



Manawatahi Six Month Strategic Learning Report

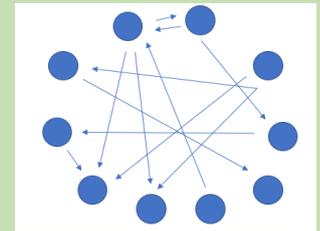
A report sharing learnings from the first six months of a pilot project to develop and test the Participatory City Approach in Tāmaki Makaurau

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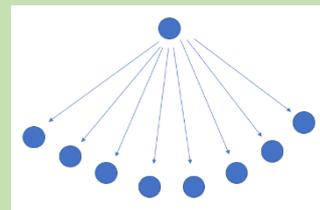
Why This Now?

For thousands of years humans lived in small groups, interacting, solving problems, and living mostly on a peer to peer basis. As western society developed, governments and corporations emerged, and citizens took on a more passive role, complying with laws, and having their needs met by services delivered, contributing into society mainly through labour, expenditure of wages, taxes, and rates. This social system has led to growing inequity, social isolation, and environmental crises to name but a few of our most pressing challenges.



Peer to peer interaction

But this is starting to change. The Participatory City Approach is an exciting new systemic approach to Community development and Community innovation, grounded in the insight that more ordinary people in neighbourhoods and localities around the world are getting together to create value in a more collaborative peer to peer way: a (re)emergent phenomenon described as “participation culture”.



Service delivery from governments and organisations to people

The Participatory City Approach creates a support platform to make it easier for ordinary people to initiate and get involved in collaborative “participation projects” based on every day activities like cooking, making, learning, eating, and more. (Find out more about this approach in [“The Illustrated Guide - Participatory City”](#))

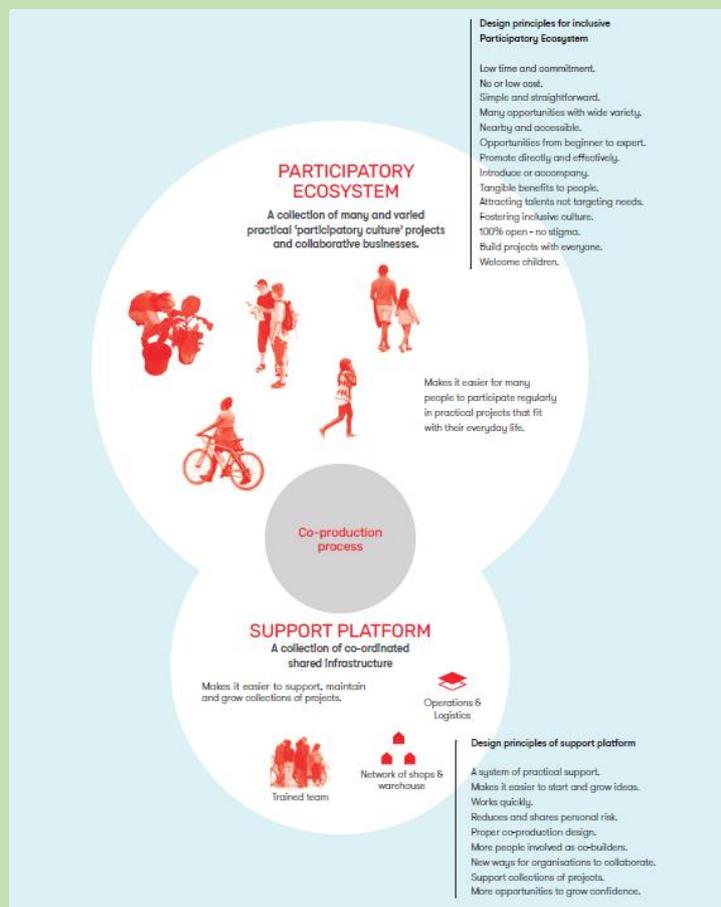


Image from [“Made to Measure” Report](#)



Tāmaki Makaurau – Auckland Context

Connected Communities is a department at Auckland Council which includes community development, community centres, arts, libraries, and more.

Hamish Lindop, Innovation Capability Coach in the Community Innovation team in Connected Communities wanted to test the Participatory City Approach in Auckland and in Connected Communities, to learn more about how it could work and validate its effectiveness in this context. He worked with the Onehunga Oranga Hub team (which includes Onehunga Library and Community Centre and Oranga Community Centre) to develop and test the approach in a pilot project, initially a year in length with potential to extend and develop further. This report documents the learnings from the first six months of this pilot project.

