MAKE THE MOVE

Shifting how the public sector works with communities
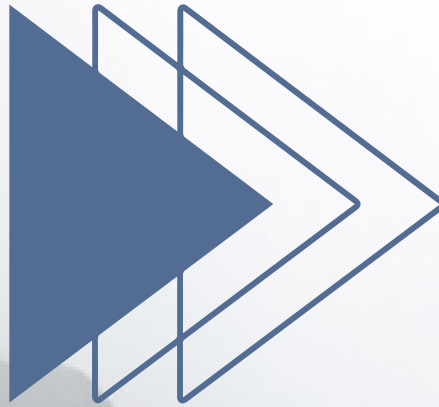
POWERDIGM
COMMUNITY CHANGEMAKERS

June 2023

Inspiring Communities
Local wisdom²

Acknowledgements

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Interviewees

Anna-Jane Edwards	Cook Islander, Ngāti Māhanga Manukura General Manager, Amotai
Byron Terris	Principal Consultant, Iron Duke Partners
Dan O'Halloran	Biodiversity Ranger, Department of Conservation
Di Rump	Ngāi Tara o Mua Ūpoko o te Ika, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Apa Chief Executive Muaūpoko, Tribal Authority
Madison Burgess-Smith	Senior Consultant, Iron Duke Partners
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Maria English	Chief Executive Officer, ImpactLab
Martin Rodd	Tangata Tiriti Co-Chair, Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance
Sarah Yarrow	National Manager, Living Water Partnership

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Descriptors used in this report

'Community' with an emphasis on 'place'

There are many types and ways of defining community. This report focuses on communities of 'place' interpreted here as geographic locations. Communities referred to in this report are groups of people who have a shared interest and/or a common identity tied to a physical place where they live, work, play, study or to which they whakapapa. Community includes tangata whenua (see below) and tangata tiriti (non-Indigenous people of Te Tiriti o Waitangi).

'Tangata whenua' with an emphasis on 'mana whenua' and 'hapū'

'Tangata whenua' translates in English to 'people of the land'. Tangata whenua have special status as Indigenous Peoples with rights articulated in He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirene, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. 'Iwi' is used here as a descriptor for tribe, 'hapū' for sub-tribe/kinship group and 'mana whenua' is used to describe Māori with whakapapa links to a geographic location.

'Government' with an emphasis on the 'public sector' and 'public policy'

Terms like 'government',[1] 'public sector', and 'public policy' are used relatively interchangeably when referring to the role of the state and public institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand. These terms are considered in their broadest sense in this resource and are inclusive of all government, policy, funding and governance functions.[2] When referring to 'the public', we mean all people living in Aotearoa. 'The public' always includes tangata whenua, but references to tangata whenua do not always include 'the public'.

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[1] 'Government' has a capital letter only when it is preceded by 'the' and refers to the Government that is elected as opposed to general references to government (lowercase 'g') agencies and institutions.
[2] This aligns with the definition used by the Productivity Commission (New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2022, p. 13).

We are Inspiring Communities

We work alongside communities who are doing what they can to make the places where they live even better places to learn, work, rest and play in. These people create positive outcomes in a place and need to be included in decision making. We share local wisdom and practice-based evidence to inform public policy and systems change. In every place we work, we acknowledge and are informed by the aspirations of mana whenua and affirm tino rangatiratanga Māori and mana motuhake.

Our vision, for all communities to flourish, is underpinned by Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Since 2008, we have championed a growing community-led development movement in Aotearoa with a strong focus on building capability and effective locally led practice and change. Our consulting arm, Powerdigm guides people in government, locals and business to use community-led practice to create effective relationships, collaborative and sustainable outcomes for our communities.[3]

Our vision is for all communities to flourish

For communities to thrive, people must have what they need to live a good life. Our vision of communities flourishing includes all aspects of social, economic and environmental wellbeing. We see community wellbeing as both an outcome and an influencer of public policy. This means good public policy can increase community wellbeing and that flourishing communities can influence and improve public policy. It is this relationship, between public policy and community wellbeing, that is the focus of this report.

[3] To learn more see: www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz and www.powerdigm.org.nz

How public policy can better serve communities – four insights

The following insights provide a call to action for public policy leaders to focus on creating the conditions for community-led responses not solutions. The insights are grouped into four themes that emerged from our interviews:

1. Creating the conditions for Te Ao Māori-led change

2. Repositioning policy workers as conduits and facilitators
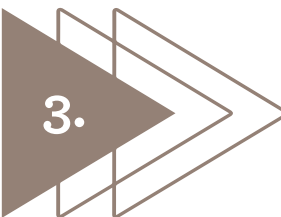
3. Creating the conditions for ethical and trusting relationships

4. Creating the conditions for innovation, learning and adaptability

Why this report and why now?

> "We tend to underestimate the capability and capacity and resourcefulness of our communities – and in fact providing them with the resources and the information to get on and do the right thing can lead to enormous success."
>
> Sir Ashley Bloomfield, then Director-General of Health (Media Conference, 2022)

This report builds on the learning articulated in Shaping the Future, which shares stories of community responses to the lockdowns during COVID-19 (Inspiring Communities, 2020).

Shaping the Future identified six shifts that, if embedded into central and local government ways of working, could help improve responses to future crises and help address the many and evolving challenges we face as a nation.[4]

Responses to recent flooding caused by extreme weather events and Cyclone Gabrielle have again demonstrated how, in times of crisis, it is communities who are well placed to respond to people in need when resourced to do so. However, three years on from the start of COVID-19, while the Government may be ready to adopt ideas about community-led development, change is slow and the public policy system is not well set up to enable localised approaches.

References to the power of community, hapū and iwi responses may appear in high-level vision statements and in government strategies and plans, but this is not yet translating into change on the ground. This report responds to people in communities who ask, when will the Government listen to us and start to value and invest in local ways of working? When will they make the move and shift how they work with communities?

This report sets out ideas about how the public policy system might better enable community-led development. Like many other government systems around the world, the public policy system in Aotearoa is under extreme stress. The system was designed in a different era to address different issues, with different assumptions, expectations and rules.

It can no longer operate effectively under that set of assumptions and rules and needs to adapt to an evolving context. The collapse and renewal of the public policy system presents an opportunity. It is an opportunity for people working in the public sector to adapt the way they approach their roles and responsibilities now, in order to shape a more ethical and sustainable future.

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[4] The six shifts recommended in Shaping the Future are: decentralise; recognise and respect difference; value people and relationships; embed collaboration; build local economic resilience; and tolerate more risk. See: https://inspiringcommunities.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Shaping-The-Future.pdf

What is this resource about?

