VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINES:

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PATHWAYS FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE IN AOTEAROA

APRIL 2023

A call-to-action 'not-white' paper from the SASS Group
SASS= Systems-change Advocacy, Support and Solidarity

For practitioners and supporters of Systems Change

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OUR FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

A sizeable proportion of Aotearoa's population is struggling. Why? Because the systems we've designed are failing many of our people.

Band-aid, tick box, one-size-fits-all approaches to complex and chronic issues like child poverty and food security can temporarily reduce individual suffering, but don't address the underlying causes of these problems. We need Systems Change, we need more of it, and we need to be doing it in better, more community-led ways.

This paper contains messages to Systems Change practitioners and supporters from women working on the frontlines of Systems Change. We are part of a group known as SASS (Systems-change Advocacy, Support and Solidarity). We believe that a more equitable future for Aotearoa begins with Systems Change, and that this future is Te Tiriti-based, connected and community-designed.
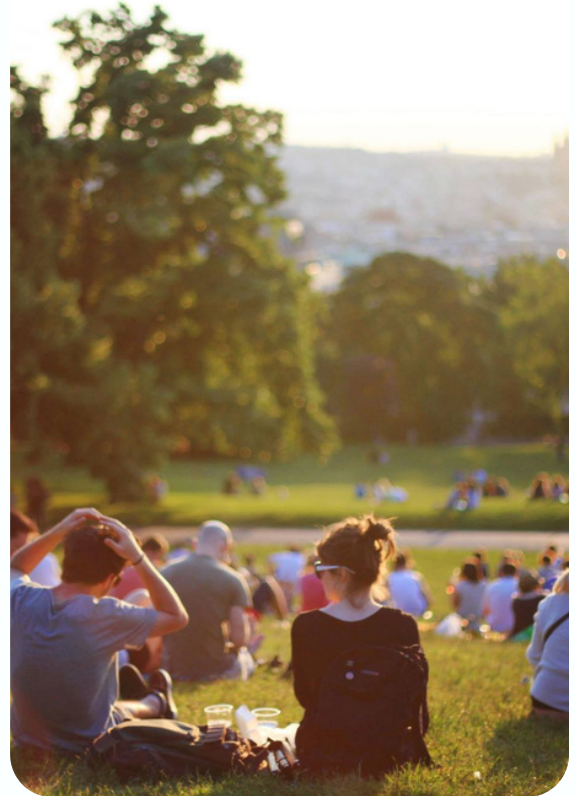
We recommend five pathways for building more positive and impactful Systems Change in Aotearoa:

1. Enable Systems Change Leadership

2. Strengthen relationships and working together

3. Address racism, bias and exclusion

4. Overcome funding and bureaucracy challenges

5. Encourage experimentation and amplify transformation

For ease of access and immediate action, you will find checklists of actions organised by these five key pathways at the end of this paper.

HOW THIS PAPER CAME TO BE

Systems Change is necessary and important but hard to do. What is most helpful for building more positive and impactful Systems Change here in Aotearoa? What might Systems Change practitioners and supporters of Systems Change (for example, governance and advisory groups, funders, government agencies and media) do differently to make this happen? These are some of the questions explored by a collective of women on the frontlines of Systems Change in late 2022.

Our group, known as SASS (Systems-change Advocacy, Support and Solidarity) are all experienced, hands-on community leaders from diverse backgrounds. We are fiercely passionate about Systems Change mahi that is Te Tiriti-based, community-led, relationship-led and collaborative. We meet monthly to connect, support and share learnings, resources and wisdom. Examples of the kinds of systemic issues we are working to shift include ending hunger, overcoming racism, eliminating family & sexual violence and addressing poverty.

Our process for exploring how to better support effective Systems Change involved a retreat as well as in-person and online workshops to explore what helps and what hinders positive Systems Change. Workshop facilitation and the drafting of this paper was done by Kate Frykberg (Pākehā) and Erin Matariki Carr (Ngāi Tuhoe, Ngāti Awa) from Tūmanako Consultants.

Participants in the process are women from the front lines of the movement, and include:

- Anjum Rahman (Inclusive Aotearoa Collective Tāhono)
- Anya Satyanand (Leadership NZ)
- Bianca Johanson (Manaaki Rangatahi)
- Eva Chen (Wellbeing Trust)
- Jade Tang-Taylor (AcademyEX, Innovation Unit, Toi Āria)
- Jewelz Petley (The Western Initiative)
- Anissa Ljanta (Systems Change Advocate)

- Philippa Holmes (The Good Fale)
- Repeka George-Kopeka (Healthy Families and Systems Change Consultant)
- Shaleshni Sharma (Shama Ethnic Women's Trust)
- Tarewa Cowan (Kāpō Māori Aotearoa New Zealand)
- Jane Zintl (Ara Taiohi)
- Tric Malcolm (Kore Hiakai).