About Onehunga & Oranga

Onehunga and Oranga are diverse communities with a range of ethnicities and languages spoken. Socioeconomic conditions vary with some areas experiencing advantage and some with disadvantage. This creates a varied mix of local residents.

Ethnic groups for people in Onehunga Central, 2006–18 Censuses

	2006 (%)	2013 (%)	2018 (%)
European	46.0	51.6	52.8
Māori	10.1	9.0	11.9
Pacific peoples	23.8	21.3	18.5
Asian	23.5	26.8	28.1
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African	1.5	2.3	2.9
Other ethnicity	6.4	1.4	0.8

THE SUPPORT PLATFORM IN A NEIGHBOURHOOD



1
The support platform is a team of friendly people who know a lot about growing participation culture projects.



2
They are based in a high street shop in the middle of the neighbourhood.



3
The shop is bright, homely and welcoming... and a little unfinished here and there, leaving room for others to bring things along.



4
The shop has exhibitions of ideas from other places for inspiration, and many projects that you can take part in locally.



5
It also has cups of tea and biscuits.



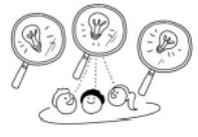
6
The team works with local people to map all functional spaces nearby that could be home to new activities.



7
The team talks to local businesses and organisations to see how they can work to co-design projects with local people. Given an opportunity people are always very generous.



8
The team talks to people that come into the shop with ideas - and together they turn them into projects to test - joining up people who can work together.



9
All ideas are tested and given the best opportunity to succeed. They develop to next stages if local people are interested and participate. People vote with their feet.



10
Projects are designed with people to incorporate the 10 design principles. Equipment and spaces are drawn together to kickstart projects.



11
Team gives encouragement throughout, reducing the sense of risk, and also reducing risk itself by helping the project ideas succeed.



12
The team and local people work together to create 100s of opportunities to participate. This happens very quickly.



13
Together they create local festivals and events to show what's possible ...



14
... workshops and co-design sessions that get people and organisations excited about project ideas.



15
They organise health and safety training and insurance.



16
They design newspapers, posters and flyers and send email newsletters.



17
They work with projects to build websites, set up twitter and facebook accounts etc.



18
The team keeps records of projects and participation - documenting & measuring everything that happens.

25

From [Illustrated Guide to Participatory City](#)

What we Did

We adapted the Participatory City Approach for the context of Onehunga Oranga Community Hub, with the team in the two community centres and the library communicating the opportunity to participate, engaging residents to encourage them, hear their ideas, and codesign participation projects together.

April – June 2022

- Capability building sessions and setting up systems to support the approach
- Beginning to socialise and engage residents about the opportunity to get involved

July – December

- Launched three participation projects in July, co-developed and launched four more over the coming months
- Stopped all projects in December for the Christmas break to reflect and prepare for the following six months of pilot



Staff Capability Building

A core team of six staff have received training and are receiving ongoing coaching support to develop their capability in the Participatory City Approach, in areas such as:

- Promoting the approach through multiple channels
- Engaging community members onsite within the hub and out in the wider community
- Understanding the fundamental nature of the approach and explaining it in accessible and appealing language to community members
- Inviting and encouraging them to share their ideas
- Supporting and collaborating with them to co-develop and co-produce these ideas into participation projects
- Reflecting on and learning from experience to gradually strengthen capability and effectiveness

Manawatahi is a new opportunity for you to meet people and make friends doing everyday activities together: cooking, eating, growing, repairing, making, playing, and more!! Come to one of the activities below or talk to our friendly staff about your ideas anytime!

COMMUNITY MORNING TEA

When: Starting 25th July, Mondays & Wednesdays 10am to 11am
Where: Onehunga Community Centre & Library Foyer, 83 Church Street, Onehunga

Come meet locals, share your ideas and find out how to get involved at our free community morning teas. We'll have tea, coffee, biscuits and a friendly atmosphere waiting for you!

GARDEN WITH US!

When: Wednesdays 3:30pm
Where: Onehunga Community Centre Courtyard

We are growing kai vegetables – roll up your sleeves, get your hands dirty and make some friends!

COOK WITH US!

When: Starting 28th July, Thursdays 3:30pm
Where: Onehunga Community Centre Community Kitchen

Come cook with us and bring a container to take some home. Let us know if you are coming via email if possible.