This report adds a layer of expertise and perspectives to the knowledge shared in Shaping the Future (2020). Rather than providing a formulaic template or recipe for success, this report highlights how public policy can create the conditions for communities to flourish. It aims to help the public sector work better with communities to design and implement policy that responds to their needs and aspirations. It provides feedback to government officials and publicly critiques, affirms and advises how to better support locally led approaches. The report aims to encourage those working in government to use and resource expertise beyond the public sector and professional consultants. By sharing stories and insights from leaders who work at the intersection of government and communities, we hope to inspire, inform and influence change.

If public sector leaders are serious about all communities across Aotearoa flourishing, time and resources will need to be re-prioritised. We understand this is challenging for people who are time-poor and working in a system that values different things. Our hope is that the ideas in this report will make it easier for public servants to champion change in the public policy system and enhance the impact and value of their work by creating space for diverse local actors.

Who is this resource for?

This resource is for public sector leaders and practitioners in central and local government agencies. Leaders such as policy and operational managers influence the content and quality of policy development and implementation and the way policy teams work, including who they listen to. These leaders are dedicated, hardworking and time-poor. They may know how to enable community-led development but revert to organisational norms when operating under extreme time pressure. Many public servants would like to place more value on community-led change in their work, and some may even be experts on this in their own communities, but they struggle to translate this intent into genuine engagement and change in their daily work because of the constraints they operate under. This report is for them.

Elected officials – like politicians, ministers, mayors, councillors and members of Parliament – also influence the public policy system. This report signals approaches that could make their contributions more effective and their challenging roles more rewarding. Many people working outside the public sector also influence public policy, such as iwi and hapū leaders, business leaders, academics, community leaders, consultants and media commentators. They help shape and enable communities to thrive and so this report is for them too.

Ultimately, of course, while they might not be its primary readers, we write this report for the champions who step up and contribute to their communities. To those who give their time and energy to care for the people and places they love, this report is for you.

Foundations and principles that guide this work

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the foundation and guide for community-led development in Aotearoa.

Community development is fundamentally about place. Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a constitutional document establishes the relationships, rights, responsibilities and obligations that people have to live ethically in Aotearoa, on lands where Māori are tangata whenua and Indigenous rights holders.

Inspired by the 'spheres of influence' (Independent Working Group on Constitutional Transformation, 2016), this resource and the work of Inspiring Communities are located in the 'relational sphere' (fig. 1) and are guided by the concept of equity (Article 3, Te Tiriti).

The content of this resource is also located in the Kāwanatanga sphere because of the focus on the role of the public service, which is governed by the Crown (Article 1, Te Tiriti). This resource acknowledges and affirms (but is not located in) the Rangatiratanga sphere (Article 2, Te Tiriti).
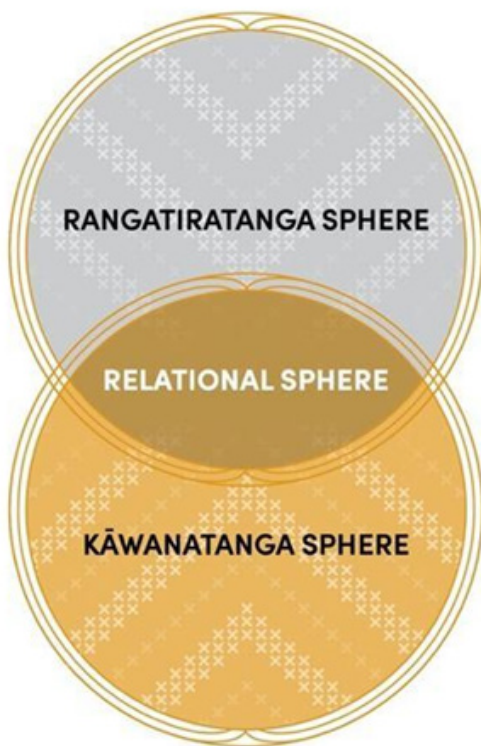

Fig 1. Spheres of influence from Matike Mai, image cited in Human Rights Commission, 2022, p. 100.

Inspiring Communities advocates for a model of place-based community-led development that has historic origins in post-colonial social movements (Nilsen, 2021) and in Aotearoa is guided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Te Pou Manawa (fig. 2), visually represents the woven relationships of this work. Our work is also guided by the principles of growing from shared local visions, building from strengths, working with diverse people and sectors, growing collaborative local leadership, and learning by doing. This is further explained in Appendix 1.
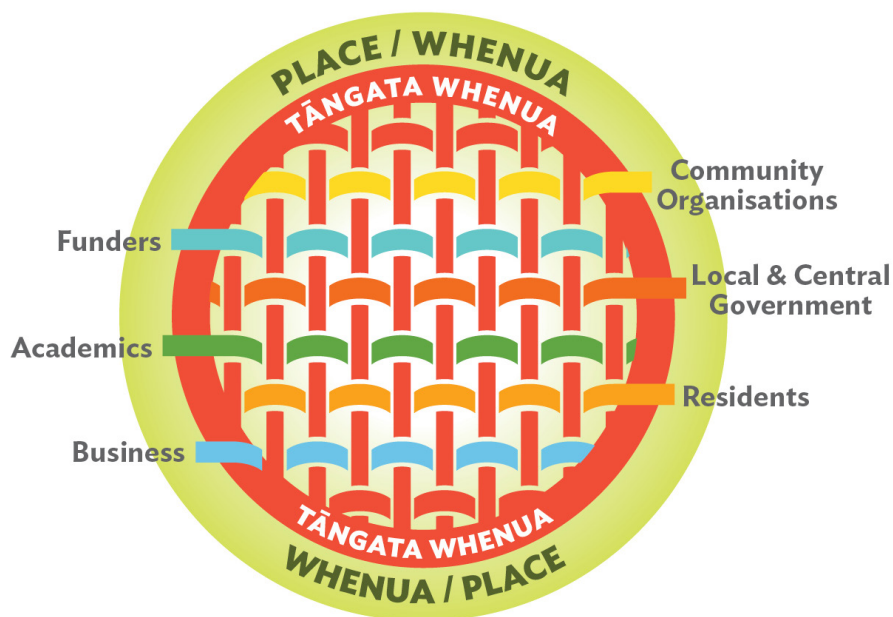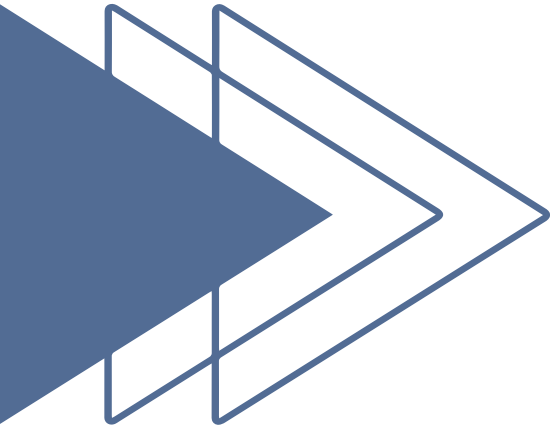

Fig 2. Te Pou Manawa, Inspiring Communities

Insights:
Recasting public policy as creating conditions not just solutions

We interviewed leaders who work at the intersection of government and communities and asked them how public policy might better respond to community needs and aspirations. We analysed the interviews for common themes. The insights from the interviews build on what we learned from Shaping the Future and are informed by our continued learning and practice in supporting community-led development.

