

Reflections on a five-year experiment: ConCOVE's legacy

NZ Vocational Education and Training
Research Forum

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Jodhi Warwick-Ponga • 1st
Dedicated, energetic and innovative Optimist ...
4mo •

This photo came up in my Facebook memories and took me right back—five years ago. We were a small consortium presenting our ConCOVE proposal face-to-face at TEC in Wellington. It was a five-year plan we'd poured our hearts into, with Simon doing most of the heavy lifting on the writing.

The interview panel was tough, and after all that work, it felt like a flop. We walked out thinking it had all been for naught and headed to the pub to drown our sorrows.

Two weeks later, we found out we were successful. It was a reminder that sometimes your impact lands even when it doesn't feel like it at the time. Grateful for the team, the kaupapa, and where it's all led.

(And I'm going to be completely not humble here: it was my idea to ensure we centred Māori, Pacific Peoples, and Wāhine/Women in the proposal.)


27

2 comments



Tell them what you loved...



An aerial photograph of a large-scale construction or demolition site. The ground is a mix of brown earth, mud, and piles of rubble. Several yellow excavators are visible, some with their arms raised. Two white trucks are parked in the upper-middle section. On the left, there are blue and white storage containers and a white car. On the right, a multi-story building is under construction, with red scaffolding and wooden formwork visible. The overall scene is one of active earthmoving and structural work.

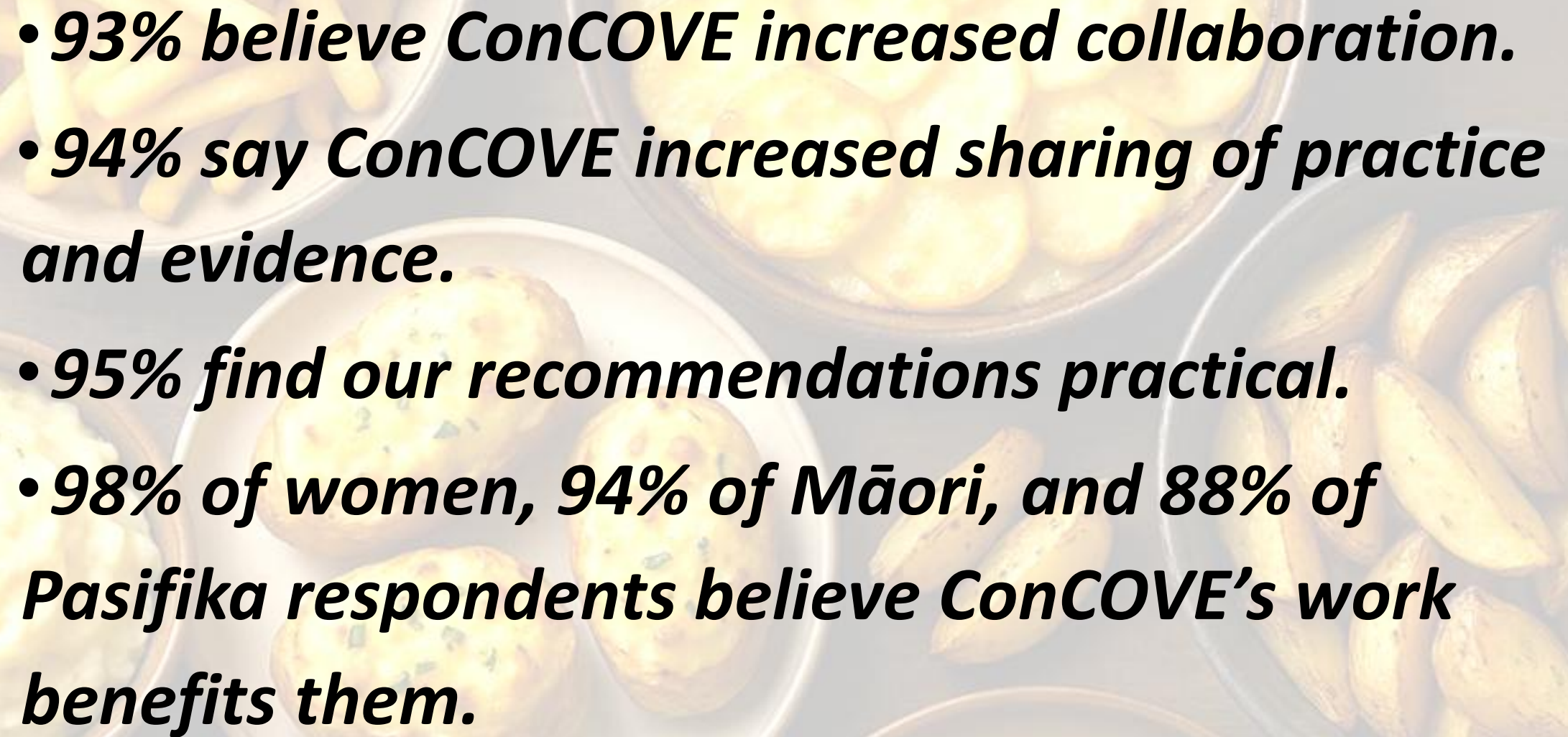
*Systems change is about shifting the
conditions holding a problem in place.*



An aerial photograph of a construction site. In the center, a large area of dirt and gravel is being excavated. Several yellow excavators are visible, working on the site. Two white trucks are parked in the upper right, and a larger white truck is in the center. To the left, there are stacks of lumber and other construction materials. On the right, a multi-story building is under construction, with red scaffolding visible. The text "The system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets." is overlaid in the center of the image.

*The system is perfectly designed to get
the results it gets.*



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- The background of the slide features a collage of several bowls containing different potato preparations. In the top left, there's a bowl of french fries. To its right is a bowl of potato slices. Below the fries is a bowl of mashed potatoes. In the center, there's a bowl of potato wedges. To the right of the center is another bowl of potato wedges. At the bottom, there are more bowls, including one with a baked potato and another with potato slices. The text is overlaid on this background.
- ***93% believe ConCOVE increased collaboration.***
 - ***94% say ConCOVE increased sharing of practice and evidence.***
 - ***95% find our recommendations practical.***
 - ***98% of women, 94% of Māori, and 88% of Pasifika respondents believe ConCOVE's work benefits them.***

An aerial photograph of a large-scale construction or demolition site. The ground is a mix of dirt, mud, and debris. Several yellow excavators are visible, along with white and grey trucks. On the right side, the skeletal framework of a multi-story building is visible, showing red rebar and concrete columns. On the left, there are some temporary structures and materials. The overall scene is one of active earthmoving and construction.

“ConCOVE has been a treasure trove of strategic and operational information.”

“Your work allows the sector to act with far greater efficiency.”

“Sometimes we get hamstrung by the lack of data. ConCOVE’s research has empowered us to challenge the system and design solutions.”

***We don't rise to our goals, we
fall to the level of our systems.***




Keep the work visible.

Embed the work into delivery.

Preserve the kaupapa.



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1. *Stronger advocacy*
 2. *Faster qualification design and delivery mechanisms*
 3. *Business skills for all people*
 4. *Stronger collaboration between industry, education, and government*
 5. *Better funding and smarter investment models*

- *Disrupt the narrative.*
- *Challenge the system.*
- *Take the evidence and go further than we ever could.*
- *Build a future where every learner — and every employer — can thrive.*

***Sometimes your impact lands, even
when it doesn't feel like it at the time.***

Jodhi Warwick-Ponga