Systems Developed

A number of systems have been developed to support the approach:

- Budget and expenditure management to enable the procurement of simple materials to enable the success of participation projects, and lower barriers to participation
- Multi-channel communications and promotion strategy developed and being tested
- Registration method being developed to capture the diversity of participating residents
- Reflection, evaluation, and measurement system developed to capture the effectiveness of the approach and continuously learn, improve, and adapt

Inputs and Outputs

Inputs	
Staff time	20-30 Hours/Week
Budget used	< \$2,000

Outputs	
Participation Projects	7
Individual Project Sessions	55
Total Attendances	595



Fruit & vegetables grown and harvested by residents 50+

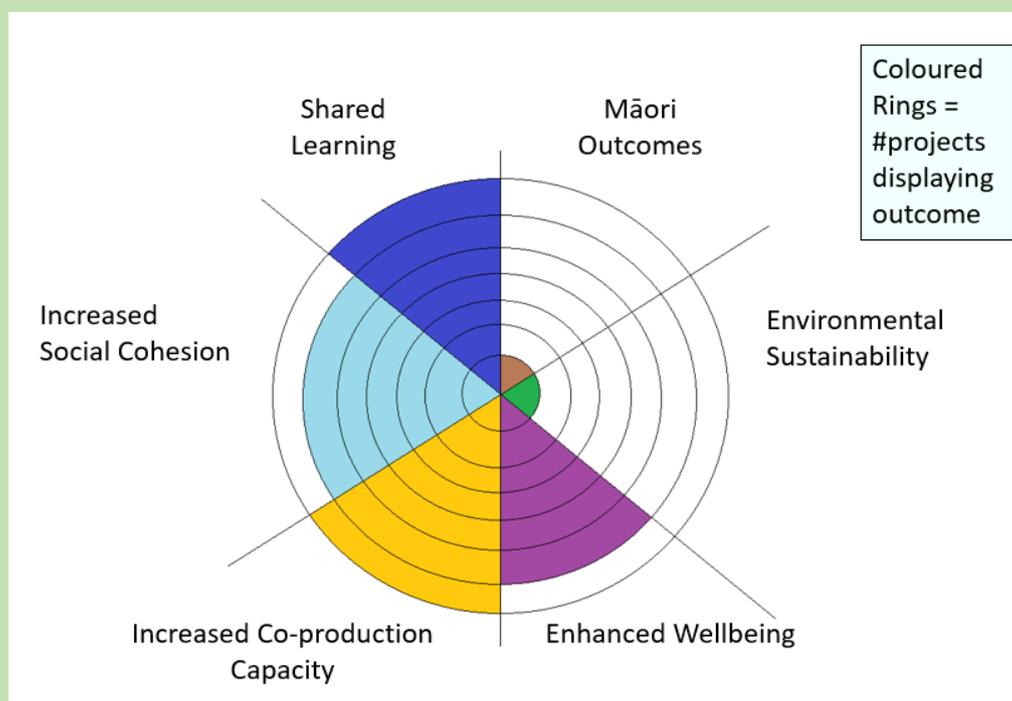


Communal Meals made and consumed by residents 10



Communal Cups of tea and coffee 130

Ecosystem Outcomes



Outcome Definitions

- **Increased Social Cohesion:** The project shows evidence of drawing together diverse community members: diverse age, ethnicity, background, creating increased cohesion between diverse residents. This in turn is borne out by evidence to create many benefits to community.
- **Increased Co-production Capacity:** The project shows evidence of residents increasing their capacity and capability to collaborate and create value together in some way
- **Shared Resident Learning** The project shows evidence of residents learning skills and knowledge from each other in different domains
- **Enhanced Wellbeing** The project shows evidence of enhancing the well being of participants who show and express joy, satisfaction, engagement, stimulation, a sense of belonging, and other positive feelings
- **Improved Māori Outcomes** The project shows evidence of creating positive outcomes specific to Māori e.g. reinforcing or increasing community knowledge, capability, and awareness of Māori culture
- **Increased Environmental sustainability** The project shows evidence of increasing environmental sustainability e.g. increased community kai sovereignty, interest or capability in growing own food, etc.



Challenges

- The approach does require significant investment of time and energy by staff, as well as some investment of budget, but the staff had existing service delivery commitments to balance with investing in the pilot project.
- It takes time for community members to understand the opportunity to be involved in a participation project, and build their motivation and participation habit.
- It was a steep learning curve for the coach and the whole team grappling with the new way of working involved, including a high degree of adaptability required as projects morph and change and different residents contribute in different ways

Strategic Learnings

There were many significant learnings which we could glean from the first six months that begin to validate many of the assumptions of the approach as it was done in Barking and Dagenham, and also create new learnings important to the place context of Tāmaki Makaurau.