A common thread in the interviews was the idea that public policy could have greater impact if it focused on creating the conditions for community-led responses rather than creating and choosing solutions for communities. This overarching insight supports a devolving of power from central and local government to communities. It is an approach that requires humility and good faith. It affirms tino rangatiratanga Māori and aligns with the principles of community-led development, systems thinking, complexity theory, and the shifts identified in Shaping the Future (2020).

> "Share resources and incentivise ideas from communities. You have to be paying attention to the conditions, not just the solutions."
>
> Gael Surgenor, workshop participant

The following insights provide a call to action for public policy leaders to focus on creating the conditions for community-led responses not solutions. The insights are grouped into four themes that emerged from our interviews:

1. Creating the conditions for Te Ao Māori-led change

2. Repositioning policy workers as conduits and facilitators

3. Creating the conditions for ethical and trusting relationships

4. Creating the conditions for innovation, learning and adaptability

1.
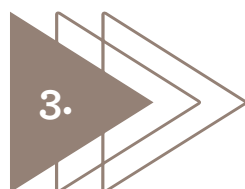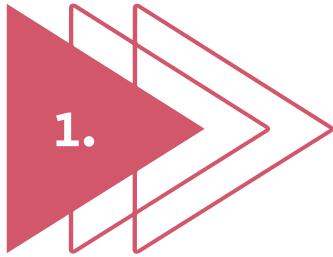
Creating the conditions for Te Ao Māori-led change

Letting go of reductionist thinking, individual approaches and short-term planning >>
Moving towards collective, intergenerational responses and centring nature

> "I think if we all focused on how to embed Te Tiriti o Waitangi. If we walked alongside that journey it would show us that the Indigenous way is the right way. Te Ao Māori can lead the way. That would help our community.

> Tara Moala (Waikato-Tainui, Ngāti Paoa,
> Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa, Ngā Rauru), workshop participant

Place-based community development takes place on land that is intrinsically linked to the legal and cultural rights of tangata whenua in Aotearoa. An understanding of mana whenua is of particular importance because in all geographic locations there are mana whenua whose rights and aspirations must be prioritised in place-based community work.[5]

Both tangata whenua and tangata tiriti leaders we spoke with also talked about how creating the conditions for Māori-led change can influence community-led initiatives to centre nature and focus on collective wellbeing and intergenerational change. These concepts are central to Te Ao Māori and mātauranga Māori and are a shift away from the foundations of a public policy system that is designed to privilege Western ways of knowing, being and doing. This learning challenges leaders in the public sector to consider the spheres of influence model (see fig. 1) and shift public policy towards ethically and responsibly creating the conditions for practices that embed Te Tiriti o Waitangi and are guided by mātauranga Māori. This starts with orienting to ethical relationships (see page 29).

[5] See: https://inspiringcommunities.org.nz/ic_resource/he-manawa-maori-a-maori-heart/

Vanessa Sidney-Richmond (Taranaki, Te Aitanga a Mahaki) is Pou Whirinaki of Te Tihi o Ruahine Whānau Ora Alliance. Vanessa shared how Māori responses to COVID-19 are tino rangatiratanga in action:

"I would assert that Iwi/Māori stood up systems and processes immediately and did not wait for government to give the 'go ahead' as our people needed us to do that. COVID lockdown was a time for us to be agile and we suddenly became distribution hubs, communicators of COVID information, and kai deliverers day in and day out. These are the stories that weren't captured by the Government and when it was all over and done with, Iwi/Māori did not receive the recognition they should have for the mahi we did in our communities while waiting for government to sort themselves out."

Vanessa's story is a call to action for the Government to better recognise, affirm and resource Māori-led and place-based responses. In doing so, the public sector could shift how it works with tangata whenua and with communities.

Pākehā environmental leaders Martin Rodd and Sarah Yarrow shared how partnering with iwi, hapū and Māori organisations and being guided by mātauranga Māori have enabled communities they work with to lead responses that centre nature and prioritise long-term, collective wellbeing. This has changed the way Pākehā-led organisations approach environmental challenges.

Martin Rodd is the tangata tiriti co-chair of Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance. The Alliance is a collaboration between iwi, councils and the Department of Conservation across the top of the South Island, who are working together in a Te Tiriti-based co-governance arrangement to achieve conservation goals. Martin shared how engaging with iwi has helped shift the work of the Alliance to consider regional biodiversity more systemically. For example, in a project to restore the marine environment from the Buller to the Wairau, iwi leaders encouraged a wider focus that included inland areas and neighbouring mountains:

"Through this collaborative approach, particularly with the approach that iwi take which is really a system focus of mountains to the sea where everything is connected, you get to work seamlessly across boundaries to make most sense of what is right for place."

Sarah Yarrow, National Manager of the Living Water Partnership, a collaboration between Fonterra and the Department of Conservation to improve water quality, shared similar reflections:

"They [the Government] do the policy and then they do the regulations and that tends to focus on fixing one problem at a time, so that might be a focus on reducing nitrogen or phosphorus reaching waterways. It's a very reductionist, Western science and Euro-centric way to think. And then the policy approaches tend to be individually focused – trying to address solutions farm by farm or person by person. A major lesson out of Living Water is, you are so much better to get together collectively and do things at a catchment or a landscape scale. That's how we are going to achieve things at the scale and pace needed. Current policy approaches don't support this way of working. So our advice back to the Ministry for Environment might be that policy settings that support collective action and approaches are needed for change."

Martin and Sarah's stories spotlight how creating the conditions for Te Ao Māori-led change – through collaborating, co-governance arrangements, changing policy settings and applying Indigenous and systems thinking – can better enable place-based change in a public policy system designed by and for Western worldviews.

