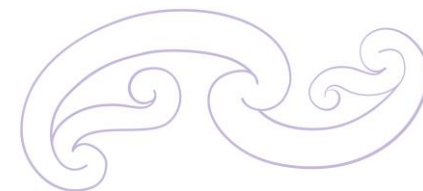


- **Summary of our recent enquiry into HOW was community research done in a Covid environment, and how may this impact policy making? Also, what is the opportunity for community research to be done better?**
  
- **We like to really thank the work of Ana Ika, Policy Analyst and Advocate, for her work in our this enquiry**
  
- **From our enquiry, we know that**
  - The way data was collected changed, and this has affected outcomes in policy and programmes. We worry that this won't get you closer to communities and their own aspirations.
  
  - Some rangatahi who didn't want to engage before Covid, don't want to even more so now.
  
  - The Participatory Action Research whānau of methodologies suffered, where kanohi ki te kanohi research was limited. These methods are built on trust over time and nurture close collaborations. They represent power sharing in research outcomes. The very fact of being a participant has an empowering effect on their lives.





- Some longer-term engagement in communities where research is co-designed with communities, halted or decreased. And in some cases, continues that way.
- Things got creative: Some employed the assistance of key community leaders which became crucial and pivotal for recruiting participants and shaping the nature and format of research interviews. Have these relationships continued though?
- Less people did online surveys.
- More mixed methods – and creative ways:
  - Moana Research project: Zoom was used for older Pacific participants, and they engaged ‘natural mediators’ like children and grandchildren.
- The digital shift in data gathering definitely created uncertainty and challenges:
  - Who missed out because they couldn’t afford to fix their phone or didn’t have a fast enough internet connection?
  - And who didn’t get to speak in a Zoom?



- There were already **long-standing issues within the health research sector** such as funding and workforce shortages. There are concerns now about making sure we have a robust and stable health research workforce, particularly in times of crisis.
- **There's evidence for decreased sample size** during a Covid environment. So how do you compare year to year with a changed sample size? And how transparent and understood will those findings be?
- And we know that there were **decreases in representation** of certain communities which is required in national projects.
- We know that non face to face, especially in non-city sites, diminishes opportunities for **mutual learning between communities and researchers**, and this could potentially impact outcomes for areas where synthetic results were created.





- And there's evidence that participants continue to be anxious about being face to face with researchers.
- Ana couldn't be here today to present, but we asked her what is the one thing she really wanted you to know:

*“Communities particularly minority or smaller communities (small towns, refugees, Pasifika, Poorer communities) don't have the buffers (financial buffers) so they were more likely to be impacted by Covid. And those impacts are more likely to be lasting. Ensuring that these communities have a voice in research is important so that disparities and inequalities are not increasing. Community networks were the catalyst in ensuring communities engaged in research.”*

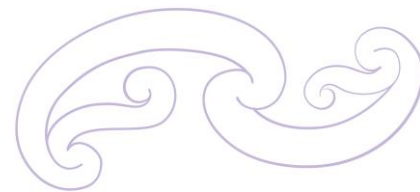


# SO WHAT?

- **What voices are missing because of all this?**
- Who shows up, who doesn't? Who talks, who doesn't?
- **There's an opportunity here** to support community researchers and their connections with communities, more holistically.
- Because they have those **strong relationships with communities**, NGOs, community groups and leaders.
- We know from our own work with researchers from diverse communities, they're sick of research projects going in and "*Stealing their stories because our stories are our ancestors*".
- Supporting community researchers more is also good because they are independent by nature and aren't confined by the sometimes-rigid parameters of academia and Government research.



- We hear the need for more lived-experience to be included– that awesome – but why would someone handover their communities to you? What some may call hard-to-reach, they say they are hard-to-reach for a reason.
- Community researchers have the access, to these precious and protected relationships. They are gold.
- And what about what tikanga of research, as seen by that community. How can this – research as ceremony – be part of how community research is created, delivered, shared, and bought back to those communities. Or even better, how can research also build the capacity of local community researchers and knowledge holders. Ihi Research is doing some incredible work in this area.



## ➤ SUMMARY

- It is anticipated that our Covid context for research will, in part, shape research and therefore insights and policy in the future. What does this mean for the way research is funded? And what's the opportunity to look at what methods and methodologies are best for lives to thrive, AND policy making and programmes of work. And for Māori-centred research, and co-design of research? **Because that's how communities function naturally.**
- Let's not adopt *pivoted* methods for the *right* methods.
- If community groups, sector advocates, community researchers and small research companies are closest to communities and have better and more authentic access, how should they be better supported and resourced?



**So many questions, and we want to help you to answer them.**

We are looking to resource a Research Broker Function to broker better research done alongside community.

Please contact us if you have half an hour to be interviewed about how we can add value to your existing research function.

[manager@communityresearch.org.nz](mailto:manager@communityresearch.org.nz)

**We are proud to be part of ComVoices. Please get to know us. Please be mindful – we are busy and under resourced. We are community.**

**Thank you.**

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