



Rātā  
Foundation



# MULTI-YEAR FUNDING PROGRAMME REVIEW

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**EMPOWERED TO THRIVE**

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# Executive Summary

This research invited Grantee Organisations (GOs) who were recipients of a Multi-Year Grant (MYG) to reflect on the benefit, value, and challenges of receiving the grant. Rātā was particularly interested in:

- the key benefits for MYG recipients and the outcomes this grant contributed towards
- what worked well and what were less useful ways of working, including relationships with Rātā staff over the duration of the grant, and interim and post-grant reporting
- the programmes importance for community organisations
- the programmes contribution to the Purpose and Objectives of Rātā.

## Overall value of the programme - the three-year term and key benefits

The MYFP is extremely important to GOs. The three-year term of the MYG was strongly supported by all GOs. They said this grant was unusual within the funding landscape and an indication of how important it was to Rātā to make a difference to the people and communities supported by the GOs.

GOs said the longer term of the funding enabled them to work more strategically – planning, reviewing and refining programmes. Knowing they had this funding helped them to employ staff and advertise services for the following years. In contrast, where they had annual grants or contracts from other funders, they needed to work to an annual timetable, and could not be confident about recruiting and retaining staff for more than a year at a time.

## Outcomes that can be in part attributed to the Multi-Year Fund Programme

Support from Rātā through the MYFP has enabled GOs to:

- Increase the reach of their service to hard-to-reach populations.
- Refine and innovate their programmes to be more responsive to their people and communities.
- Strengthen their relationships with key organisations.
- Fund essential operating costs
- Increase staff security and retention.

Consequently, GOs have been able to focus on their work and on making a difference to some of the most vulnerable and invisible communities within the Rātā regions. These outcomes in turn have a subtle and important ‘ripple effect’ of benefits into the wider non-GO communities within the Rātā regions.



## What is working well? What challenges?

In addition to the outcomes above, the MYG has been used by many GOs to leverage other funding. It has boosted the confidence and sense of achievement of the GO recipient, making them 'a little bit bolder'.

Many of these MYG recipients were part of the emergency response teams for the Covid-19 pandemic. They delivered essential services to their people and communities, supporting the national response during a time of uncertainty and change. This work asked a lot of the GOs, and many changed the way they delivered their services for the long term. For example, with online programmes and new contracts. GOs continue to make micro innovations to response to their communities' needs .

Over and above this emergency response role, these GOs support families experiencing challenges, and trauma in their daily lives. In many ways those working in 'Rātā GOs' are everyday heroes. They work consistently and skilfully to support families experiencing challenges to stabilise and get back on their feet. Meeting these needs, working holistically and in complex circumstances is an everyday challenge of GOs. Staff turnover can be high, and there are sometimes overload and recruitment challenges.

Some GOs are using the MYG to support their workforce, maintain professionalism and reduce uncertainty for their staff. Some of the GOs rely on part-time staff and volunteers. They say that they can stretch the MYG a long way.

Some of the MYG recipients mentioned the challenge of building bicultural and cross-cultural understanding in their wider non-GO communities. Other GOs mentioned they were able to access, support and de-escalate crises within their communities in a way that other organisations, such as the New Zealand Police and councils, may be less able to do. Another said that some of the families they were working with had overlapping challenges, for example, food poverty, digital poverty, as well as health challenges. This can mean that staff are spending longer on consultations with families and liaising with more agencies.

GOs working in all sectors use the Rātā MYG in combination with other funds to increase the impact of their work.

## Relationship with Rātā

All the GOs referred to their relationship with Rātā under the MYG as being important, unique, trust-based, and valued. The people Rātā employs, the way they work with the GOs, and the value they add to the GOs work were mentioned. Rātā is seen as part of the GOs formula for success.



## Contribution to Rātā Purpose and Objectives

The MYFP is contributing strongly towards the purpose and objectives of Rātā. The MYG increases the ability of these GOs to focus on their work, rather than on funding.