Funding for the retreat, workshops and the writing of the paper was generously provided by The Todd Foundation.

This not-white paper is our gift to everyone who is passionate about creating a more equitable, inclusive, Te Tiriti-based Aotearoa whether you work in Systems Change or support Systems Change. It's not your usual 'white paper', because - well - many of us are not white, and most of our Systems Change work involves approaches which are not white.

In the pages that follow is wisdom gathered from community voices on the frontlines of beautiful, messy, and vital Systems Change mahi. We know that taking action informed by this wisdom, the seeds of a healthier, more equitable future will take root and prosper. All quotes in green are from the SASS retreat.

We have organised our learnings into five key pathways, each with clear, actionable next steps for those who want to contribute to a more beautiful future.

We welcome your feedback and involvement.
For more information, please contact:
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WHAT IS SYSTEMS CHANGE?

We hear the words 'the system is broken' often in conversations about the big challenges of our time, for example health, justice, economics and the environment.

Or maybe these 'systems' are not exactly broken, maybe they work very well for some people, usually those in privilege, and very badly for others, particularly those who are less privileged.

Systems Change is work which aims to change these big systems so they work for everyone.

Here are three of our favourite Systems Change definitions:

- 'Systems change is an approach that recognises how complex the world really is, and focuses on shifting the whole picture, rather than merely tinkering with little parts.'(1)
- 'We understand Systems Change to mean the changes that make the biggest difference for people and the planet. To explain this, we use the upstream/ downstream metaphor of an awa or river.'(2)
- 'A system change follows a change in the root causes of an issue, as opposed to a surface level change which only addresses symptoms'.(3)

To illustrate: providing food parcels for families, important though this may be, is not Systems Change because it addresses symptoms or downstream effects of much bigger issues of poverty and inequality. On the other hand, initiatives aimed at changing our economic systems so that poverty and inequality are no longer issues is Systems Change work, because the aim is to change the root causes or upstream reasons for poverty.

Systems Change is vital work that is much needed here in Aotearoa. Our hope is that this paper helps System Change to happen more and happen better.

1. The Southern Initiative - Explaining Systems Change
2. The Workshop: Mapping the landscape - how to talk about Systems Change in Aotearoa, New Zealand
3. Ashoka's 'System change: A high level summary'

FIVE PATHWAYS TO BUILDING POSITIVE AND IMPACTFUL SYSTEMS CHANGE IN AOTEAROA

Through workshops, deep dive explorations of our work and collecting the experiences of people engaged in a diverse community-grounded Systems Change mahi, we have identified five key pathways and associated actions to build positive and impactful Systems Change in Aotearoa:

PATHWAY ONE: ENABLE SYSTEMS CHANGE LEADERSHIP

What this is about

Because Systems Change involves working upstream to change the root causes of big issues, it is neither quick nor easy work. It also often lacks some of the 'feel good' factors of downstream work, for example a smile on the face of a food parcel recipient, or easy-to-provide success indicators like number of food parcels delivered. Additionally, Systems Change leaders require unique skills, including the ability to inspire, challenge, co-create, negotiate, innovate and, importantly, to persevere in the face of adversity.

Leading a Systems Change initiative is a marathon, not a sprint, and the work can take a high toll on everyone involved:

> *Leading a Systems Change organisation is lonely and exhausting and scary and sometimes I feel so out of my depth.*

> *Burnout is a constant danger. I am doing this work as a part-time employee and actually working more than full time.*

> *There's never enough time - there are constant demands and not enough space to think, pause, reflect, be, heal, restore.*

THE SASS STORY

Experienced community leaders Anjum, Jane, Bianca, Tric and Anissa, saw a pattern of people in Systems Change initiatives in burnout and/or feeling overwhelmed and isolated. Carving a nurturing space out of the busyness to connect and lift each other up, the SASS Group began with encouragement with Systems Change supportive funders, meeting monthly for a year before approaching the Todd Foundation about interest in funding our first in-person retreat. There was power in sharing our stories and knowing all of us observed and heard others ask for the same changes needed to better support community-led Te Tiriti-focussed equity work.

Buoyed by the Todd Foundation's commitment to this vital kanohi ki te kanohi time together, and knowing the importance of growing Systems Change in Aotearoa and that a diversity of frontline voices was needed to amplify and leverage positive and healthy change, we returned with the request to fund a deep-dive session and development of this 'not-white paper' to leverage healthy social change and much-needed trust-based resourcing of community-led Systems Change initiatives and Systems Change leadership.