Insight 1: Indications that the Approach builds Social Cohesion in a “Radically Inclusive” way

We observed that residents who were diverse in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status found the opportunity to take part in participation projects appealing and engaging. It was also notable how those who would normally be most marginalised engaged with sessions, especially “Creative Kōrero” sessions where barriers to participation were extremely low: sit down and have a cup of tea or coffee, maybe play some boardgames, share ideas if you feel like it.



Insight 2: The Approach builds Co-production Capacity in Residents

We regularly observed big and small ways residents were increasing confidence, sense of agency, and capability in making collaborative contributions across all projects, for example:

- A tween-aged participant sharing her favourite recipe and then leading the group (including adults) in a shared cooking session
- Children facilitated to think about vegetables and fruit they'd like to grow, plan the garden, and then plant and grow the garden
- Diverse residents sharing ideas for participation projects which sometimes led to projects being co-produced



Insight 3: Indications that Māori Residents find the opportunity Engaging and Appealing

Several Māori residents were keen to share their ideas and get involved, sharing ideas like Reo Māori learning, Manu Aute (traditional kite) making, fried bread cooking sessions, and spontaneously making cultural contributions like leading a karakia before partaking of a shared meal in a “Cook With Us” session.

After a community morning tea, we invited a couple of residents to the kitchen to wash up the cups with us. One of them, an elderly Māori gentleman commented that this made it feel “like being back on the marae up north”.

This resonates with the findings of the Mii’kmaw Native Friendship Centre who are developing the approach in Halifax, Canada, centering on indigenous Mii’kmaw people, and Truth and Reconciliation (see further reading p. 24 for details).



Insight 4: All Projects Demonstrated Immediate Practical Benefits to Residents

Whether it's hot food, mutual support, fun, a warm social environment, or something else, residents generally gained immediate practical benefits from participation in any given session, making sessions immediately rewarding and a positive reinforcing experience



Insight 5: Approach yielded Excellent Ratio of Inputs: Outputs: Outcomes

Since the team involved had significant commitments to existing delivery this meant that the time and energy they could invest in the pilot was limited, and yet with that relatively small investment of time and energy, small but measurable improvements in social outcomes were observed in developing and testing the Participatory City Approach through the first six months of this pilot.

If investment in the approach were increased, the “multiplier effect” in this impact ratio is likely to lead to a significant increase in positive impact

Project Directory

Creative Kōrero

Project Sessions: 9

Attendances: 120

About the Project: This project was started by the hub team as a way to invite residents to connect over a cup of tea or coffee, get to know each other, for the hub team to tell residents about the opportunity to coproduce with them and other residents and for residents to share ideas. The team has noticed that this is an opportunity for often marginalised community members to connect in a safe space, and residents have contributed in different ways: food for morning tea, cleaning up and doing dishes together with the hub team.



Cook with Us

Project Sessions: 10

Attendances: 138

About the Project: The project began with a number of diverse residents initiating an interest in doing cooking. The hub team designed the project similar to the “great cook” programme in Everyone Everyday, with different hub team members and residents taking turns to host a session by sharing a recipe and leading the group to cook it. Meals have then been shared between cooks and others present in the Onehunga community centre and library.



Garden with Us

Project Sessions: 8

Attendance: 65

About the Project: This project began with engagement around youth week, where children also started to share their ideas and communicated their desire to do gardening. The hub team facilitated the children to decide and plan what they'd like to plant in the soil around the courtyard and some planter boxes were procured for more planting space. Extra seedlings came from Waimaahia Library. Other community members have gotten involved and some of the veges have been used in the cooking sessions. For many residents it is their first time to touch soil or be involved with gardening.