Many GOs mentioned the challenge of the cost of living and the negative impact this was having on their communities. GOs said that they were anticipating more funding pressures and competition between GOs for smaller pools of funding.

All GOs mentioned the value and practical difference the MYG makes to their organisation. Rātā is seen as a valued and authentic partner 'who walks their talk'.

## Recommendations

Suggestions from GO organisations regarding ways to improve the impact of the MYFP included:

- Consider longer grant terms, like a 5-year term, or longer.
- Continue with the current reporting program and create opportunities for more visual reporting wherever possible.
- Continue communicating clearly about funding priorities.
- Make cost of living adjustments within the three-year grant term (i.e., inflation indexing).
- Consider creating an opportunity to apply for a little more funding during the term to cover unexpected costs.
- Support information technology and data management initiatives.
- Continue to be a leader, role model and influencer on the regional and national stage, with and on behalf of, GOs.

Suggestions from the research team regarding ways to improve of the MYFP included:

- Invite and seek the support of the GOs 'network of influencers' on sticky and complex issues impacting the GO and grantmaking community.

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<sup>1</sup> The Future of Innovation Is Exciting, It Is Micro | by Space and Lemon Innovations | Medium



# Introduction

The Rātā Foundation Multi-Year Funding Programme (MYFP) has been running since 2016 under the Proactive Programmes work stream. This evaluation will inform the review of this programme. Rātā want to understand the value of the programme to Grantee Organisations (GOs) and the difference it makes for them and their communities.

Key principles of the Multi-Year Funding Programme include:

- providing certainty, stability and help to strengthen community organisations and enable them to be more effective
- relationships are built on a high trust model with funded organisations
- funding may be used to support innovative solutions.

## Research objectives

The research aims to undertake a review of the Multi-Year Funding Programme to provide insights into:

- the overall value the programme
- the key benefits for MY grantees and outcomes created (negative and positive) of receiving a MY grant
- the extent any changes or outcomes from the programme that the MY grantee organisation attributes to the programme
- what works well and what are not useful ways of working, including relationships with Rātā staff over the duration of the grant, and interim and post-grant reporting
- the programmes importance for community organisations
- the programmes contribution to Rātā's Purpose and Objectives.

The methods used in this research are semi-structured interviews with GOs who had been MYFP recipients. A range of types of GOs were selected across social, cultural and environmental sectors. The findings are summarised in the next section.



# Findings: The experiences of Grantee Organisations of the Multi-Year Fund

This section shares insights from Grantee Organisations (GOs) about their experiences of the Multi-Year Grant (MYG). Their perspectives have been grouped into the benefits of receiving the grant and changes that the GO was able to make, partly due to receiving the MYG. Finally, they reflect on the difference their relationship with Rātā makes.

## Key benefits and changes made

Support from Rātā through the MY Fund Programme has enabled GOs to:

- Increase the reach of their service to hard-to-reach populations
- Refine and innovate their programmes to be more responsive to their people and communities
- Strengthen their relationships with key organisations
- Fund essential operating costs.
- Increase staff security and retention.

## Increasing the reach of programmes and refining the way their programmes are delivered

All MYG recipients are focussed on meeting the needs of their people. They use the space created through an MYG to increase the numbers of people they can support and reach. Faced with high levels of need and often waiting lists for their services and programmes, GOs focus on supporting their people in practical and impactful ways:

- We are whānau-centered. Our focus is tamariki, rangatahi and breaking that intergenerational cycle of crime. Children who have a parent in prison are 9.5 times more likely to end up in prison themselves. So, we focus on these children.
- The biggest contract that the MYG supports is probably our financial mentoring contract, because some of our contracts (with government) are woefully underfunded. I mean they give you what they think you need, rather than what the programme costs... So Rātā supports, predominantly, that financial mentoring service.

