ENABLING LIFE IN VACANT SPACES

A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO EVALUATING HOLISTIC WELLBEING IN DISASTER RECOVERY CONTEXTS

FINAL REPORT

JULY 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Measuring and communicating the holistic value of community wellbeing initiatives is often difficult, time consuming, and depending on the method, can miss important intentions and outcomes. But without some form of criteria and evaluation, communities and decision makers may not know what to prioritise and invest in. This report outlines two approaches to assessing the intentions and outcomes of the non-governmental organisation, Life in Vacant Spaces (LiVS), in Ōtautahi Christchurch. Ōtautahi Christchurch presents a useful case study for wellbeing as it continues to recover from the physical and psychological trauma of earthquakes. These earthquakes disrupted senses of safety, and trust in existing institutions. At the same time, this disruption enabled new possibilities. LiVS is a charitable trust that brokers spaces for community grou ps, creative projects, social enterprises, and start-ups.

Each year, LiVS prepares a report detailing some of its outcomes, but like many charitable trusts, has struggled to communicate the value of their work in terms that make sense to funders and those unfamiliar with the wellbeing outcomes of transitional placemaking. Previous methods of measuring and communicating LiVS intentions and outcomes have focused on the number of projects supported, the number of inquiries converted into projects, and the area of land activated. However, the value and wellbeing outcomes of what LiVS does goes beyond these metrics.

We used interviews, participatory, and archival methods to qualitatively identify the intentions and outcomes of the organisations and projects LiVS has supported. We then used two tools, the Community Economy Return on Investment (CEROI) and the Mauri Ora Compass to categorise the social and ecological intentions and outcomes of LiVS work for individuals, groups and wider Ōtautahi, Christchurch. Broadly, the findings show how LiVS enable and support a diverse range of projects that contribute to the city, people's wellbeing, the environment, and generations to come.

The CEROI helped to identify the range of investments (including time, people's energy, and money) that go into LiVS supported projects, and their underlying intentions (including; environmental wellbeing and social connection). The Mauri Ora Compass uses the concept of mauri (the life force inherent in all things) and

helped identify where outcomes occur; whenua ora | wai ora (regenerative ecologies), hapori ora (connected communities), ōhanga ora (circular bio economies), kainga ora (healthy homes), waka ora (active and accessible transport) and hihiri ora (moving toward carbon zero energy). The method and analysis highlighted that outcomes were most apparent in supporting hapori ora (connected communities), kainga ora (living carbon storing buildings), ōhanga ora (circular bioeconomies), and whenua and wai ora (regenerative landscapes).

Climate change and other events will continue to cause disruption in urban centres and elsewhere. The role of place-making organisations such as LiVS will have a growing importance to help build hapori ora (connected communities) around Aotearoa New Zealand as natural and social disruptions increase. The CEROI and Mauri Ora Compass can be used to identify and communicate intentions and outcomes, and thereby help communities and decision makers identify what they may wish to prioritise. This innovative methodology moves away from individualising and reductionist assessment methods, and provides a holistic and engaging communication tool for communities, funders, and social enterprise.

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INTRODUCTION

FESTA 2016, We Have The Means.

Photo: Jonny Knopp, Peanut Productions

LiVS is a charitable trust in Ōtautahi, Christchuch that brokers spaces for community groups, creative projects, social enterprises, and start-ups to undertake (primarily) transitional activities. The organisation connects owners of vacant land and buildings with people who have ideas to fill those spaces, usually temporarily. LiVS provides support from the initial stages of ideas and brainstorming, through to deinstallation. This support includes providing:

- agreements or insurance to reduce the risk to the project for all involved
- social connections and support (including mentors and sponsors)
- key infrastructure or basic upgrades to ensure appropriate spaces for a range of projects
- advice on project management, funding, and event support.

LiVS currently has two part-time staff, occasional contractors, and relies on staff using their own communication and transport assets. The organisation rents some desks in the co-working space at Salt Lane Studios, a previous LiVS supported project. Until recently, the organisation had to apply for funding every year. It has now had two years of three years of guaranteed Christchurch City Council (CCC) funding. The charitable trust is governed by a board of trustees.