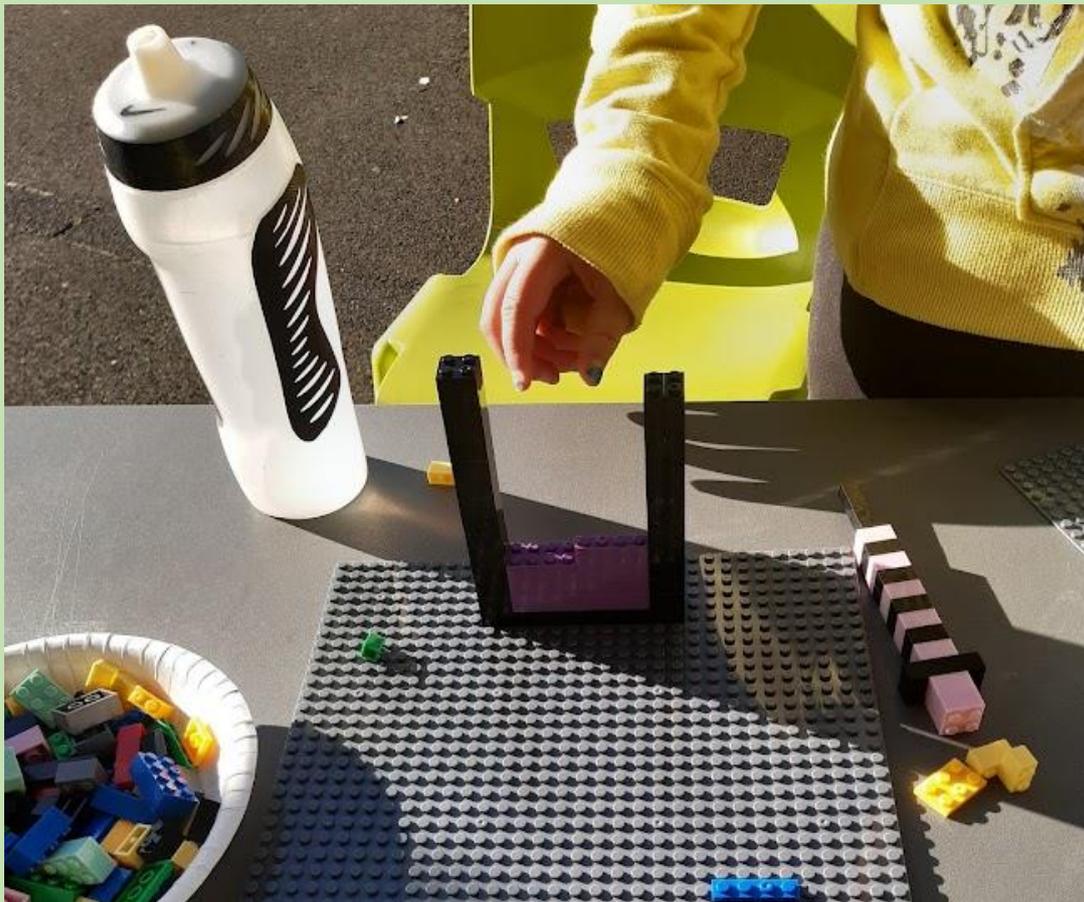


Lego for Everyone

Project Sessions: 13

Attendances: 123

About the project: this project was started by the Oranga team as a way to get started with the participatory city approach, having fun, relaxed and open sessions where residents of any age can connect over tinkering and playing with lego. A wide variety of ages and walks of life have engaged with the sessions at different times and the lego provides a relaxed setting for residents to connect as well as engaging and growing creativity and collaboration.



Seedling Swap

Project Sessions: 1

Attendances: 20

About: A member of the hub team saw that Pakuranga library had done a similar seedling exchange that was quite successful. She talked to local residents who indicated interest and arranged a trial session that was well engaged with.



Games Cafe Unlimited

Project Sessions: 9

Attendances: 88

About the Project: This project started with a number of local children communicating that they are interested in tabletop gaming and would like to have regular sessions together. A hub team member facilitates the sessions and supports children and young people to connect together over different games.

Writing Group

Project Sessions: 4

Attendances: 13

About the Project: This project started from the hub team knowing over time of the interest of a number of residents interested in writing, so organising them and getting them together to have regular shared writing sessions.

Further Reading

The Illustrated Guide - Participatory City – A good starting point to understanding the Participatory City Approach - <http://www.participatorycity.org/the-illustrated-guide>

Introductory Video - [link](#)

Tools to Act – In depth year two report from the Participatory City Foundation in Barking and Dagenham, London - <http://www.participatorycity.org/tools-to-act>

Halifax Progress Report – report detailing work by the Mii’kmaw Native Friendship Centre to utilise the approach for indigenous Truth and Reconciliation - <https://www.halifaxiseveryone.ca/progress-reports>

Want to know more?

Get in touch with Hamish Lindop, Innovation Capability Coach, Auckland Council

Hamish.lindop@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/hamishlindop/>