Strategies used to increase the reach of their services and programmes include creating online courses and interactive websites. GOs also work to sustain more personal, face-to-face services and programmes for their people and communities, wherever possible. For example, by locating services in places that will be more accessible to the people they support such as marae, schools, kura and suburban community centres.

GOs are often refining the way they deliver their programmes to increase the reach of their service. For example, one grant recipient is trialling a drop-in health consultation service for young people, due to the long waiting list for individual consultations with their nurses, counsellors, and doctors.



Another GO bought a vehicle for their volunteers so that they could travel into the city at night to meet rangatahi on the streets.

### ***Covid-19 pandemic***

During the Covid-19 pandemic, these GOs were extremely busy reaching vulnerable people and delivering support to their communities:

- That we were able to pivot the administration team into becoming workers on the ground, rather than sitting in the office. What helped us a lot was being able to pivot our workforce to what was needed.
- We're a growing community and now we have the RSE employment scheme, as well, and during Covid, we supported them as well, because they were a part of our community.

Many GOs have continued with a period of change in their organisations post-pandemic, making further refinements to their services and programmes. For example, some have reviewed websites to make them more interactive and accessible:

- We were able to use some of our other resources to create computer programmes for our parents, so they were able to access services that were starting to go online... The learnings from Covid and the floods is that, in our community, there is an IT-divide. So, we did a 12-week programme in information technology (IT) for our parents and were able to purchase equipment for them, so that they can access schools and education.

### ***Post pandemic data and information***

Through the pandemic and other civil defence emergencies, some GOs had collated contact lists and other data about their community to support emergency management. They are now consulting with their members regarding sharing this information with other organisations, such as Civil Defence in preparation for future emergencies:

- All the information and data we are collecting. Our IT infrastructure and information management needs to be looked at.

### ***Extending programmes into new places and communities***

GOs have extended their programmes into new places or communities, providing practical services for vulnerable hard-to-reach populations, such as young people, and those experiencing family violence or other trauma. The MYG gives GOs space to plan new approaches, test micro innovations and focus on programme delivery:

- We're being creative around our service delivery... trialing drop-ins. Have been successful. Huge numbers of youth come in during drop-in hours. We're looking at expanding those... We've decided to get together as a team next month, start with a blank canvas.
- We are going to be moving. We will be tenants in the new Youth Hub, which is in the process of being built.



- We have a wraparound social work programme... and a mentoring programme as part of that wraparound service. The Social Workers work with whānau. Then, when a family is stabilised, we look at putting kids across into a mentoring programme, where they're matched with a volunteer mentor for 12 months. We look for a 12-month commitment and then there usually are pretty cool success stories. Those relationships, often, you know, we hear how they changed the mentees' life, but also the mentors' life - those who volunteered.
- We're a holistic service. We have multiple streams. We used some of the MYG for our Maara Kai. We have a garden now. We ripped out our beautifully landscaped garden in the back section and put it into raised garden beds. We've developed a programme where we teach whānau to grow their own vegetables. But it goes further than that. We take what is produced in the garden and we teach what to do with it, how to preserve and bottle. We used some of the MYG to support that service as well.
- We employed people that are well-known in the community, and we didn't look at the ability to speak English. We looked at the ability to be able to communicate with our community.

## Strengthening relationships with key organisations and communities

GOs talked about strengthening relationships over their MYG-term, such as with central and local government, or in key communities. For example, one GO was in the process of becoming a signatory to a local government community programme. Others were working with the New Zealand Police (NZP), Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Oranga Tamariki (OT), Civil Defence (CD) and Te Whatu Ora (TWO):

- We do a lot of connection with other organisations, so it might simply be running around picking up a food parcel, or a collection of quilts from a place that supports us... that sort of thing.
- Our Team provides holistic wrap-around support to 15–24-year-olds with complex needs that are wanting to engage in employment and education... Because that's a huge need, we've picked up some funding from Youth Development, as well. So, we (now) have a Youth Worker at Selwyn. We (have placed) nurses in 3 out of 4 schools (in our area).