Common Ground Social Space

Photo: Stephanie Defregger

LiVS started in 2012, soon after the Canterbury earthquake sequences of 2010 and 2011. These earthquakes devastated the city and its residents, with vast swathes of the central city becoming vacant space. Yet what emerged from this vacant space and the struggles of recovery was a desire for creativity and change. In many ways this enabled new possibilities as the city and its residents recovered from the physical and psychological impacts. The organisation was formed after a report commissioned by Christchurch City Council (CCC) and written by Gap Filler founders Ryan Reynolds and Coralie Winn.

Since then, over 700 projects and numerous organisations[1] have been enabled through LiVS support. Each year, LiVS prepares a report detailing some of their outcomes, but like many charitable trusts, has struggled to communicate the value of their work in terms that made sense to funders and others unfamiliar with the wellbeing outcomes of transitional placemaking.

1 : Throughout this report we use the phrase 'LiVS supported projects and organisations' to reflect the wide diversity of people, communities, organistions and projects that LiVS has supported.

WHAT EMERGED FROM THIS VACANT SPACE AND THE STRUGGLES OF RECOVERY WAS A DESIRE FOR CREATIVITY AND CHANGE.

This research addresses this challenge by identifying and communicating the social and ecological intentions and outcomes of LiVS work for individuals, groups, and wider Ōtautahi, Christchurch. The research addresses the broad question; *how has LiVS contributed to the city?* We investigated LiVS supported projects and organisations using interviews, participatory and archival methods, and trialled two tools: Community Economy Return on Investment (CEROI) and Mauri Ora Compass, to identify and categorise the kinds of intentions and outcomes LiVS has enabled.

An Artist at Hassals Lane

Photo: Stephanie Defregger

Pallet Pavilion

Photo: Maja Moritz

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METHODS & PROFILES

ENABLING LIFE IN VACANT SPACES

FINAL REPORT

PART ONE

METHODS & PROFILES

This research used qualitative methods, focusing on 27 projects and organisations. Thirteen interviews were undertaken with key members of the 27 projects. This section describes how the research was undertaken, how the data was analysed, and outlines the project profiles.

METHODS

Drawing on community development best practice, we used action research methods and co-design processes that involved LiVS in setting the purpose and design of the research. In 2021, a workshop with the LiVS board, staff and lead researcher (Kelly Dombroski) was held, and the group decided that an exhibition, book and report would met the needs of both LiVS and the researchers. The scope would be across the LiVS portfolio of projects, but had to include as many projects from the East x East space as possible. East x East is a nine-hectare space in the east of Christchurch, where hundreds of houses had been demolished following the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes. Between 2019 and 2022, LiVS employed Burwood resident Hannah Watkinson to set up transitional and long-term projects in the site, with community partners in this lower-income suburb. The site was handed back to the Christchurch City Council in 2022.

The group brainstormed projects and organisations that LiVS had supported that would demonstrate the *range* of activities rather than the *most common* activities. This approach fits with a qualitative research methodology that seeks to *understand* phenomena rather than *generalise* (Hay & Cope, 2021). Social research ethics for the project was obtained by key researcher Gradon Diprose for the whole project through Manaaki Whenua - Landcare Research.

LiVS current project: The Incubator

Photo: Elisha Blogg

From a list of potential projects developed by (then) LiVS director Rachael Shiels and reviewed by the board, we approached 34 people to be interviewed. Between July and December 2021, Kelly Dombroski interviewed thirteen past and present participants of LiVS-supported projects and organisations. Some of these interviews covered more than one project/organisation, because the interviewee had been involved with more than one. We chose interviews as a key method because it fitted best with the time availability of participants. Interviews were conducted either in person, or online and lasted approximately one hour. Many participants also provided the research team with relevant documents about their projects and organisation (including independent and internal reports). The interviews were transcribed and provided to participants, some of whom edited them. In addition to interviews, the research team reviewed publicly available information and grey material (websites, reports, news articles and images) about other LiVS supported projects and organisations. Altogether, 27 projects/organisations were reviewed as part of the research.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IS PART OF A RESEARCHER'S LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY

Initially, the plan was for one of the other researchers to conduct interviews to help manage perceived conflicts of interest due to Kelly's role on the board of LiVS. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that was not possible. LiVS conflict of interest processes are mainly focused on financial benefits from board participation, and this project held no financial benefits to Kelly since research is part of her salaried job. Ethically, the main risk is participants feeling they have to participate due to Kelly's role on the board. This was managed by having LiVS staff approach participants with the research request. Participants could then choose to contact Kelly to participate. In terms of the research approach, Kelly's role on the LiVS board is consistent with a community action research approach, where community involvement is part of a

researcher's long-term commitment to the community under research (Gelling and Munn-Giddings, 2011; Tuhiwai Smith 1999).

The transcripts, associated documents supplied by participants, and publicly available material were analysed using a qualitative coding method in NVivo. The analysis used two sets of codes. The first were (inductive) codes that emerged from the transcripts as themes, for example, 'volunteers', 'funding', 'COVID-19'. These codes helped identify: key facts about the organisations/projects, partcipants' relevant concerns, and their values and understandings. The second set of codes were researcher-driven (deductive) and connect the data to wider research concerns and international urban wellbeing literature. These codes included, for example, 'mission', 'connection' and 'place' (to assess wellbeing elements that the organisation/project contributed to), identify a 'hero quote' and 'project statistics' (for use in the exhibition) and finally, 'investments' (including 'time' and others) used in the CEROI tool.

The coded transcripts were then used to construct the analysis matrix. This matrix included a brief description of the project/organisation, key quotes that exemplified their relationship with LiVS or their contribution to the wellbeing of the city, and an assessment of the projects/organisations impacts and returns according to four criteria.

Box 1:

Project assessment criteria

BOX 1:

PROJECT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS MATRIX

This analysis matrix included an assessment of the projects/organisations impacts and returns according to:

Sustainable Development Goals	**Community Economies Return on Investment (CEROI)**	**Mauri Ora Compass Tool**
Information on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be found at https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals	Community economies ethical coordinates with reference to the Community Economy Return on Investment (CEROI) concept (Gibson-Graham, Cameron and Healy 2013)	Mauri Ora/living systems compass tool as a measurement of hollistic wellbeing (Yates, 2021, see also Yates et al., 2022)

Wellbeing corner at Understorey Tuarua.

Photo: Federico Corradi

We also trialled mapping the contributions against the Five Ways to Wellbeing framework (see https://mentalhealth.org.nz/five-ways-to-wellbeing), but found it did not suit the work of LiVS because this framework is mainly about individual actions for wellbeing rather than wider community and city-scale actions. While many LiVS projects create space for individuals to act for their wellbeing, they extend beyond this to collective actions. Collective approaches to wellbeing are important for long term sustainability and for justice between groups with different access to individual resources (Kamp et al., 2022).

We then tested the draft analysis matrix with the interview case studies, then reviewed it with the exhibition project team led by Life in Vacant Spaces[2] to see how the different frameworks resonated with their vision for the exhibition. The project action team chose to use the CEROI and Mauri Ora frameworks for analysis because the CEROI foregrounded important ethical questions and intentions, and the Mauri Ora Compass tool enabled different kinds of wellbeing outcomes to be clearly communicated (see Part 2). The project action team discussed how the Sustainable Development Goals were too large and not clearly situated in an Aotearoa New Zealand context, and the Te Pae Māhutonga framework helped to identify the public health benefits of aspects of LiVS work, but did not capture the built environment and economic side of the LiVS supported projects/organisations. The project partners were keen to practice reciprocity by engaging with the tools and frameworks that the wider research team had been involved in developing. For the

2 : The project action team included; Rachael Shiels (LiVS director from 2018 to 2021), Hannah Watkinson (coordinator of the LiVS managed East x East space from 2018 to 2021), Elisha Blogg (LiVS director from 2021) and Kelly Dombroski (lead researcher).

wider academic research team, this was also a good fit due to the holistic nature of the mauri ora tool based on Indigenous understandings of the interconnectedness of wellbeing for human and more-than-human, and the feminist lineage of the CEROI approach emerging from long engagement with thinking and practice around care, embodied engagement in place, and participatory action research.

