

Lessons learned: Whānau Ora HIA

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Whānau Ora Health Impact Assessment (WOHIA)

A tool to identify the impact of government and sector **activities** on Whānau ora before the activities are implemented. Whānau ora HIA is based on evidence, focussed on **Whānau ora outcomes and emphasises equity**. Whānau ora HIA **informs policy makers** with robust advice and helps communities structure their feedback to policy organisations.

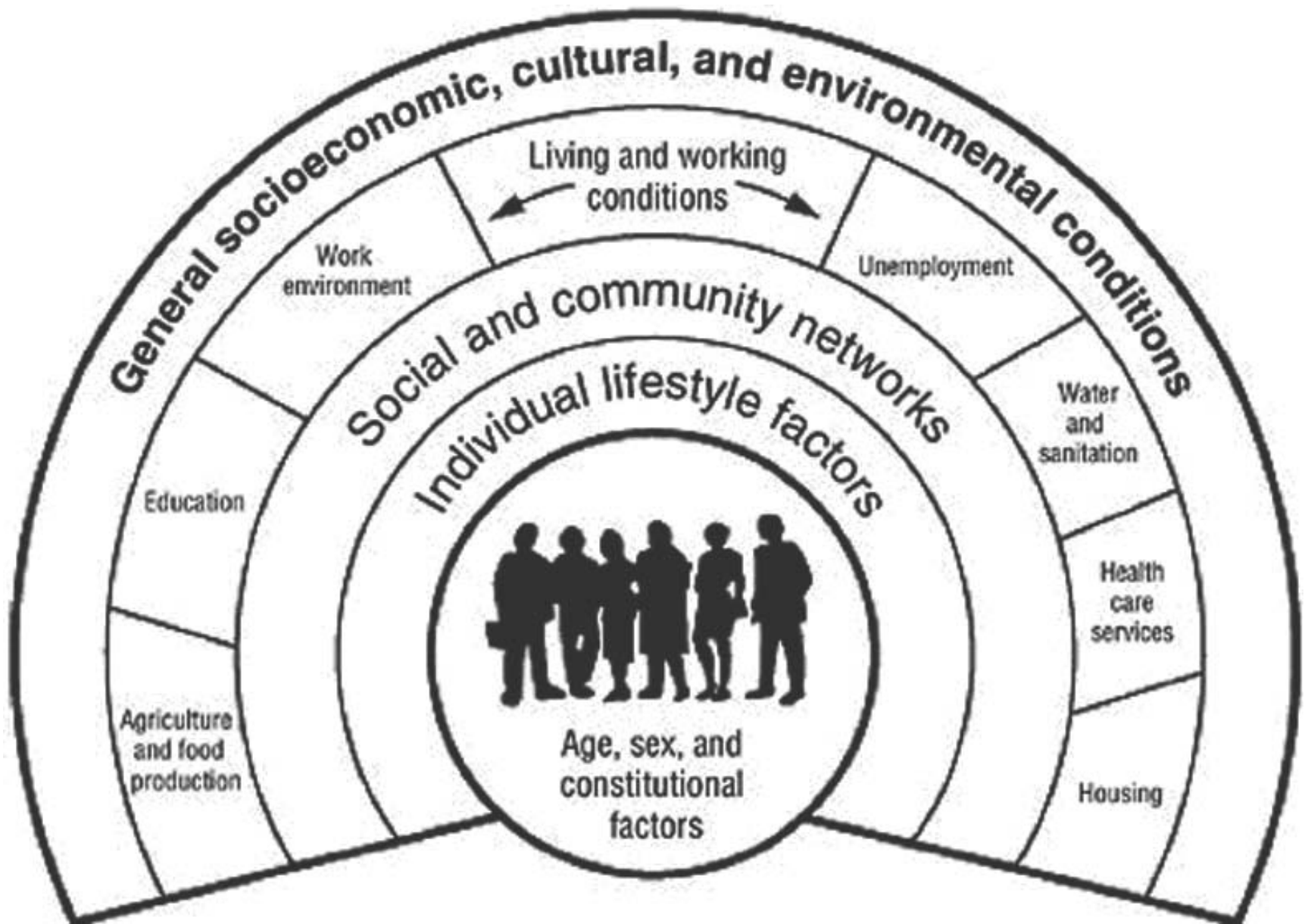
Whānau ora can be described as “Māori families supported to achieve their maximum health and wellbeing”.

Whānau Ora HIA is an approach

It aims to ‘move the consideration of Māori issues from a token, last minute tick-box to an integrated Māori voice within the policy making process’ (Wall, 2007).

It aims to ‘draw out the complexity of the issues and to help develop sophisticated solutions’ (Wall, 2007).

The right attitude, values and flexibility are critical.



Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1992. Policies and strategies to promote social equity and health. Copenhagen: WHO

Where Whānau Ora HIA began in NZ

- Treaty of Waitangi
- Assessments of Environmental Effects and ‘consultation’ with iwi for air, land and water impacts (via regulatory requirements), and the recognition that there is more to Whānau Ora than just that
- New Zealand Health Strategy to “assess public policies for their impact on health”
- Public Health Advisory Committee HIA tool and programme of work
- Ministry of Health Whānau Ora tool and programme of work
- International momentum for HIA

What has Whānau Ora HIA been used for?

- One central government policy (at Ministry of Health)

Several local government:

- Community development and planning
- Infrastructure projects
- Commissioning & providing services
- Preparing & assessing funding bids

HIA and Whānau Ora HIA

| | HIA | WOHIA |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Where it's from | Impact assessment derived | Impact assessment derived |
| Who developed it | Public Health Advisory Committee | Te Kete Hauora, Ministry of Health |
| Rationale | Inform decision makers; inequalities. | Inform decision makers; Treaty of Waitangi; inequalities. |
| Target audience | Scope for all populations. | Māori. Pākehā privilege. |
| Stakeholder involvement | European approach. | Māori approach. |

Lessons learned

- In-service training, on actual real-life policies is best (rather than generic training courses). It must target senior management.
- Its easy to come up with 50-question guide, but the skills to decide what questions are most appropriate and how to ask questions are needed

Lessons learned

- It is a substantial challenge for a policy decision maker to say 'my focus is Whānau Ora ' for any assessment.
- As with general HIA, we can't assume an understanding of the determinants of health. This must be explained first to any potential agency/policy analyst, before getting into what 'Whānau Ora ' is.

Lessons learned

- Implement Whānau Ora HIA as a flexible tool that draws on skills people already have, and processes they already do.
- Whānau Ora HIA as an additional process was seen as less likely to be successful.

The present

- Developed by the Ministry of Health, with practical support from the previous central Government
- A HIA tool developed by Māori for use by all.