The GOs often acted as liaison-people between their communities and government and community organisations. This was particularly important during the civil defence and other community crises that occurred during their MYG term. Pandemic responses were discussed frequently.

However, GOs also play an important role in mediating conflict and de-escalating stressful situations in the community on a weekly basis:

- The greeting that we get in our uniforms is completely different to the greeting that the people in blue (the NZ Police) might get. We see rangatahi in town and if they're having a whaiwhai... we can just jump in the middle and if they say, 'oh Matua'. Soon as they say that word, we've got them. You know they're going to listen. So, having that MYG funding has allowed us to have the waka ...and just go out and do what we do.



### ***GOs support communities to be more welcoming of diversity***

GOs are contributing to building awareness and understanding about cultural diversity:

- We are a diverse country. (As migrants) we have become visible in the community. We get people coming to us. Those who need help with going to appointments, going to the doctor. We also get organisations like (councils) coming to us.
- We've got new projects in place. We have now got van patrols and we've been outreaching to other organisations, nursing homes and things like that. They want to learn (marae) protocol. This is a new thing for us. I've never done teaching in that kind of format before.
- For our new migrants, coming into the region, it was the language barrier. We were able to employ people with the languages and then train them in what we needed to do. People started to look at our workforce development programmes and include them within their own organisation.

### ***Supporting Partner organisations***

GOs who focus their work with tangata whenua said that the MYG was valued and important for their mahi. Tangata whenua services, delivered within a Te Ao Māori approach, can offer support to, and connection with, hard-to-reach people and communities. They aim to be a place of inclusivity, safety and opportunity. They offer a wide range social services, as well as training and education programmes, like apprenticeships:

- (Our) Marae is a hub for Māori, including maataa waka, and the wider community who wish to use the Marae for tangi, hui, noho or to access the services we offer. It is a centre for developing cultural knowledge and understanding about culture, marae kawa, tikanga, and mana whenua histories. (The marae) provides manaakitanga services; affordable housing for Kaumātua; Whānau Ora.
- Pono services (empowering whānau and building safe families, marae and communities). We are a venue for the delivery of various education and training courses, community meetings, wānanga, and hui. Not just for the Māori community, but anyone who wishes to utilise their facilities and respects our tikanga.
- Pā Harakeke is a new framework from government, specialising in family violence... It's an opportunity for whānau from all walks-of-life to understand how they parent. The MYG supports us to be a lot more streamlined. In terms of being able to be trusted and have that autonomy to work in the way we are, without stopping and starting programmes.
- For sure, it takes time (to make changes in our type of work). Those who are committed and really engage with the service, it takes a couple of years and that's generous. But for those people, they spend a lifetime engaging in their trauma... It's really great to see people a few years down the track and think 'that's really great, they are still going on their journey'.



### ***Tangata whenua organisations emphasised recruiting and retaining good people***

Tangata whenua organisations described many benefits from the MYG they had received, including supporting staff recruitment and retention:

- Our Marae wants to be a good employer and offer our people roles. Part of being a good employer is paying a living wage. To be equitable around salaries and remuneration. In a tight labour market - it's competitive. The MY funding supports us to be competitive. Take some of the roles we have as part time into full time roles.
- The MYG has gone towards administration within our organisation. Some has gone towards registration fees for counsellors and social workers. We pay a membership towards some organisations. (The MYG) contributes to professional supervision. It's important to us that practitioners attend supervision once per month. Rātā makes a contribution towards that.

### **Funding essential operating costs**

All GOs use the Rātā MYG to bolster funds for essential operating costs such as transport, electricity and rent. They also mentioned other costs such as information technology, websites and relocating to new premises.

Many GOs mentioned using the MYG to support the costs of administration within their organisation. Sometimes they topped up the hours of part-time staff to do this work. Other times, they used the MYG to support staff development, such as professional registrations, conference attendance, and/or an employee assistance programme (EAP).