This research was shaped by several factors: firstly, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions meant that ethnographic and participatory methods were not usually possible, hence we relied more on what people *said* about the projects they were involved in, rather than what we *observed*. Secondly, the positionality and theoretical orientation of the research team - we specifically focused on holistic wellbeing intentions and outcomes. Thirdly, due to limitations on travel, Kelly Dombroski conducted all the interviews. This may limit what people said because Kelly declared her position and potential conflict of interest as a LiVS board member. Yet it also may have enhanced the discussion because Kelly was then identified as a co-worker in place-making and a Christchurch resident, which built immediate rapport and allowed the conversation to get right to the heart of things relatively quickly.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To document how LiVS has contributed to the city by researching 27 projects and organisations using a qualitative research methodology that seeks to understand instead of generalise. Interviews were conducted either in person or online and analysed using four assessment criteria. Community involvement throughout this research is part of the researcher's long-term commitment to the community.

PROFILES: PARTICIPANTS PAST AND PRESENT

This section summarises the 27 projects/ organisations with which we conducted interviews, and lists the additional organisations reviewed and included in the exhibition and book. The data in the 12 summaries come from interviews and publicly available information. The 12 projects/ organisations profiled here include (in alphabetical order): Christchurch Aunties; Cultivate Christchurch; Disc Golf; East x East; Gap Filler; the Green Lab; a Local Food Project; the Food Collective; RAD Bikes, Redzone Drone Racing; Salt Lane Studios; Watch this Space.

Hassals Lane

Photo: Stephanie Defregger

CHRISTCHURCH AUNTIES

Photo: Heather Milne

The Christchurch Aunties was formed in 2017 by Heather Milne, Heather Locke, and Sarah Butterfield. The organisation started providing practical support and assistance for two women's refuges in Christchurch by using social media to mobilise the wider community to donate needed items and funds for women leaving violent relationships.

Christchurch Aunties used a space at Hassell's Lane, (on the old Seven Oaks school site) for storing donations. It became known as "The Aunties' Attic". This enabled them to move the donations out of their children's bunkbeds and a lounge room, and to give some breathing space to the organisers, while scaling up their storage of furniture.

The Aunties now help four women's refuges, one transitional housing agency, and eight community organisations supported by over 4,500 'Aunties' in 2021. Additional community organisations such as PIPS, Dress For Success, and Linwood Community Corner Trust are also supported during the year.

> "Christchurch Aunties would look very differently if it wasn't for the support of organisations specifically like Life in Vacant Spaces, who have been an absolute supporter for the last few years, in a real nuts and bolts way that has enabled us to grow and to daevelop and to see how far we can continue growing."

LIVS SITE:

Old Seven Oaks School, owned by Ara Polytechnic

INTERVIEWEE:

Heather Milne

PROJECT TIMESPAN:

2017-2021

WEBSITE:

http://www.chchaunties.org.nz/

Photo: Cultivate Christchurch

CULTIVATE CHRISTCHURCH

Ruia ngā kākano o te tūmanako ki roto i te māra o te hinengaro

Sow the seeds of hope in the garden of the mind

Cultivate Christchurch, has inspired people all over the world with its grounded, place-attentive approach to youth wellbeing in a disaster recovery setting. It integrates youth employment training, social work, and skills development into the operations of an organic urban farming system. The organisation supplies produce to local people via vegetable boxes, and to hospitality customers (while taking restaurant organic waste for composting). The organisation works with youth in need of additional care beyond that which is accessible to them via family or government or otherwise in the community.

Cultivate has been going for more than six years, using the same spot on the corner of Peterborough and Manchester street. The site was brokered by LIVS, and is a previously residential site still privately owned. In 2022, Cultivate moved from the site and into a different work model in partnership with Untamed Earth organic farms.

> “There’s definitely a space for LIVS to act within the community to enable access to land that people would otherwise not be able to access…the key thing for us was that we needed to do a pilot, to prove to that we’re at the point that we actually are going to achieve the outcomes that we said we were going to achieve…and that’s what it did. And it then leveraged land in other areas.”