What we can do about it

One of the most helpful things we can do to support more impactful Systems Change in Aotearoa is to nurture present and future Systems Change leaders. This includes:

For Systems Change Practitioners: Let's look after ourselves and each other, for example:

- Include reflection time and self-care time into our work plans and budget lines. The current reality is that we over-schedule because we have to, and this is a systemic issue which we need to address
- Ask for help and support when needed, and normalise sharing the challenges we face
- Strengthen our collective voice by supporting each other to advocate for Systems Change

For funders and other supporters of Systems Change: Support ongoing learning, creativity and resilience of Systems Change leaders, in particular:

- Support accessible retreats and mentoring to strengthen Systems Change leadership
- Provide professional development and paid sabbaticals, including paying someone to look after our organisations while we are gone
- Boards, friends and family can help ensure that leadership expectations are realistic, can encourage leaders to take holidays and have downtime, and watch for signs of burnout
- Businesses might consider providing care-packs, retreat vouchers and other give-aways to support those in the trenches of Social Change
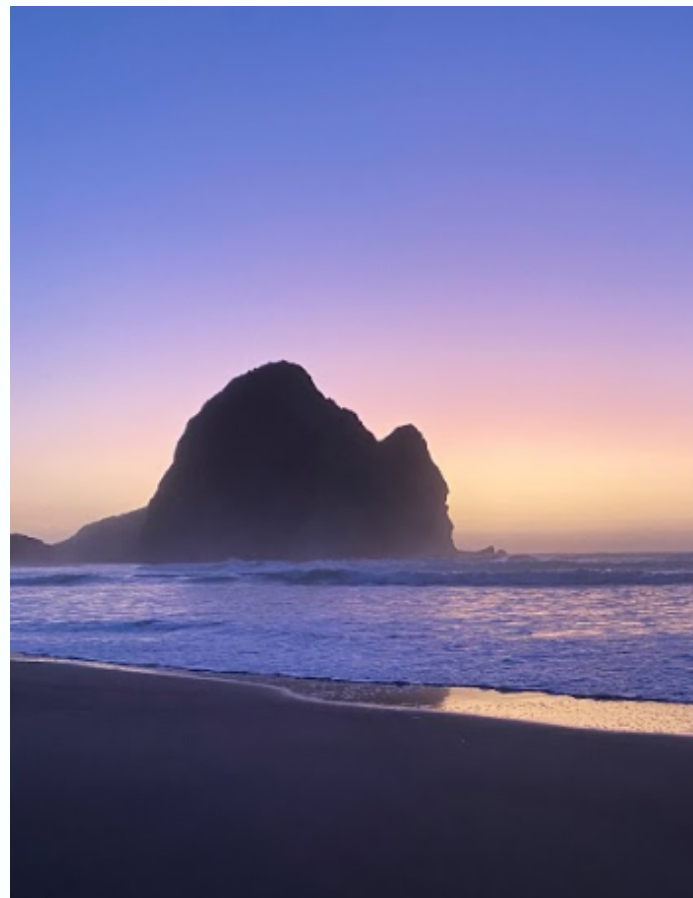
PATHWAY TWO: STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS AND WORK TOGETHER

What this is about

Systems Change is too big and complex to do alone - it requires working together. And that means all of us - communities, Systems Change initiatives, funders, government, media and passionate individuals.

Even more importantly, Systems Change needs to be led by the communities we serve. Unfortunately, we have found that there are significant barriers to collaboration and ensuring community take the lead:

> *Who is sitting at the tables of power? If community isn't there at the table, we need to make the tables bigger and pull up another seat - nothing about us without us!*

> *Procurement processes mean we compete, or duplicate, or work in silos.*

> *Come down to the grassroots, meet people as people, and centre lived experience.*

SYSTEMS CHANGE

Systems change is when a group decides to step further into relationship, activate their agency and shift things together, according to shared relationships that centre values. Learning and accountability are absolutely vital to creating meaningful, enduring changes in a system.

An example of this is a system shifting project that moved from its birth home in a mainstream organisation into a collective held by community organisations. The seeds for the project were planted when the Ministry for Youth Development funded a couple of rounds of small grants for projects supporting queer and trans young people around the motu. This turned into a framework for rainbow cultural competence that sat within the work programme of Ara Taiohi, the peak body for youth development.

Over time, it was recognised that the potential of the relationships that had been built (and broken, and rebuilt) to create the framework could serve as a powerful engine for deeper, wider, more profound shifts in the sector working with young people in Aotearoa. Te Ngākau Kahukura was born out of the aspiration and expertise of a collective of rainbow organisations and championed partnering with the peak body.