GOs describe these expenses as the 'boring bills' and non-specific costs. They say that they are harder to fund through other grants and contracts for service and that Rātā stands out as a grant maker that supports these essential expenses:

- One of the areas that we've struggled with is being able to do things like pay the rent and pay the boring stuff... Gives us certainty in terms of operations and continuity around our staff - Being able to do it 3-yearly. You've got to look at the cost benefit of constantly filling in applications.
- The longer-term grant is good for us, because we can plan for those three years or longer. We were able to plan three years in advance - where we wanted to be - and what we wanted to do. So, some of the stresses for the Board around applying for funding (are relieved).
- The 3-year funding is about looking longer ahead. Every year we have to look for funding. How are we going to be able to get a (staff member) if they are engaged to work only one year? It's difficult to get someone that's good enough. Some funding for operations is critical for us.
- We've made a point about ensuring that all youth feel welcome and included. We have government funding and it's insufficient to contribute towards the cost of rent and boring stuff (like that), as well as provide the service. The overhead allowance is minimal. The Rātā grant makes all the difference with government contracts, to being viable.
- We need vehicles. But that's all going to cost money and we don't have the pūtea to do that.



- Untagged operational funding is very hard to come by and hugely valuable... The certainty for a period of time, often don't get that from funders.

### **Staff recruitment and retention**

The positive impact of the MYG on staff employment and retention was mentioned a number of times. Some parts of the GO workforce have fewer paid full-time employees and many voluntary or part-time staff. The three-year term of the MYG gives GO Managers more confidence to recruit staff and more optimism that these staff will stay longer in the role:

- It really does help with planning and (means) we can keep going for these 3 years. The one-year funding is not a thing for us anymore... When we were getting those types of contracts, they left staff hanging. They didn't know if there would be a job at the end of the year. It was unsettling. Other parts of the sector, such as MSD and OT are offering MY funding now.
- One of the full-time roles is basically funded through the Rātā funding. A portion of the costs.
- Understanding that there was that little bit of extra underpinning that was going to continue... The stability. When we were busy in a pandemic-situation, we're a psychosocial first line-of-response-hub-organisation, we are astonishingly busy.
- (The MYG also pays for) an Administrator, who is the information person for 15 hrs/week. A Youth Worker. Every training programme has two casual people ... High turnover as staff move into fulltime work.
- We've got huge cost of living issues... and of course our staff are affected, as well. You know they need that addressed, as well.

### **Funding certainty, providing leverage**

Many GOs mentioned the financial certainty over three-year funding. That certainty allowed them to plan, extend services, or test micro innovations:

- To know that that funding was there and for that timeframe and to be able to budget without having uncertainty... It gave us the opportunity to focus on extending our provision and to balance the way the services (were offered) to the community.
- It's great to have that knowledge that you've got that funding for the next three years planning too, planning certainty... so I know I can budget for X amount coming in.
- It's a lot better for the reason that it gives you a lot more certainty. You know a year rolls around quickly, and working on one year at a time it, actually doesn't provide you any security. So, you're only planning a year at a time. Whereas, with the MYG, we know we're going to get it for three years, so it allows us to be a little bit bolder. (The MYG) just allows a lot of freedom and it allows security.
- It's great to have those broad grants, so you can move them around your budget a little bit. You've got just a little bit of play within the budget categories.
- It gives me financial assurance into the future. That's the number one benefit. It takes away that worry of 'where will I get the money for next year?' Only 30k. Other programmes cost more. This one is really operational... gives me lead time. I can plan our education programme, which will ultimately result in new income.