LIVS SITE:

Peterborough Street, privately owned

INTERVIEWEE:

Fiona Stewart

PROJECT TIMESPAN:

2015-2022

WEBSITE:

https://www.cultivate.org.nz/

DISC GOLF AT EAST X EAST

The Disc Golf course at ExE was installed by Vortica in 2019. It has been designed so that the space can be used by serious disc golf players alongside amateurs and families. It is a sport with rising popularity, which requires relatively little investment to set up and is usually publically accessible. It thus has a very different demographic form 'ball golf'. The course is well used, with many weekday and weekend users of different ages observed during the research period.

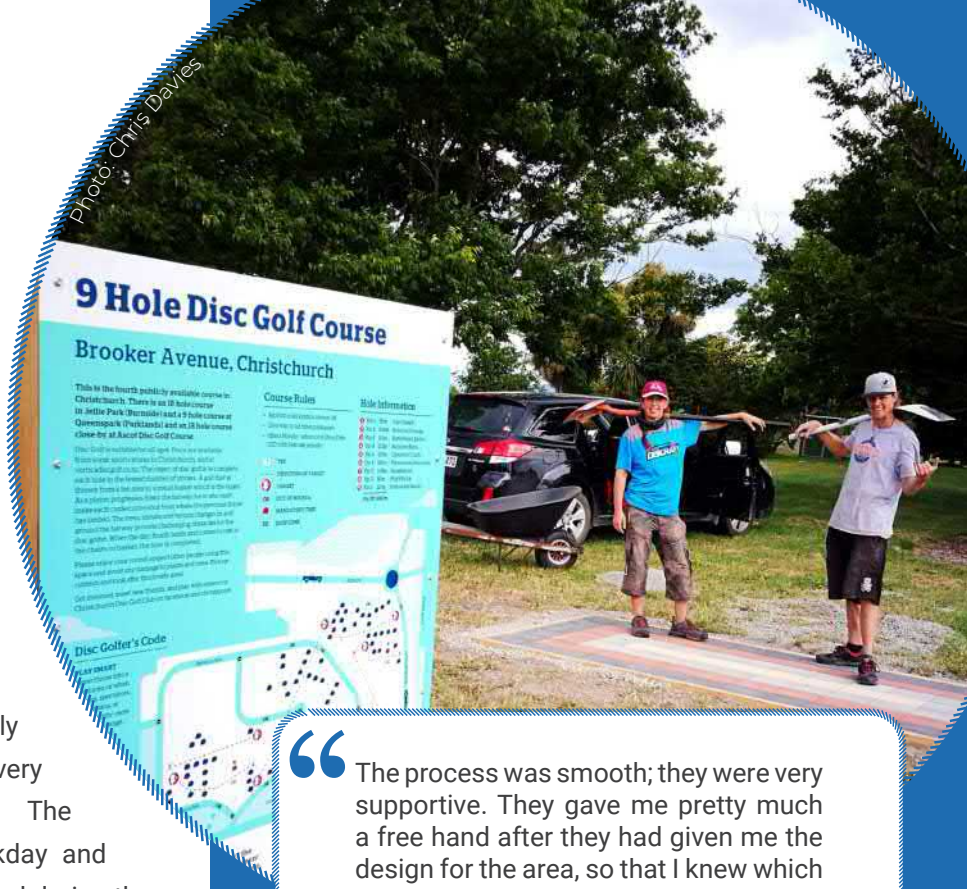


Photo: Chris Davies

> "The process was smooth; they were very supportive. They gave me pretty much a free hand after they had given me the design for the area, so that I knew which areas I couldn't use and which areas I had to stay away from. So, the whole process was fantastic."

> "LIVS have changed lives. Literally changed lives by their relatively small investment in East x East."