How you can apply this learning

1.1   Invest in and support your team to embed the Māori Crown Relations capability framework into their professional development and team plans. Build in time, accountabilities and rewards for progressing within the framework.[6]

1.2   Apply Te Tiriti o Waitangi critical analysis tools to all policy work.[7]

1.3   Ensure mana whenua outcomes, leadership and authority are planned for early and engage mana whenua inclusively and broadly on all matters that are of interest to and impact Māori in place. Ensure mana whenua perspectives are reflected in systems, policies and processes (as endorsed by mana whenua).

1.4   Invest in the conditions required to adequately support Māori to work in your team and/or pay for Māori expertise as and when required. Plan for this early in budgets and timeframes.

1.5   Identify who mana whenua are (and where they are in Treaty settlement processes) in the area where your policy is to be implemented. If it is national policy, consider how it needs to be adapted for rohe. Identify who holds the relevant iwi or hapū relationships and seek advice early on how to best proceed.

1.6   Privilege mātauranga Māori ethically and responsibly. Utilise Matike Mai (2016) and academic sources, seek advice from scholars and experts, ensure you have the right permissions and authority to proceed.

1.7   Adapt your policy settings to centre nature and prioritise collective (not only individual) wellbeing.

1.8   Make time for long-term, intergenerational thinking, planning and investment. Shift governance and policy settings to suit longer timeframes where needed. How can your team let go of urgent short-term thinking and instead create conditions for long-term stewardship of people and places?

1.9   Measure how you are creating conditions for Te Ao Māori-led change and embed accountabilities and rewards for doing so.

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[6] See: https://www.tearawhiti.govt.nz/tools-and-resources/public-sector-capability/

[7] See: https://www.tearawhiti.govt.nz/tools-and-resources/contemporary-treaty-of-waitangi-issues/
  or https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1468796819896466

2.

Repositioning policy workers as conduits and facilitators

Letting go of government defining and solving problems >> Moving towards government as conduits for place-based solutions

We learned that public policy workers can better respond to the needs and aspirations of communities if their roles are recast as conduits or facilitators of change rather than as creators, governors or managers of change. This idea – that people working in the public sector are conduits (of funding, resources and information) and facilitators (of ideas and relationships) – is grounded in the understanding that communities are key decision makers about local issues and are actively involved in making their places better. This approach requires public policy workers to be agile enough to get behind and support the things that hapū, iwi, whānau Māori and communities care most about.

Anna-Jane Edwards (Cook Islander, Ngāti Māhanga) is the former manager of UpTempo at The Southern Initiative, a learning incubator that works alongside Pasifika families from South and West Auckland to understand what it takes to grow intergenerational wealth and wellbeing through workforce progression.[8] UpTempo's partnership with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) started six years ago. Anna-Jane talked about how public servants from MBIE are tasked with convening and coordinating:

"In our contract it clearly states that MBIE is a partner and that their role is to bring all the different government agencies to the table and to feed the learnings that we are getting from our programme into those different agencies. So they convene and coordinate conversations with different policy shops and others that have some decision making over resource and programming. That is set in the governance structure and the programmes that are a part of this initiative… it isn't a traditional funder-fundee relationship with MBIE; it is a partnership and that means that you need to be responsible for convening, for coordinating, for affecting change across your professional spheres of influence and organisation, just as much as you giving us the money and time. That is quite a different mindset and still a work in progress."

Anna-Jane's story illustrates the valuable role public servants can play in enabling locally-led change by convening, coordinating and connecting people and acting as relationship brokers. Those working in the public policy system can use resources to bring diverse people together to support innovative community-led ideas. They can also help communities access and influence decision makers like chief executives and ministers. Anna-Jane's example shows how community intelligence can influence change in government organisations when the structures are set up to enable this.

[8] For more see: https://www.uptempo.nz/

Dan O'Halloran is a biodiversity ranger for the Department of Conservation in the Bay of Islands. Dan offers another example of how government staff can broker relationships and share information, helping support community and voluntary groups:

"The best way you can help sometimes is to say [to groups struggling], this group over here, here's what they did. We'll show you how they dealt with it and help with the connecting."

Anna-Jane and Dan's stories provide a provocation, to recast the role of government away from defining and solving problems for communities to creating the conditions for whānau and communities to work with others to define their own solutions. If people working in public policy were to act more as conduits, this might also help shift the task of ministers and politicians away from choosing solutions and making management decisions. This could free them up to get agreement on big-picture changes, use flexible and relational processes when commissioning work and then partner with communities for results.

How you can apply this learning

2.1 Instill a culture of being in service to communities by encouraging and rewarding servant, collaborative and wayfinding leadership styles (Spiller et al., 2015) and approaches that value and enable local solutions for local challenges.

2.2 Invest in and recruit for facilitation skills. Write these skills into core competencies in job descriptions, advertisements, accountabilities and professional development plans. Look for and reward the practice of these skills.

2.3 Convene and coordinate diverse people to come together around common goals as needed. Devolve decision making about solutions to communities. Think fewer fixed advisory groups and one-off consultations, and more relationships and fluid collectives.

2.4 Measure how you are convening and coordinating to increase the value of this approach and encourage behaviour change.
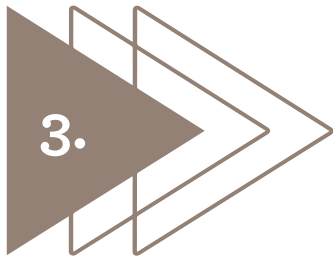
3. Creating the conditions for ethical and trusting relationships

Letting go of fear, guilt and shame >>
Moving towards humility and reciprocal, trusting relationships

In the interviews we learned how important it is that people who work in public policy build relationships with people in communities, but that this can't (and shouldn't) replace those relationships already held in communities. We learned that for public policy to better enable communities to thrive, public servants need to understand how their roles relate to the communities they are aiming to serve. Understanding the context of people and communities in place will improve policy approaches and outcomes.

In Aotearoa, this requires not only knowing who mana whenua are, but what this means in terms of the rights mana whenua have as Indigenous Peoples and the deep and interconnected relationships tangata whenua have to the land and environment. People working in public policy must also understand the position and responsibilities that come with working for the Crown in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We learned that listening to and collaborating with people and groups outside of government – and measuring the quality of those relationships – can lead to more innovative and locally adaptive solutions. We also learned that recruiting for relational skills in teams leads to better quality and more enduring policy approaches.

Di Rump (Ngāi Tara o Mua Ūpoko o te Ika, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāti Apa) says that what her organisation (Muaūpoko Tribal Authority) lacks in money and resourcing they make up for in relationships and knowing their community. Di says iwi Māori proved to government agencies how effective they are in responding to community needs during COVID and after Cyclone Gabrielle because they hold long-standing and trusting relationships that can be activated fast:

"Even with Gabrielle. We just did it. Established structures like the CDEM couldn't hold a candle to our response agility. In fact, we didn't wait for their meetings they came to ours because we were already up and running and had our finger on the pulse. We could just call on whoever we needed to and would find out who needs what because we already have the relationships."