- If we look at the financial mentoring contract, it gave me, as Manager, the confidence that I could bring in someone else for a few hours a week as support for the coordinator. She was getting bogged down.
- We've now got funding with Te Whatu Ora, because they saw that we've got contracts with other providers (like Rātā). So, they look at that and say that we're a worthy organisation to have funding with.
- (The MYGF) is such a good base. Rātā contribute one quarter of total funding over three years. A significant amount. \$20-30k. For every dollar they give, we raise another \$5. That's the leverage out of investment.

## Making a difference - short and long term

GOs contribute to many changes in their communities. Their programmes are specific, tailored and specialised programmes. Their focus is on making a difference through:

1. Practical support
2. Building confidence
3. Offering guidance and empowerment.

### Practical support

GOs step forward in tough times with practical support such as food, translation services, accommodation and transport. Importantly, they also provide connection, education, communication and mediation within their communities:

- The cost of living is really impacting people. They're getting squeezed with their ability to be able to pay for things. So, any skills (around cost of living) is going to be hugely beneficial... One week they might have to get groceries and can't pay the power bill. Helping them navigate around that system. Supporting them in advocacy, if they have got into a bit of trouble, can bring them back to a place of stability, connection and confidence.
- We're becoming a popular organisation. Being a Centre. We have that connection with our communities. That's what a lot of organisations are lacking, is connection. So, the MYG is critical. We've started looking at our strategic plan. Having 3-year funding has enabled us to think long-term about outcomes, rather than delivering outputs.

### Building confidence

The GOs receiving the MYG strive to sustain this practical support over the long term. They provide skilful, stable and sustainable support, while creating opportunities and direction for their communities. GOs talked about a 'boost-in-confidence', as a result of receiving the MYG:

- Our (staff member) was able to connect with our communities and ask: 'what they want to do?' So, Rātā Foundation has been helpful for (our organisation). We are able to run activities our communities have asked for. (The MYG allows us to have) a person who is organising these. We're thankful, proud and confident.



- Three years! It allows us confidence to grow. The capability and capacity to (progress) our development programme.
- We don't feel like the poor relation anymore. (The MYG) put us on an even playing field. Allowed us to be a voice in our sector, without having the worry of: 'We're only here for the next 6 months'.

## Guidance and empowerment at many levels

With an orientation towards empowerment, many of these GOs are providing wrap-around support for those who are looking to enter the workforce, start new businesses, or obtain work-related qualifications. For example, Drivers Licenses, Forklift Licenses and Food Safety Certificates:

- What we're trying to do with the Trust is to future proof (our families). That's why we're looking at education programmes and programmes for our children. IT programmes for our parents... Some of the children are taken out of education at the age of 16 or 17 to support the family, financially. We say to our parents, to try keep our children in education for as long as they can. So, they have better employment opportunities. So, that's the other part of our Trust role. We've set up our own scholarship (programme).
- We provided training for a number of people and also helped with creating champions within their workforce.

Some GOs have achieved significant, widespread and visible results from their work, leveraging the Rātā MYG with other funding sources and leading complex, community consultation processes and programmes:

- (Our work) is a success story. The community really got behind (our programme). There's not that many people who can say 'we have saved the landscape'. Like everything, it is hard to look back and imagine how bad it was. (We've) taken lots of groups down to see our work... Rātā can hold (our project) up and say, 'this is what we have achieved'. (We are able to) put more effort into doing the job, rather than raising the funds, thanks to the MYG.
- We've picked up some additional contracts, which are still inadequate, given the need in the community. But we're doing our best to work with other youth organisations and look at National One-Stop-Shops and have a national approach to funding. We're only 1 of 2 in Christchurch that were successful in the (government) round of funding this year. We're already at capacity and have a waitlist of young people. There is more need out there than what we receive funding for.

GOs also said that they were experiencing more complex and challenging situations for some of their clients, which placed pressure on their service:

- Listening to the Social Workers, they are getting placed in some complex situations. This means that our Social Workers will spend longer with their families than they might have previously. So, there is a lengthened high need and more demands on these families. This might be apart from the trauma that they're going through with their loved ones in prison. You know the whānau you know you're actually dealing with housing issues or food poverty and those sorts of things that need addressing, as well, for a whānau to become stable.