LIVS SITE:

East x East, Burwood (red-zoned land managed by LINZ and LiVS)

INTERVIEWEE:

Chris Davies

PROJECT TIMESPAN:

2019-ongoing

WEBSITE:

https://udisc.com/courses/brooker-ave-disc-golf-course-wcaV

Photo: Hannah Watkinson

EAST X EAST

East x East is an outdoor community space on red-zoned land (land that is no longer available to be zoned for buildings, and was the site of widespread housing demolition). The name East x East reflects its location in the eastern suburb of Burwood at the eastern end of New Brighton Road. LIVS held the licence for this land from LINZ, from the year 2019 to 2021. Hannah was employed by LIVS to contribute to the site's temporary activation. Hannah and LIVS curated and enabled a range of community projects, including a pump track, disc golf, art projects, events and more. In 2021, it was handed over to the Christchurch City Council to manage as part of the regenerate plan.

> "Things will change a lot in the future with the land, but at the same time, it's really grown into something that the community really loves, and so that is super-special. It's definitely been the project that I'm really proud of."

LIVS SITE:

Brooker Ave, Burwood

INTERVIEWEE:

Glenys Browne (LINZ)

Hannah Watkinson (East x East coordinator)

PROJECT TIMESPAN:

2019-2021

GAP FILLER

Photo: Gap Filler

Gap Filler started out after the September 2010 earthquake, with a small community built public space set up on a patch of dirt where two buildings had once stood. The concept was simple but profound: people needed somewhere to gather. The kitcschy public park proved popular, and the stage was in use for two weeks with over thirty bands. The organisation creates 'propositional' projects that challenge and enhance spaces in the city. They have led delivery of more than 200 public installations, facilitating countless others.

Gap Filler founders set up Life in Vacant Spaces in order to separate out the 'site brokering' aspects of the work with the placemaking aspects.

> "... if we created a movement and there were hundreds of people and organisations involved, then they couldn't take it away from us as easily, that kind of strength of decentralisation. I feel like that's been an important part of how we've approached our work in the city."

LIVS SITE:

Various

INTERVIEWEE:

Ryan Reynolds

PROJECT TIMESPAN:

2010-ongoing

WEBSITE:

https://gapfiller.org.nz/

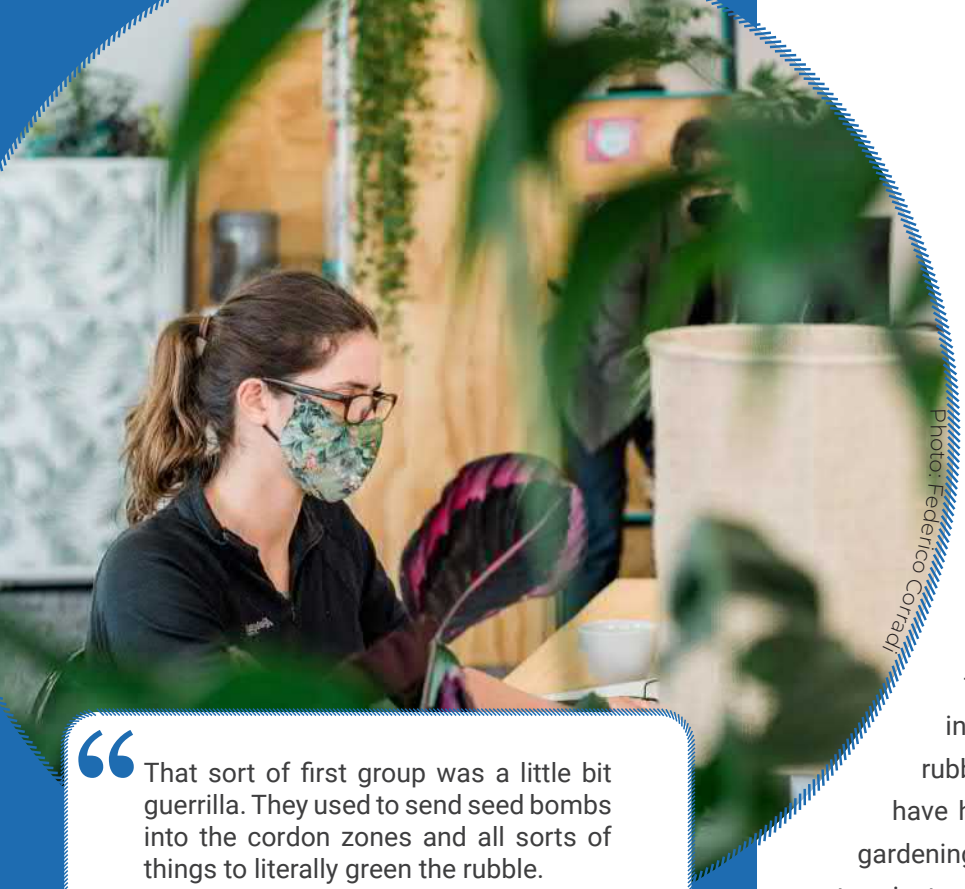


Photo: Federico Corral

THE GREEN LAB

(GREENING THE RUBBLE)

The Green Lab (previously Greening the Rubble) fosters human-nature connections by bringing greenery into urban environments. In the immediate post-quake years, they focused on temporary landscaping projects in the inner city, providing "something that wasn't rubble to look at". In more recent years, they have helped a variety of communities set up gardening and landscaping projects, and fostered art projects and exhibitions related to their kaupapa of fostering connection. At the time of research, the Green Lab has a co-working space filled with indoor plants, called Understorey. It worked like the understorey in a forest, providing shelter for a diversity of people to connect and thrive. With LIVS and Gap Filler, the Green Lab has been one of the Christchurch City Councils core transitional partners.

> "That sort of first group was a little bit guerrilla. They used to send seed bombs into the cordon zones and all sorts of things to literally green the rubble.
>
> Some of them were political but a lot of it was just about providing something that wasn't rubble to look at. Like a place to be that didn't involve acres of Wilson's car parks.
>
> LiVS is a really great enabler... LiVS works. So there is a removing of barriers that happens when you work with Life in Vacant Spaces. They take care of the bureaucracy, the paperwork, the leg work of finding spaces and developing relationships with landlords. They really create potentiality out of spaces which are otherwise just sitting unused... That's so invaluable, really."

LIVS SITE:

Various

INTERVIEWEE:

Khye Hitchcock

PROJECT TIMESPAN:

various, from 2011

WEBSITE:

https://thegreenlab.org.nz/

A LOCAL FOOD PROJECT

Alex Davies returned to New Zealand from the UK after the earthquakes. He began cooking in the on-site earthen pizza oven at The Commons and contributed to a number of Gap Filler projects such as Social Soup and A Local Food Project. Alex went on to open other restaurants, such as Shop Eight in New Regent Street, city, and his current restaurant Gatherings. His cooking nourished folks looking to return to the city when so many businesses were closed, and in Social Soup, supported social entrepreneurs to access the shared 'start up funds' that the project enabled.

His focus on creative use of locally produced foods with low environmental impact resonates with this customers and contributes to the city with his restaurant Gatherings, as a business with an ethical backbone and general creator of deliciousness.

Photo: Alex Davies

> "Activating spaces like that, it essentially gave me confidence which I didn't necessarily have. It gave me an opportunity to push the boundaries with limited risk to myself, had I signed up to big lease with a greedy landlord. I might have been little less free in what I was doing. So it's definitely helped there for sure.
>
> And then that exposed me to an audience as well, which in turn ended up resulting in me having a 50 percent share in a restaurant. After I finished at that place, I had the confidence to go on and on my own place."

LIVS SITE:

The Commons, Cnr Kilmore and Durham Street

INTERVIEWEE:

Alex Davies

PROJECT TIMESPAN:

various

WEBSITE:

https://www.gatherings.co.nz/

Photo: Jessica Lynch

> "I was very interested in the idea of engaging the space and activating the space. So I started what we called the Food Collective there and was bringing on a little bit of a - we were trying to make a little hub there with some different food vendors and stuff like that."

THE FOOD COLLECTIVE

Mamacita's was a food truck specialising in tacos run by Jess Lynch. Originally from Southern California, Mexican food is "just food" for Jess. Mamacita's was one of a handful of regular food trucks based at The Commons after the earthquakes. Whether it was live events held at the Pallet Pavilion, or collective endeavours for bringing new folk into food trucking, or providing lunch for office workers returning to the city, there was always something to get involved with for Jess. Her food style is fresh, locally sourced, and fun. After running Mamacita's as a food truck for three years, Jess opened the Sun Dog Diner in Papanui Road, fitting out the shop with handmade furniture and a quirky cheerful vibe. There, she continued to provide great food and handmade sodas to both long term VIP fans and new customers.