What we can do about it

There are three key things we can do to strengthen relationships and collaboration, first to be uncompromisingly community-led, second to prioritise working together over working separately, and third to communicate well and share resources. In practice this may involve:

For Systems Change Practitioners: Put people, relationships and manaakitanga at the centre of everything we do, for example:

- With community - take a 'nothing about us without us' approach through being out and about in communities connecting and listening, and by ensuring our organisations reflect the communities we serve
- Within our organisations: our internal relationships mirror our relationships with communities, so devolve leadership, foster radical inclusion, understanding and aroha
- With other organisations: Build networks with organisations who have a similar kaupapa, meet regularly, share what we learn and find opportunities for working collaboratively

For funders and other supporters of Systems Change: Support collaboration and working together, for example:

- Support the creation of a collaboratively funded agency or hub to support Systems Change. This might include backbone services like HR, admin, finance, policy, comms and space. Sharing backend infrastructure will increase collaboration, creativity, and efficiency
- Support the creation of a collaboratively funded agency or hub to support Systems Change. This might include backbone services like HR, admin, finance, policy, comms and space. Sharing backend infrastructure will increase collaboration, creativity, and efficiency
- Ensure funding facilitates time and space to connect and build relationships and share learnings, possibly as a budget line within the funding
- Trust and be led by Systems Change practitioners' assessments of what is needed; avoid imposing your worldview
- Boards can develop board-to-board relationships with other Systems Change organisations
- Media can showcase stories of collaboration

PATHWAY THREE: ADDRESS RACISM, BIAS AND EXCLUSION

What this is about

We observe ignorance, bias, racism and exclusion on a daily basis, including in ourselves and in our organisations. Examples of this include:

- Lack of understanding of and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the central place of Te Ao Māori in Aotearoa
- Exclusion of People of Colour, disabled people, LGBTQI+ and other peoples
- Episticide - the killing of ways of knowing and ideas, often unintentionally
- People in positions of power acting from a place of ego and unidentified privilege
- Silencing - the imbalance of power and privilege makes it hard to challenge those in power. This is true even for the stroppiest of System Change people, and even when dealing with the most progressive funders and supporters

> *The future is brown - get over it!*

To quote lawyer and teacher Ani Mikaere (Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Porou):

> *Pākehā need to take ownership of their history and to take positive Pathways to redress the situation. Such Pathways will include learning to let go of some of their power. This means that Pākehā in positions of power must place their trust in Māori, not the other way around.*

SHAMA

Shama Ethnic Women's Trust grew from conversations in homes and garages to fill gaps in available services for ethnic women and children. Listening to the voices of women, we heard repeatedly that conversations and solutions around sexual harm did not include the perspectives and needs of ethnic communities. Shama's response was to seed and support a grassroots movement to develop the sexual violence service by holding a hui at the Parliament in 2019. Almost 100 ethnic therapists and counsellors attended and approximately 43 discussions were conducted which included ethnic, religious and regional discussion tables. The results led to the development of three streams of work: crisis response; long-term therapeutic services; and a prevention and awareness programme. These continued efforts are an example of how systems change with a diversity of perspectives is needed to make a more robust, positive and long-lasting impact in Aotearoa.

What we can do about it

Addressing racism, bias and exclusion and making sure there are a spectrum of intersectionally diverse voices at the table is core Systems Change work and underpins the healthy changing of every system. This means we all have work to do. Useful starting points for both Systems Change practitioners and for funders and other supporters of Systems Change include:

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Useful starting points for both Systems Change practitioners and for funders and other supporters of Systems Change include:

- Admit that we don't know what we don't know, and build understanding of where we sit in the spectrum of privilege, for example Pākehā privilege and class privilege
- Commit to being life-long learners in this space. In particular, learn more deeply about Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Matike Mai constitutional transformation as pathways to forms of Systems Change that are values-based and uniquely relevant to Aotearoa
- Listen deeply to and amplify voices of those with lived experience
- Engage navigators and mentors from communities to guide this work. On this point, we also need to understand the limitations: 'one Asian person can't speak for all Asia'. Similarly, one Māori can't speak for all Māori. Additionally we need to remunerate this work properly, and avoid over-burdening communities
- Commit to accessibility (in both physical and digital spaces) and ensure that systems and processes are designed for people most in need, knowing that if they are served everyone else will be also

MATIKE MAI

An important resource for changing our fundamental systems here in Aotearoa is the Matike Mai Aotearoa Report on Constitutional Transformation (4, 5). Mandated by the Iwi Chairs Forum and led by Prof Margaret Mutu and the late Dr Moana Jackson, this report was published after 252 hui with thousands of Māori throughout Aotearoa. The question asked at each hui was, 'What would a constitution based on kawa, tikanga, He Whakaputanga, Te Tiriti and UNDRIP look like?' This question asks us to imagine beyond the current settler colonial governance system to a system that allows tino rangatiratanga Māori as well as kāwanatanga, that weeds out injustice, and nurtures genuine reconciliation for a thriving Aotearoa New Zealand.