## Relationship with Rātā

All the GOs referred to their relationship with Rātā under the MYG as being important, unique, trust-based, and valued. The people Rātā employs, the way they work with the GOs, and the value they add to the GOs work were mentioned. Rātā is seen as part of the GOs formula for success:

- For me, I can reach out if I need to, to Rātā. They are not on our tail, which is nice. They do the yearly check-in. I know who my adviser is, and I can make contact any time and he will come. He is known in our community, which is really great, it's an easy connection.
- I think Rātā did a fabulous job. Without them we would struggle. We see them as a key partner... It's peace of mind, knowing that we've got some funding for a 3-year period.
- To be honest at the beginning we didn't know (the MYG) existed... and we were really honored and privileged to (get the grant). To a lot of people, I know it seems like a little (amount of money) ...We can make it go a long way.
- My dealings with Rātā, they're an exceptionally good organisation. I've had just two people that have dealt with me.... The communication was great, their responses were great. They're making suggestions and looking at how they can help... They understand what's going on out there and they understand what we're trying to do.
- It's wonderful to be able to share our mahi with someone face-to-face.
- They Trust. They've been happy for us to use (the grant) the way that we've used it.
- Rātā trusted us to do the right thing with the resources that they gave and provide information to them with our report. Probably one of the easiest grant providers. Easy access to them... being able to still keep a connection with Rātā. Rātā Board members that live (nearby). We get to connect with them.

## Learning with and from Rātā

GOs learn from Rātā. Some specifically referred to aspects of the Rātā grant-making philosophy, such as their equity-orientation. In some cases, this has led to changes in the GO. For example, some reported that they had improved the diversity of staff recruited to better meet the needs of their clients. Others had set up training and workshops to help staff learn about their people and better tailor their service:

- (We have) Te Reo lessons on Wednesdays.
- For our community, knowing there is external eyes on our books builds stronger trust between us and our community and the other funding partners.
- Where they can help, they make suggestions. They just get it. They understand what's going on out there and what we are trying to do.
- Our engagements with Rātā have been positive and not just around this grant. We have talked to Rātā about some other work we do. Rātā have been engaging with us about some of their networks. And sometimes we have made introductions for them. They're a fantastic resource for us in terms of people they know.



- Rūnanga engagement matters a lot to us. We have very good relationships. They are stretched and many community organisations approach them... It would be great to have support from Rātā to coordinate engagement. Even if it was just the briefings we get from Rātā.

## Reciprocating

GOs said that they, in turn, saw themselves as resource people for Rātā:

- Rātā been really good to deal with all the way through. Generous supporters. They keep in touch. Good personal relations with some. They understand what we're doing here. Good to get from Rātā what we could do to improve their mana or reputation. They are doing such good work for us, there must be something we can give back to Rātā. Whatever we can do to help Rātā. It's a healthy relationship. We celebrate it.

## Rātā expectations of reporting are realistic and pragmatic

Many GOs appreciated the pragmatic and realistic reporting requirements of the Rātā MYG:

- Report requirements are effective and high-level.
- I do some other big funding reporting and I do love the comment on (Rātā's website). It says: 'We do not want this to be burdensome.' I thought 'that's fantastic'. Has a good overview of what's going on and then followed-up by a meeting. I find the reporting straightforward and relatively easy.
- Working in the not-for-profit space is a bit more stressful. You're constantly trying to do stuff on (the smell of) an oily rag. That's just the nature of it and doing 101 jobs, all at the same time. Not having arduous reporting requirements makes it less stressful.



