
A Fair Chance for All

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Inspiring Communities Feedback

About the submitter

Inspiring Communities (IC) promotes and grows locally-led change because this achieves sustainable, effective solutions. Our vision is for all communities to flourish, for no community to be left behind.

We are a team of specialists in community-led development, working with communities, government and agencies to support local places to become even better places to live, work, and invest in. Since 2008 we have championed New Zealand's growing community-led development (CLD) movement. We currently engage a network of 4900 people, groups and organisations across Aotearoa, with a focus on building CLD capability and effective locally-led practice. During 2021, 1794 people from across Aotearoa were part of IC training, mentoring, learning and events programmes.

Our Te Whakawhanake ā - Hapori ki Aotearoa framework (see appendix 1) has been developed from learning with and alongside communities in Aotearoa for the last 13 years. Inspiring Communities CLD principles and practices are nationally recognised, for example by DIA and also internationally.

While providing a range of public good funded activities and CLD support, Inspiring Communities also offers a range of services through our consultancy arm Powerdigm.

For more on Inspiring Communities see www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz

Our Feedback:

Inspiring Communities commends the Productivity Commission for your “A fair chance for all” Interim Report. It is refreshing for a number of reasons:

- In reframing your enquiry question to “what keeps persistent disadvantage in place”, you have revealed and clearly named some of the core underlying barriers to transformational community-change within the public sector that need to be addressed . Eg. How to share power, work

relationally and with new mental models (enabling, strengths based, collaborative, decolonising, trauma informed, generative, equity focused etc).

- Persistent disadvantage is about much more than lack of income. Implementing a broader and integrated wellbeing lens to your work has meant that other core underlying issues, such as exclusion, lack of identity, hope, connection and belonging, are openly surfaced. These key aspects have frequently remained hidden when policy is framed from a traditional economic lens
- It acknowledges that while more collaborative and coordinated services are important – they are not of themselves a panacea. Government can not commission its way out of intergenerational disadvantage. Tweaked financial policy or upscaled services and programmes are not enough. Effective investment must also focus on whanau, hapū and community development. Given the longstanding trauma present for many people, families and communities, time to build relationships and trust is essential. We notice that the communities who could most benefit from a whanau and community-led approaches in Aotearoa are often the least equipped to apply for funding to support their own development. Significant pre work to build relational connections, support mechanisms and organising capacity and infrastructure within these contexts is thus essential. This work relies on trust, an ability to operate effectively in nuance, uncertainty and chaos, providing some stability for those you're working with to enable them to move from a place of helplessness to optimism and small stepped change.
- It recognises rangatahi, whanau, hapū and communities themselves must be actors in the process of addressing intergenerational change, not just passive recipients of yet more services OR more co-design processes. While better enabling the voices of lived experience into policy design processes, better engagement in itself is not enough. Engagement needs to transition into 'activation' whereby those impacted by intergenerational disadvantage are supported to both participate in and lead change processes

We agree that capability building within the public sector is also essential for the system change recommendations you've noted to be enabled. We observe many public servants keen to work in more adaptive, enabling and strengths-based ways but they often lack the skills and knowledge about what 'working differently' looks like. Supporting this energy requires concurrent focused investment in both capability building and accompanying process/system barriers that are identified in real time as new practice is embedded and scaled. In terms of capability building, we encourage a broad range of approaches to be progressed – go beyond usual 'tool boxes' to encourage secondments into hapū, iwi, whanau and community groups, organisations and networks and creation on ongoing opportunities for listening, reflection, and problem solving with people/organisations in local communities working to overcome intergenerational disadvantage.

We support your suggestion that a new a nominated Wellbeing Agency be established and dedicated to/accountable for ensuring public sector wellbeing policy, intents and approaches are actually

embedded in public service processes and practices. A learning and performance support mandate need to be inherent in the Agency's approach. Rather than set this up as a small stand alone unit, we suggest the wellbeing function is held in either DPMC or the Public Service Commission to ensure that a cross cutting approaches to public sector practice/investment are enabled, with responsibilities integrated into the KPIs of both departmental CEOs.