The answers that arose were a series of essential values or needs that a constitution must embody. These constitutional values address colonial injustice, protect space and wellbeing for all people and allow us to remember our place in balance within the Earth and changing climate. The timeline for constitutional transformation is set to 2040 – and we all have work to do to achieve this vision.

4. https://nwo.org.nz/resources/report-of-matike-mai-aotearoa-the-independent-working-group-on-constitutional-transformation/
5. https://tikatangata.org.nz/our-work/maranga-mai

After the horrific 2019 terrorist attack on Christchurch Mosques, a key response has been Systems Change. Why?

Because we need to address the underlying racism and other forms of discrimination in our society and to promote inclusion and equity. Inclusive Aotearoa Collective Tāhono was born shortly after the attacks and is a collaborative approach with a commitment to Te Tiriti, a vision of an Aotearoa where everyone has a place to belong, and a mission to build a socially inclusive Aotearoa. Through supporting nationwide conversations about belonging and using a constellation approach to support multiple aligned projects, Inclusive Aotearoa enables us all to get involved and to help build an inclusive society.

A key focus of the work is to bring people with different lived experience and worldviews together, to work on change in their particular area of interest, such as media representation, digital rights, Te Tiriti, or anti-racism work.

PATHWAY FOUR: OVERCOME FUNDING AND BUREAUCRACY CHALLENGES

What this is about

Navigating bureaucratic power structures and making do with funding that is short-term, constrained in how it can be used, time-consuming to apply for and report on, and often simply not enough, are major impediments to making Systems Change.

> *Collaborative, untagged, report-free funding which invites risk-taking and understands the potential for failure is bliss when it happens, and big ups to the funders who provide this! But often funding feels like playing stupid games and getting stupid prizes.*
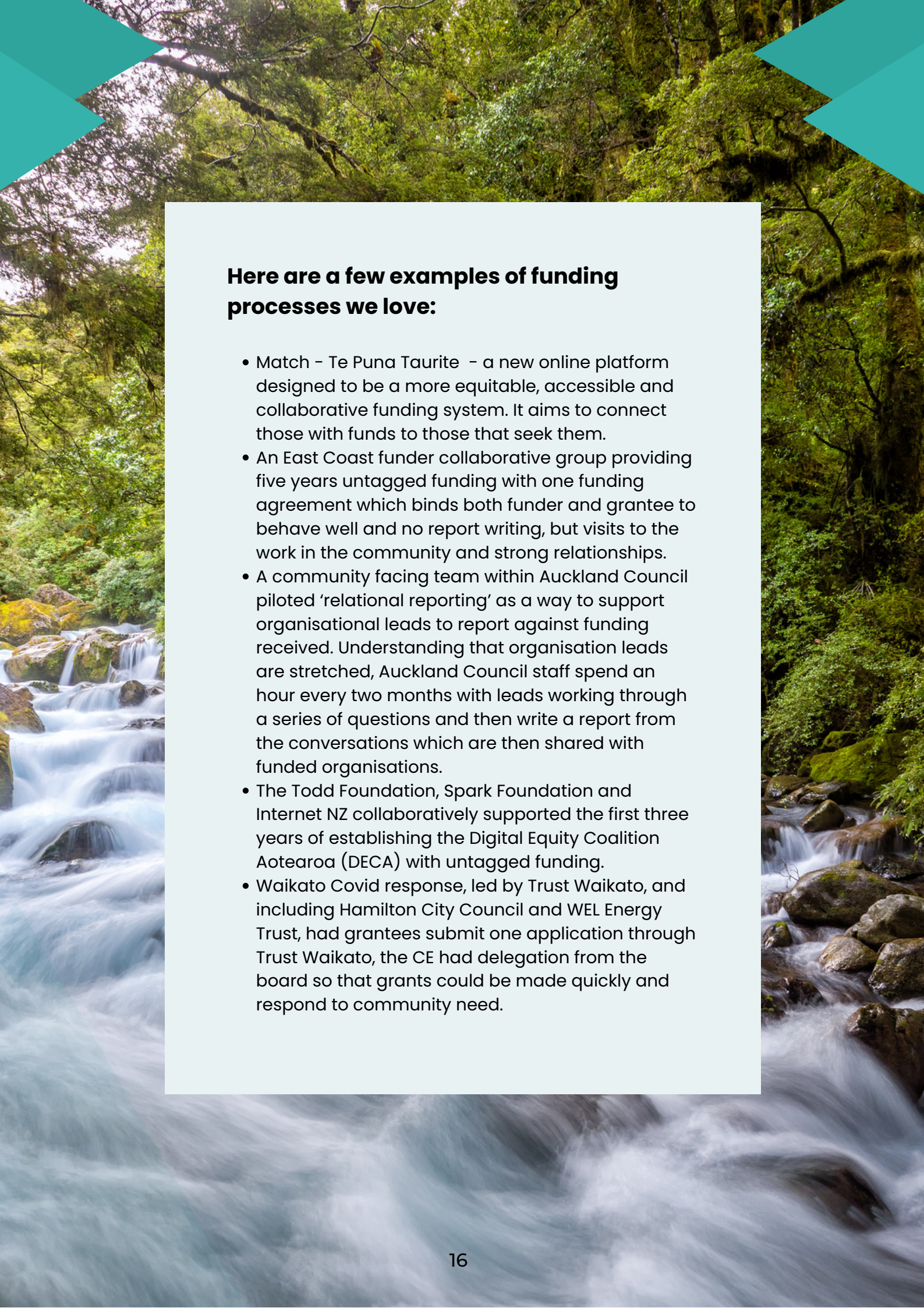
What we can do about it