Di worries about government trying to replicate iwi and hapū authority and ways of doing things when they should instead resource and partner with them in order to help everyone:

"Partner with us, don't take over… it is paternalistic. If there's a gap, the Government tends to assume that must mean no one is doing it. No. It means we would like to but at the moment we have all our fingers and toes in the dyke!"

Di's story is a reminder of the importance of positionality and place in policy development and implementation. Local contexts, histories and relationships mean that 'one size fits all' approaches to public policy do not work. In Di's rohe, the hapū network is a sophisticated mechanism for community-led development that has been there for generations.

Understanding who the champions are in communities, in hapū and in iwi and resourcing their needs and aspirations is more ethical, sustainable and cost-effective than creating new initiatives. The leaders we spoke with shared ideas about how government agencies and businesses can help communities to lead. One of these ideas from Di was resourcing communities through paid internships and secondments:

"We'd like to see Crown agencies, SOEs and corporates take social responsibility to the next level. Like moving from corporate sponsorship to transform communities. We are the most incredible secondment opportunity! It's useful for corporates and businesses to have volunteer days. I mean it's great but if you want to do something in a community that makes a transformational difference, then give your skilled future leaders to that community for a year. And understand that it is an immense and often life-changing opportunity to give to those you value as future leaders."

Sarah Yarrow shared that one of the key lessons learned from Living Water has been how fundamental it is to resource the time it takes to establish relationships in order to achieve social and environmental outcomes that are place-based and enduring:

"I think the way that relationships are established and the terms of reference that you work to is so fundamental. The 'mana enhancing agreement'[9] that was brought to the table by Reconnecting Northland... they set that up right from the start with the way we would work together. It's not just the standard memorandum of understanding. It's really shifting the way we work. It's not just what you are working on, it's the way that you work together... setting things up the right way, everyone knowing why they are there, having that values discussion first."

Sarah shared that another lesson learned from the Living Water partnership was that the way people in big organisations and agencies work is just as critical as what they do:

"There's a whole transformation that needs to happen about how we approach the way we do work for the environment… it's the in-between bits. There's the 'what' we do – so for us that's the technical things, you've got an engineer and you've got an ecologist and you've got a freshwater fish specialist and that's all the 'what'. But there is all this 'how', this glue that brings it all together. I think that is what is seriously lacking across all of it. More how."

Sarah's story is a reminder of the benefits of investing in and recruiting for relationship skills:

"One of the Living Water lessons we are saying from Living Water to DOC is, for every technical person who works in your organisation, you need a person who has a focus on people. You need to get that re-balancing… you need to understand history and have emotional intelligence and engage and listen. It's all of those 'soft' skills. We call them soft but it's just being a good person in the world isn't it. They'll [Government] fund the constructing of the wetland, they will fund the monitoring, they'll fund the other things you need to buy… but communities talk about this a lot… they need the resourcing for the person who supports the social process that brings people together to make it all happen."

9 For more info see: https://www.livingwater.net.nz/assets/pdf/MEA%20for%20Northern%20Wairoa%20Partnership-%20Fully%20signed%20Final.%20-%20April%202018.pdf?k=c58b9ffe28

Madison Burgess-Smith and Byron Terris work for Iron Duke Partners, a public policy advisory firm that operates at the intersection of business strategy and public policy. Maddy suggested that investing more in relationships like corporates do could help:

"If you were partnering with a big corporate, you would have a relationship manager... you would have someone that you built an enduring relationship with and who would be able to articulate what your mahi was and be your champion inside their organisation. [In Government] it's just so ad-hoc and they view the relationship as transactional as opposed to developing an enduring relationship."

Anna-Jane Edwards talked about enablers such as having a long-term relationship with government and having that conversation up front about what partnership looks like. She also talked about having the right people in the room:

"We had someone in MBIE that we really got along with. They were our tribe. They saw the value of UpTempo. Then we had someone else from a different agency that didn't quite get it but still stayed in the room and have come on the journey with us and now are 100 percent committed to it. Having that key person or people that really get it and are able to bring others into the room and hold them there."
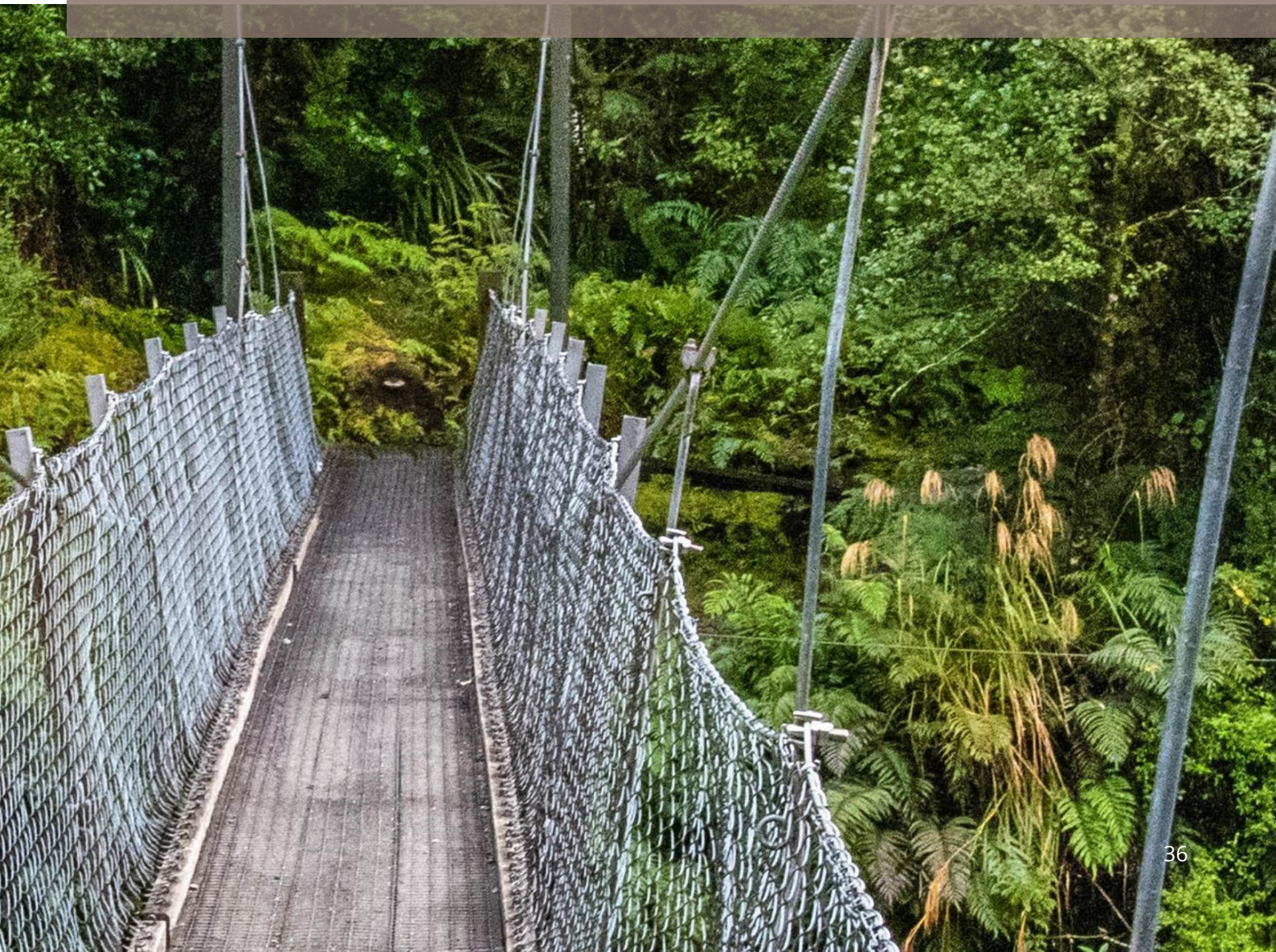
A recurring theme in the interviews was the importance of creating the conditions for relationships of trust and accountability. One of the conditions that emerged was allowing enough time for relationship building and creating flexible funding models. Sarah Yarrow had this to say:

"The Government needs to know that what they are funding is going to work. That's why they have reporting and metrics. But I think the whole funding model needs to be reviewed and could be quite different. I get why they do it, but why don't you trust people? They literally live there, they know what they are doing, rather than getting them to write a report, why don't you go and sit down with them once every four months and have a cup of tea and see how it's going? I don't know what the solution is but I know that [the reports and paperwork], it's not getting the money to the right places in the right way."

These stories shared above help to answer how people working in public policy can support effective responses to the challenges communities are facing.[10] We heard how critical it is to look for what is working and to work flexibly so that resources can be directed to where trusting relationships are held in communities.
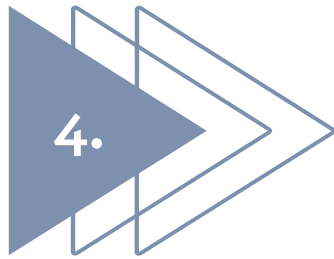
How you can apply this learning

3.1 Know and be able to articulate your place in relation to others, including your ancestry and what you can offer professionally to tangata whenua and communities.

3.2 Practice the art of active and deep listening with humility and respect. Invest in professional development to build this communication skill in your team.[11]

3.3 Research and identify who in your team/agency holds relationships with community leaders and consult with them on how to proceed.

3.4 Invest in and recruit for relationship skills in your team and arrange secondments to support communities in ways they direct will offer the most value.

3.5 Secure relationship agreements that include shared values and clear roles and responsibilities.

3.6 Adapt commissioning and procuring processes to be more relational.[12]

3.7 Create conditions for trust-based funding models, locally led investment decisions and accountability mechanisms.

3.8 Build in time and costs for monitoring and evaluation practices that are about continuous learning and are relational, collaborative, open and transparent.

3.9 Commit to and plan for longer term resourcing, e.g. 5-10 years rather than 1-3 years. Make contracts flexible enough to adapt to changes over time.

3.10 Measure the quality of relationships and include the results in performance monitoring frameworks so that the way government does its work (not just what it does) is recognised, measured and valued.

[10] For more ideas see: https://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/media/1412/relational-approach-community-social-innovation-tsi-march-2019.pdf

[11] See: https://inspiringcommunities.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Active-Listening-Checklist.pdf

[12] See: https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/planning-strategy/social-sector-commissioning/ssc-action-plan-2022.pdf

4. Creating the conditions for innovation, learning and adaptability

Letting go of perfectionism, fear of failing and fixed mindsets >>
Moving towards imagination, adaptability, transparency and tolerance for risk

> "Senior managers and CEs have the power to support doing things differently. Foster curiosity and imagination and invest in new capabilities. Otherwise you are just going to get the same results."
>
> Gael Surgenor, workshop participant

We learned that public policy designed in central or local government is only useful if it can be applied in local contexts and can adapt and change as communities learn what works.

We learned that when processes are open and transparent, when information is accessible, when feedback loops are in place, and when impacts are measured and evaluated, public policy can more easily shift from rigid cookie-cutter delivery to facilitating conditions for creative and adaptable community responses.

Manu Caddie (Ngāti Pūkenga, Ngāti Hauā) is based in Ruatoria, Gisborne. Manu has community, government and business experience and is a champion for Indigenous and sustainable solutions that support biodiversity, health and well-being. Manu talked about the importance of having fair, open and transparent processes to bridge the gap between public policy and community needs and aspirations. He talked about the Land and Water Forum as being a valuable model that aimed to bring diverse perspectives together.[13]

This process required confidence from diverse stakeholders that the process would be fair and the facilitation would be independent of interest groups. Manu talked about some of the enablers and principles required to bring different interest groups like this together:

> "Having a set of rules or tikanga around how things will work. So it's not necessarily a majority rules situation. It might be trying to build real, true consensus and everybody is going to have to give up a little bit, you know, and some people might have to give up more than others to get that consensus."

[13] For more see: http://www.landandwater.org.nz/Site/

Manu spoke about the importance of having open and accessible information as a way to build trust between the public sector and communities and to create the conditions for shared learning. He used the example of what happened when oil and gas exploration was being discussed in his region:

"Council put up all the information related to consents and applications in public places as early as possible and I think that's an important principle and practice for public agencies to do. So it doesn't rely on OIAs that take forever and can be challenged or denied or whatever... being open and honest. It's not always convenient or politically expedient but it means outcomes will be more enduring or won't end in litigation."

Anna-Jane talked with us about how UpTempo is generating continuous learning between communities and government by embedding feedback loops. This is an example of how a central government agency, in this case MBIE, has recognised they do not have the answers and has invested in and contracted for learning, not just outputs. Anna-Jane explained how UpTempo can test and trial different things and regularly feed what they learn into government agencies and organisations. They have some flexibility in how they measure and report and the indicators they use.