We would also encourage Productivity Commission to explore the key role that intermediaries like Inspiring Communities, and many others, can play in supporting innovative local development approaches across multiple communities. The key roles of Field Builders and Field Catalysts is increasingly being recognised as a key part of the transformative change mix. These intermediary system supports work in the middle space – lightly, but intentionally supporting and connecting across a number of locally-led initiatives, feeding practice learning, evidence and insights up to central systems while concurrently supporting capability building, shared learning and implementation across a number of locally-led but centrally enabled initiatives.

For more see:

https://ssir.org/articles/entry/field_catalysts#

<https://www.bridgespan.org/about-us/for-the-media/new-bridgespan-group-research-examines-how-funders>

https://ssir.org/articles/entry/how_field_catalysts_accelerate_collective_impact

https://inspiringcommunities.org.nz/ic_resource/field-catalyst-thinking/

We note that the Canadian federal government is currently investing in this kind of infrastructural support to address related complex issues – for example, it has partnered with the Tamarack Institute of Community Engagement to support the implementation of Youth Futures (place based approach to address persistent youth unemployment and disadvantage).

For more see: <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/communitiesbuildingyouthfutures>

System Shifts that we know work to enable wellbeing in Aotearoa

Inspiring Communities produced Shaping the Future after the first COVID 19 national lockdown. It outlines lessons learned, experiences and what was achieved during that period. It also outlines 6 shifts developed from the 70+ interviews we did with people including Government officials that remain relevant and pertinent to the enhanced public sector response you're recommending. The shifts outline how to support and activate local systems, hapū and iwi to lead in collaborative place-based ways.

Access Shaping the Future full report below:

https://inspiringcommunities.org.nz/ic_resource/shaping-the-future-2/

Conclusion

Inspiring Communities thanks The Productivity Commission for the opportunity to comment on your Interim Report and look forward to your final report in early 2023. We strongly support your interim recommendations and look forward to seeing their implementation within the public sector. They are essential changes that must be enabled.

In closing, we are reminded of the 'learning from doing' wisdom that retiring Director General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield shared at his final media conference earlier this year.

“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.”

Ashley Bloomfield, final media conference as Director-General of Health, 27 July 2022.

Appendix 1:

About Community-led Development – Te Whakawhanake ā Hapori – ki Aotearoa



Te Whakawhanake ā-Hapori ki Aotearoa 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.

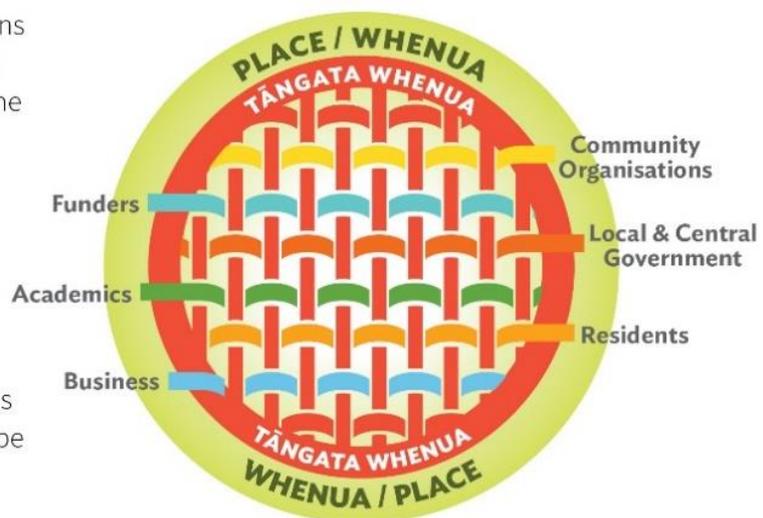
*Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou,
ka ora ai te iwi*

*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 Whakawhanake ā-Hapori Weaving our connections and contributions

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 kaa¹.
- Tailor-make solutions that reflect local ambitions, goals and contexts.
- Grow a shared sense of optimism and collective ownership of the future.

**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

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.

He kai kei aku ringa

– there is food at the end of
my hands

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.

**Mā whero, mā pango, ka
oti te mahi**

– by red and by black the
work will be completed

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.

**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

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.

I orea te tuatara ka patu ki waho

– a problem is solved by continuing to
find solutions

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.