Like addressing racism and bias, addressing bureaucratic power structures and unhelpful funding practices is Systems Change in itself, and it arguably underpins the changing of any kind of system. Here are some starting points for making change:

For Systems Change practitioners: build an environment of collaboration and sharing rather than competing, for example:

- Work with funders to explore alternative, collaborative funding models where Systems Change organisations apply together and share equitably, instead of fighting over funding
- Share templates, budgets, funding applications within our networks
- Communicate openly and honestly with funders, eg share the tough stuff, ask for funding to be repurposed if needs change, and challenge funders on their processes and equity practices when appropriate

For funders and other supporters of Systems Change: Change your internal systems to become a leader in effective, equitable funding, for example:

- Remember that 'it is hard for small grassroots organisations to compete with the big guys,' so consider supporting navigators who can matchmake and/or collaborate with other funders so that one application goes to many funders. (The new MATCH system is seen as a positive pathway here.)
- Provide untagged funding for the kaupapa, not the project. Additionally, multi-year funding is required to facilitate multi-year Systems Change, preferably with inflation provisions built in. This could be done through collaborative funding models with multiple funders and supporters contributing over a longer time period
- Instead of accountability reports, show up and see what is happening. If you see people turning up and participating then the initiative is probably working. Then you, the funder, can write the accountability report, if that is what you require
- Better still, that one report can be shared with other funders, which significantly reduces work for practitioners, while ensuring strong communication with supporters
- Boards can reduce bureaucracy by keep reporting, policies and procedures lean but fit-for-purpose
- Government agencies - we encourage you to visit us in person, make room for us on the tables of power and provide remuneration when you seek our advice

Here are a few examples of funding processes we love:

- Match - Te Puna Taurite - a new online platform designed to be a more equitable, accessible and collaborative funding system. It aims to connect those with funds to those that seek them.
- An East Coast funder collaborative group providing five years untagged funding with one funding agreement which binds both funder and grantee to behave well and no report writing, but visits to the work in the community and strong relationships.
- A community facing team within Auckland Council piloted 'relational reporting' as a way to support organisational leads to report against funding received. Understanding that organisation leads are stretched, Auckland Council staff spend an hour every two months with leads working through a series of questions and then write a report from the conversations which are then shared with funded organisations.
- The Todd Foundation, Spark Foundation and Internet NZ collaboratively supported the first three years of establishing the Digital Equity Coalition Aotearoa (DECA) with untagged funding.
- Waikato Covid response, led by Trust Waikato, and including Hamilton City Council and WEL Energy Trust, had grantees submit one application through Trust Waikato, the CE had delegation from the board so that grants could be made quickly and respond to community need.

PATHWAY FIVE: ENCOURAGE EXPERIMENTATION AND AMPLIFY TRANSFORMATION

What this is about

Systems Change is by definition transformational, but relationship-led innovative approaches are neither quick nor easy and can be a daunting prospect without reliable support structures in place. So how do we amplify Systems Change for a more equitable future that is Te Tiriti-based, connected and community designed? Acknowledging the long-term nature of Systems Change and fostering multiple different ways of approaching challenges is helpful. In turn, this requires acknowledging that not everything will work, encouraging experimentation and accepting the failure of some experiments.

> *There is such joy in seeing journeys of transformation - eg the way a change in thinking shows on a person's face as their worldview shifts, or watching communities learn to navigate the system while being true to themselves.*

To quote George E. P. Box:

> *All models are wrong - but some are useful.*

In 2011, members of the disability community developed the Enabling Good Lives (EGL) approach with the intent of increasing choice and control for disabled people and their families. Trialled successfully in the Waikato, EGL is now poised for national roll-out through Whaikaha, the Ministry of Disabled People.