## Discussion: Overall value of the Multi-Year Grant Programme

This research invited GOs who were recipients of a MYG to reflect on the benefit, value, and challenges of receiving the grant. Rātā was particularly interested in:

- the key benefits for MY grantees and the outcomes this grant contributed towards
- what works well and what are less useful ways of working, including relationships with Rātā staff over the duration of the grant, and interim and post-grant reporting
- the programme importance for community organisations
- the programmes contribution to the Purpose and Objectives of Rātā.

These questions have been answered below.

### Overall value of the programme - the three-year term and key benefits

The MYFP is extremely important to GOs. The three-year term of this grant was strongly supported by all GOs. They said this grant was unusual and a sign of Rātā 'living by their values'.

GOs said the longer-term of funding enabled them to work more strategically – planning, reviewing and extending programmes. Knowing they had this funding helped them to employ staff and advertise services for the following years. Where they had other annual grants or contracts, they tended to work on an annual timetable, and could not be confident about recruiting and retaining staff for more than a year at a time.

### Outcomes that can be in part attributed to the MYFP

Support from Rātā through the MY Fund Programme has enabled GOs to:

- Increase the reach of their service to hard-to-reach populations
- Refine and innovate their programmes to be more responsive to their people and communities
- Strengthen their relationships with key organisations
- Fund essential operating costs.
- Increase staff security and retention.

Consequently, GOs have been able to focus on their work and making a difference to some of the most vulnerable and invisible communities in the Rātā regions. This in turn has a subtle and important ripple effect of benefit into the wider non-GO communities in the Rātā regions.



## What is working well? What challenges?

The MY Grant has been used to leverage other funding. And it has boosted the confidence and sense of achievement of the GO recipient, making them ‘a little bit bolder’.

GOs over the period of this MYG were actively engaged in supporting the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and other community emergencies that occurred in the Rātā regions. This response asked a lot of these GOs, and many changed the way they delivered their services long term. GOs were part of the first response teams and steadied communities in a time of uncertainty and change.

However, in many ways GOs are everyday heroes – working consistently to reduce stress and to support families to stabilise and get back-on-their-feet with the everyday challenges they face.

Some talked about the challenge of building tolerance and understanding in the wider community. One referred to the hurt his community feels when they are portrayed negatively in the public arena.

Meeting the needs, working holistically, and in complex circumstances, is an everyday challenge of GOs. Staff turnover can be high, and consequently there are sometimes burnout and recruitment challenges. GOs are using the MYG to support their workforce, maintain professionalism and reduce uncertainty.

## Relationship with Rātā

All the GOs referred to their relationship with Rātā under the MYG as being important, unique, trust-based, and valued. The people Rātā employs, the way they work with the GOs, and the value they add to the GOs work were mentioned. Rātā is seen as part of the GOs formula for success.

## Contribution to Rātā Purpose and Objectives

The MYFP programme is contributing strongly towards the purpose and objectives of Rātā to make a difference to some of the most vulnerable communities in their regions. Increasing the ability of these GOs to focus on their work, rather than on funding.

Many GOs mentioned the challenge of the cost of living and the negative impact this was having on their communities. GOs said that they were anticipating more funding pressures and competition between GOs for smaller pools of funding.

All GOs mentioned the value and practical difference the MYG makes to their organisation. Rātā is seen as a valued and authentic partner ‘who walks their talk’.



## Recommendations

Suggestions from GO organisations regarding ways to improve the impact of the MYFP included:

- Consider longer grant terms, like a 5-year term, or longer.
- Continue with the current reporting program and create opportunities for more visual reporting wherever possible.
- Continue communicating clearly about funding priorities.
- Make cost of living adjustments within the three-year grant term (i.e., inflation indexing).
- Consider creating an opportunity to apply for a little more funding during the term to cover unexpected costs.
- Support information technology and data management initiatives.
- Continue to be a leader, role model and influencer on the regional and national stage, with and on behalf of, GOs.

Suggestions from the research team regarding ways to improve of the MYFP included:

- Invite and seek the support of the GOs 'network of influencers' on sticky and complex issues impacting the GO and grantmaking community.



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