"I recognise that we need to have those things that politicians understand and in this case that is numbers. Numbers of people we are getting into the workforce because UpTempo is seen as an active labour market programme. So we are actually having to work double-time to meet all of those things and also working hard to lift up all the learning that we are getting across the programme in a way that government can understand and do something with."

Maria English is the CEO of ImpactLab and shared similar reflections. ImpactLab uses data to measure and grow social impact in communities.[14] Maria shared stories about people who have identified solutions to problems in their communities and then, using data, have managed to influence public policy and increase funding opportunities.

Maria argues that public policy (and funders and investors) can better enable community-led responses by creating conditions for the collection and analysis of quality data and embedding feedback loops to share information and learning.

Maria shared the example of Gandhi Nivas, who provide early intervention and prevention services for men identified at risk of committing harm in the family home.[15] In this example, by using data to better illustrate locally identified problems and solutions, Gandhi Nivas were able to influence the way Police and primary health services work with families in Tāmaki Makaurau and create the conditions to reduce incidents of family violence.

"No one sat down and said we're going to come up with this new theory or policy for how we are going to address family violence. It was people in the community… it was a woman who was running community health stuff who was literally seeing the problem, seeing the person… it's a bottom up model. You start by changing what actually happens on the ground and then you have to change the policy to enable that. Whereas the other way you do it is you start with the policy as a lever for changing what happens on the ground. But I think those examples where it goes in the other direction you get the right sort of policy change because it is driven by what's needed and what is actually happening."

Madison Burgess-Smith and Byron Terris support social investment approaches to public policy and commissioning for outcomes. They have observed innovative ideas from community organisations being slowed down or failing because of barriers such as government time-frames (and political cycles) not being sufficient for the time it takes to prototype, low risk tolerance, and a lack of trust in communities to manage funding and projects. They talked about the benefits of partnering with local businesses as a community-driven approach and being more open to experimenting with innovative approaches to public policy.

"One of the easiest ways to encourage risk-taking behaviour or new ways of thinking in the public service is to carve entire teams out. Pick them up and move them and get them working separately to their parent organisation to be able to encourage that culture of actually I'm going to take a bit of a risk here or I'm going to give this group some funding or I'm going to give this group an exemption just to see how it works."

The stories in this section indicate how people working in the public sector can invest in and orient towards learning approaches and create conditions for innovative and adaptable community responses to complex challenges.

How you can apply this learning

4.1 Ensure public policy systems, processes and practices are open and transparent and that diverse communities can access information.

4.2 Embed feedback loops for continuous learning between policy teams and communities. Build in reflection time and ways for learning to be applied and for plans to change.

4.3 Invest in and create conditions for communities to gather data and measure outcomes to support learning and innovation.

4.4 Reframe and tolerate more risk. Consider the risk and count the cost of not doing anything or continuing business as usual.

4.5 Collaborate with others and draw on the expertise of community, iwi, hapū and local business partners when designing and implementing policy to ensure expertise outside the public sector is effectively leveraged.

4.6 Create the conditions for monitoring and evaluation to enable continuous learning as well as acting as accountability tools. Shift mindsets from communities being accountable to government to government being accountable to communities.
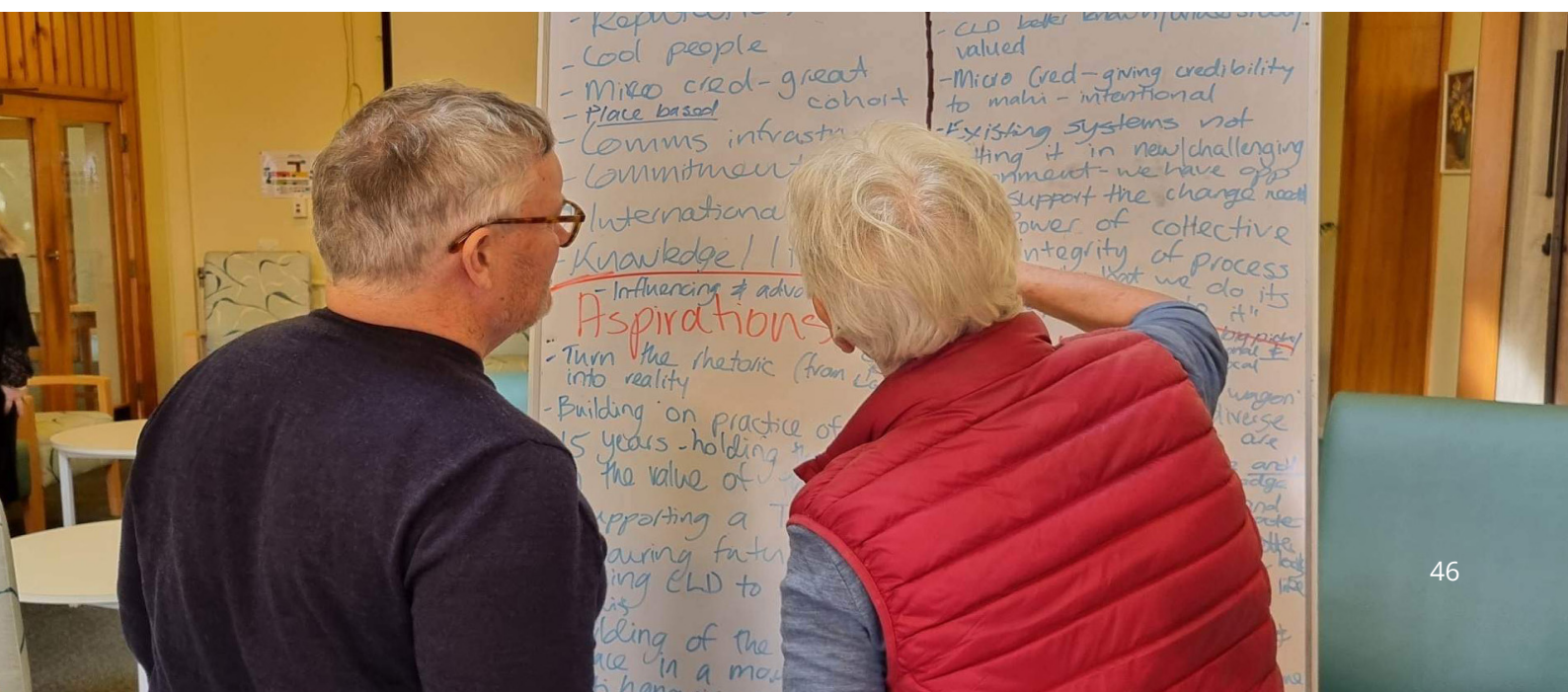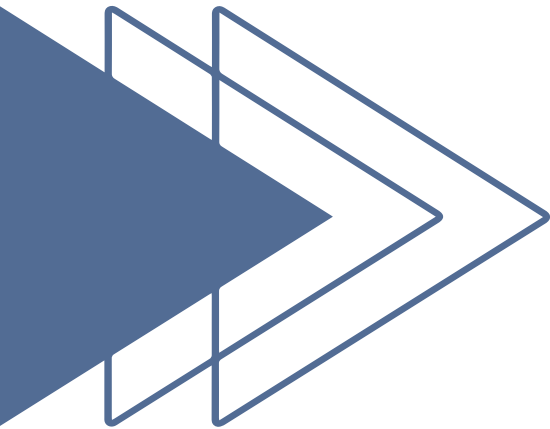
How did we go about this work?