The EGL approach is a foundation and framework to guide positive change for disabled people, families, communities and governance structures. The EGL approach has eight core principles, a vision and key components to guide positive change based on trusting disabled people and their families to be decision-makers in their own lives and to govern the resources used for their support. Leaders in the disability community developed the Enabling Good Lives (EGL) approach with the intent of shifting power and authority from government to disabled people and their families. EGL is a good example of a community-led movement created on Systems Change approaches in response to oppression. We need more social change like this! Video stories of how empowering this approach is on their website:

www.enablinggoodlives.co.nz

What we can do about it

The key to Systems Change transformation is trying lots of stuff, keeping what works, tweaking and improving, and continuing this process over time. This involves:

For Systems Change practitioners:

- Role model *'giving it a jam'* and sharing stories of both triumph and disappointment
- Share templates, tools and methods of Systems Change (e.g. <u>Niho Taniwha framework for navigating complexity</u>, <u>design thinking</u>, <u>co-design</u>, <u>theory of change</u>, <u>FSG waters of Systems Change</u> and <u>others</u>) while also being aware that all models have limitations (for example some are overly academic and most need to be adapted to ensure they are appropriate for different communities)
- Tell our stories - use blogs, video logs, social media, podcasts and media outlets. *'When people hear one-on-one stories, that's when people feel it and are willing to help and to commit'*

For funders and other supporters of Systems Change:

- Remember that community-led Systems Change work requires taking educated guesses and trying stuff, and not everything will work the way you initially anticipated. Encourage this through giving seed funding for way-finding - and if in doubt support it anyway
- Provide multi-year support for Systems Change initiatives and don't expect instant success. With community feedback informing process and ensuring sustainable progress, the reality is that we may need a 20 - 30 year timeframe to see what grows from the initiatives we seed
- Support the sharing of stories - this can be through funding PR and media support or through PR companies providing pro-bono or discounted advice to the causes you care about
- Media can share our stories and celebrate and honour both successes and things which don't work as planned.

HOPE FOR A MORE EQUITABLE FUTURE: A CALL TO ACTION

It's clear that community-led Systems Change paves the way to a more equitable future for the sizable chunk of our population who most need it.

This is not just of benefit for individuals, families and communities most negatively affected. Well-resourced and led by community over the long-term, Systems Change approaches to chronic and embedded issues can result in better outcomes in health and a lower crime rate, take weight off social services and save taxpayer money. A more equitable society benefits us all.

Our hope is for immediate action on the five pathways and associated actions in this not-white paper to build more positive, community relevant and impactful Systems Change here in Aotearoa.

For immediate action toward increased, improved and more impactful Systems Change the SASS group has developed three checklists of recommended actions organised by the pathways above. One each for System Change practitioners, funders of Systems Change and other supporters of Systems Change.
Each checklist is formatted on a separate page as appendixes.

CHECKLIST OF ACTIONS
FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE PRACTITIONERS

This not-white paper, Voices from the Frontlines: Community-driven pathways for Systems-Change in Aotearoa, brings together the collective wisdom from the frontline of community-led Systems Change equity work gathered through a deep-dive retreat and workshopping process by SASS (Systems-change, Advocacy, Solidarity and Support) - a group of experienced, hands-on community leaders from diverse backgrounds. We are fiercely passionate about Systems Change mahi that is Te Tiriti-informed, community-led, relationship-based and collaborative.

Words are important but action brings them to life. Our plea to you is to take action based on the voices of those who need it most.

Based on the five pathways for change outlined in the paper, we offer this checklist for Systems Change practitioners to action:

1. Enable Systems Change leadership:

☐ Include reflection time and self-care time into our work plans and budget lines

☐ Ask for help and support when needed, and normalise sharing the challenges we face

☐ Strengthen our collective voice by supporting each other to advocate

2. Strengthen relationships and working together:

☐ With community – take a 'nothing about us without us' approach

☐ Within our organisations – devolve leadership and foster radical inclusion and aroha

☐ With other organisations – Build networks, meet regularly, share what we learn, and find opportunities for working collaboratively

3. Address racism, bias and exclusion:

☐ Admit that we don't know what we don't know, build understanding of where we sit in the spectrum of privilege, for example Pākehā privilege and class privilege.

☐ Commit to being life-long learners in this space. In particular, learn more deeply about He Whakaputanga, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Matike Mai constitutional transformation

☐ Listen deeply to and amplify voices of those with lived experience

☐ Engage navigators and mentors from communities to guide this work and remunerate this work properly

☐ Commit to accessibility in both physical and digital spaces

4. Overcome funding and bureaucracy challenges:

☐ Work with funders to explore alternative, collaborative funding models

☐ Share templates, budgets and funding applications within our networks

☐ Communicate openly and honestly with funders, and challenge funders when appropriate

5. Encourage experimentation and amplify transformation:

☐ Role model 'giving it a jam' and sharing stories of both triumph and disappointment

☐ Share templates, tools and methods of Systems Change

☐ Tell our stories - use blogs, video logs, social media, podcasts and media outlets

CHECKLIST OF ACTIONS
FOR FUNDERS OF SYSTEM CHANGE

This not-white paper, Voices from the Frontlines: Community-driven pathways for Systems-Change in Aotearoa, brings together the collective wisdom from the frontline of community-led Systems Change equity work gathered through a deep-dive retreat and workshopping process by SASS (Systems-change, Advocacy, Solidarity and Support) - a group of experienced, hands-on community leaders from diverse backgrounds. We are fiercely passionate about Systems Change mahi that is Te Tiriti-informed, community-led, relationship-based and collaborative.

Words are important but action brings them to life. Our plea to you is to take action based on the voices of those who need it most.

Based on the five pathways for change outlined in the paper, we offer this checklist for Systems Change practitioners to action:

1. Enable Systems Change leadership:

☐ Support retreats and mentoring to strengthen Systems Change leadership

☐ Provide for professional development, paid sabbaticals and backfilling roles

2. Strengthen relationships and working together:

☐ Support the creation of a collaboratively funded agency or hub to support Systems Change

☐ Ensure funding facilitates time and space to connect and build relationships and share learnings

☐ Trust and be led by Systems Change practitioners' assessments of what is needed; avoid imposing your worldview

3. Address racism, bias and exclusion:

☐ Admit that we don't know what we don't know, and build understanding of Pākehā privilege and class privilege

☐ Include reflection time and self-care time into our work plans and budget lines

☐ Listen deeply to and amplify voices of those with lived experience

☐ Engage navigators and mentors from communities to guide this work and remunerate this work properly

☐ Commit to accessibility in both physical and digital spaces

4. Overcome funding and bureaucracy challenges:

☐ Consider supporting navigators who can matchmake and/or support collaboration with other funders so that one application goes to many funders

☐ Provide untagged, multi-year funding for the kaupapa, not the project

☐ Instead of accountability reports, show up and see what is happening

5. Encourage experimentation and amplify transformation:

☐ Provide seed funding for wayfinding - and if in doubt support it anyway

☐ Provide multi-year support for Systems Change initiatives and don't expect instant success

☐ Support the sharing of stories

CHECKLIST OF ACTION
FOR SUPPORTERS OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

This not-white paper, Voices from the Frontlines: Community-driven pathways for Systems-Change in Aotearoa, brings together the collective wisdom from the frontline of community-led Systems Change equity work gathered through a deep-dive retreat and workshopping process by SASS (Systems-change, Advocacy, Solidarity and Support) - a group of experienced, hands-on community leaders from diverse backgrounds. We are fiercely passionate about Systems Change mahi that is Te Tiriti-informed, community-led, relationship-based and collaborative. Words are important but action brings them to life. Our plea to you is to take action based on the voices of those who need it most.

Based on the five pathways for change outlined in the paper, we offer this checklist for Systems Change practitioners to action:

1. Enable Systems Change leadership:

- [ ] Boards, friends and family - ensure expectations are realistic, encourage leaders to take holidays and have downtime, and watch for signs of burnout
- [ ] Businesses - consider providing care-packs, retreat vouchers and other give-aways to support those in the trenches of Social Change

2. Strengthen relationships and working together:

- [ ] Boards - develop board-to-board relationships with other Systems Change organisations
- [ ] Media - showcase stories of collaboration

3. Address racism, bias and exclusion:

- [ ] Admit that we don't know what we don't know, and build understanding of Pākehā privilege and class privilege
- [ ] Listen deeply to and amplify voices of those with lived experience
- [ ] Engage navigators and mentors from communities to guide this work and remunerate this work properly
- [ ] Commit to accessibility in both physical and digital spaces

4. Overcome funding and bureaucracy challenges:

- [ ] Boards - keep reporting requirements, policies and procedures lean but fit-for-purpose
- [ ] Government agencies - visit us in person, make room for us on the tables of power and provide remuneration when you seek our advice

5. Encourage experimentation and amplify transformation:

- [ ] PR companies - provide pro-bono or discounted advice to causes you care about
- [ ] Media - share our stories, celebrating and honouring both successes and things which don't work as planned

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GET IN TOUCH

We welcome any questions about the action points in the checklists, your feedback and involvement; please reach out to Anjum Rahman (anjum@inclusiveaotearoa.nz) or Anissa Ljanta (anissaljanta@gmail.com).

NGĀ MIHI NUI
THANK YOU!

The SASS Group from left to right, starting at the top:
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