This report extends the research undertaken in Shaping the Future (2020). The insights presented are primarily informed by data gathered from eight online interviews held in March 2023. The interviews were conducted with leaders who work at the intersection of public sector policy and community-led development (see list of interviewees on page 2).

These leaders were chosen for their diverse backgrounds and experiences. Interviewees were asked about their observations and experiences of what works and what gets in the way in terms of public policy enabling community-led development. The interviews were recorded with consent and stored on the author's computer.

The interviews were analysed to identify common themes, which were then distilled into insights and used to develop ideas that people working in public policy can apply.

The findings in the report are also informed by the results of a report design workshop held by Inspiring Communities in Te Whanganui-a-Tara in March 2023 (attendees are listed on page 2). This workshop with ten change-makers tested the project concept, and helped to develop a research question and issues tree.

The research question formed from this workshop was: "What can the public sector do to design and implement policy that responds better to community aspirations and needs – and how should they do that?" The insights are also informed by literature and a range of knowledges and fields of scholarship including studies of leadership, Indigenous knowledges and systems thinking that have influenced the Inspiring Communities team.

While the author and editors of the report have taken care to respect references to Te Ao Māori and mātauranga Māori, they wish to acknowledge this is a Pākehā-led project and therefore reflects a Pākehā worldview.

Conclusion

"Change that challenges power is never easy."

Moana Jackson (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou), cited in Tukaki, 2022

Despite good intentions and some significant progress, a yawning gap remains between the needs and aspirations of place-based communities and the way in which the public policy system currently operates.

But all is not lost! This report shines a light on examples where public policy is helping to create the conditions for communities to lead in innovative ways. Be it protecting waterways, reducing family violence or improving employment opportunities for Pacific aiga, these creative, community-led responses continue to inspire hope.

This report is a call to action. We ask the people working in the public policy system to create the conditions for community-led change so all our communities can thrive.

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Te Pou Manawa
Community-led Development in Aotearoa

What is it?

Community-led development strengthens the vitality of communities by activating and weaving the contribution of everyone connected to a place/whenua.

Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou,
ka ora ai te iwi
With your contribution and mine
the community will flourish

In Aotearoa, Te Tiriti ensures the histories and world views of tāngata whenua shape relationships, actions and outcomes in local communities.

Whatungarongaro te tangata
toitū te whenua
People disappear from sight,
the land remains

Te Pou Manawa

A principles-based approach

Rather than a service or model, community-led development (CLD) is a way of thinking and working that's underpinned by five principles.

Inspiring Communities has crafted these principles from working with communities. They continue to evolve.

Ngā Mātāpono/ CLD Principles
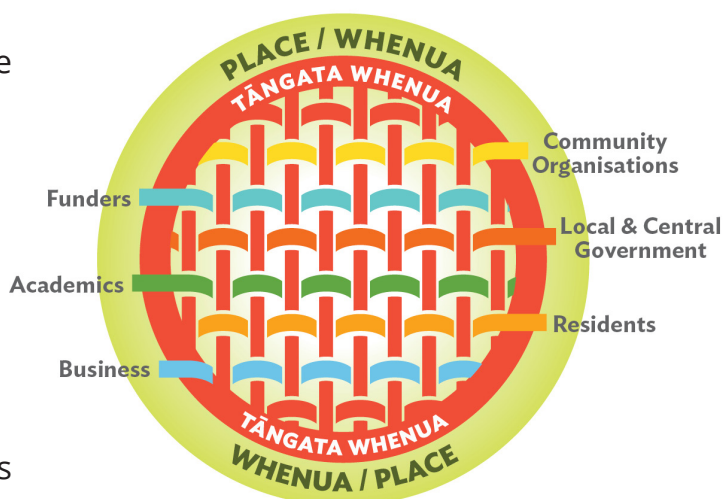
Grow from shared local visions

• Learn about tāngata whenua, their history and aspirations.

• Understand who was in this place, who is in this place and who will be in this place.

• Build plans with those who live, work, care, play, and invest in a place – the principle of te ahi kaa.[1]

• Tailor-make solutions that reflect local ambitions, goals and contexts.

• Grow a shared sense of optimism and collective ownership of the future

Build from strengths

• Everyone has a contribution to make.

• Value residents as 'experts' in their place.

• Proactively involve people who are frequently ignored.

• Recognise the strengths tāngata whenua bring and build respectful relationships.

• Value community assets. Use what you've got to help get what you want.

Work with diverse people and sectors

• Foster connections between groups who don't usually work together.

• Support the aspirations of local whānau, hapū and iwi.

• Ensure residents are actively involved in all aspects.

• Build relationships between neighbours.

• Encourage networking between community-led initiatives locally, regionally and nationally.

Grow collaborative local leadership

• Seek leadership from across the community – everyone is a potential leader.

• Value different cultural approaches to leadership.

• Support local people who are doing things and connect them to others to grow their effectiveness.

• Invest in developing skills and capacity of local leaders.

• Celebrate local leaders and community achievements.

Learn by doing

• Plan and work adaptively.

• Build in time for structured reflection to understand what's working and what's not.

• Use data and insights to measure impact. Document and share progress widely.

• Embrace small steps that contribute to transformational change.

• Use local practice-informed evidence to support system changes locally and nationally.

[1] Te ahi kaa is a term used to describe the home people – the ones that live on their whenua, that keep the home fires burning, that keep their place, particularly the marae, alive.

*Mā mua ka kite a muri, mā muri
ka ora a mua*
*– those who lead give sight to those
who follow; those who follow give
life to those who lead*

He kai kei aku ringa
*– there is food at the end of
my hands*

*Mā whero, mā pango,
ka oti te mahi*
*– by red and by black the
work will be completed*

*Ehara taku toa he toa takitahi,
engari taku toa he toa takitini*
*– success comes from the strength
of the collective and not of the lone
individual*

I orea te tuatara ka patu ki waho
*– a problem is solved by
continuing to find solutions*