LIVS SITE:

The Commons

INTERVIEWEE:

Jess Lynch

PROJECT TIMESPAN:

2011-2014

RAD BIKES

Photo: Jess Smale

RAD Bikes began as a Gap Filler project in 2013, testing out the idea of a bicycle recycling and assisted DIY repairs centre. It became an independent organisation in 2015. It is improving access to cycling, minimising waste and developing community wellbeing. RAD provides access to bicycles, bike tools, parts and servicing advice. They reduce bike related waste and teach repair skills in a safe and welcoming environment for people to connect, learn new skills and help one another. They recently opened a second indoor workshop.

> "There is always going to be transitional space. Underutilised parts of the city. To have someone who is connecting those dots for communities and wonderful landlords or people who have the land, then that's a really valuable service for us. Well, for me as a community group, it's a really valuable thing to know.
>
> I can call them and they have done that leg work and [established] all those relationships. Done all the legal whatever you need to do, to enable it. Because that would be such a massive thing for us, as a community, to embark on. But even to know what's available and door knock. How would you even start that?"

LIVS SITE:

Various
The Commons
Cashel st
High st
Near C1
Space academy

INTERVIEWEE:

Jess Smayle

PROJECT TIMESPAN:

2013-ongoing

WEBSITE:

https://www.radbikes.co.nz/

Photo: Nathan van Slooten

> If LIVS weren't here, we would still be karting all our gear around in the back of our cars and stuff, and trying to find other red zone spots.

REDZONE DRONE RACING

The Redzone Drone Racing Inc started out as a Facebook group of drone builders and programmers who used to organise meetups around the red zone to race. Eventually the group was able to organise a spot in the ExE, and has gone on to secure funding for technology, gates, and safety equipment. Drone racers steer custom-built racing drones through a purpose built racing course made up of slalom-like gates and poles on the course. They pilot using a remote control, and have a visual feed of the drone camera directly into goggles.

The site is made available as part of the ExE project, which is a partnership between LIVS and LINZ. Other funders have contributed to making it a safe space for drone racing.

LIVS SITE:

East x East, Burwood (red-zoned land managed by LINZ and LiVS)

INTERVIEWEE:

Nathan van Slooten

PROJECT TIMESPAN:

2020-ongoing

WEBSITE:

https://www.facebook.com/RZDR.INC/

SALT LANE STUDIOS

Salt Lane Studios is a co-working space for creatives in Christchurch. It started out as a space upstairs in The Corner Store, a lease site where creatives could rent studio and workspace. LIVS role was to subsidize rent for artists and creatives starting out, enabling the space to be occupied and to test out the idea. Eventually founder Hannah Watkinson went on to begin Salt Lane Studios in Tuam Street, where again LIVS started out subsidizing spaces. Now, Salt Lane runs sustainably without LIVS input in Tuam Street – although the director and project manager do rent desks there!

Photo: Charlie Rose Creative

> We were young, we didn't have massive responsibility to think about survival kinds of things for our city, but we had the space to think about what could make it better.
>
> We just weren't bogged down by the actual human basic needs side of things, as such. People were doing that. People were taking water trucks out to the suburbs that didn't have water, and people were helping people with the housing and stuff like that. Whereas when we came into the place-making realm, it was in those bonus extras.
>
> I think Life in Vacant Spaces is the kind of organisation that Christchurch would be in a very different position without. It has supported and continues to support a lot of things that would otherwise be unrealised, and it has contributed to the city being an excellent place to live.

LIVS SITE:

Cashel Street

INTERVIEWEE:

Hannah Watkinson

PROJECT TIMESPAN:

2018-2021

Play Again, by Porta and Bols. Photo: Watch This Space

> There's a lot of young people who don't enjoy the gallery art system, art school sort of system. There's something empowering as well about having your art in a public space. You feel, as I say, that you've contributed, there's a stakeholder sense of pride.

WATCH THIS SPACE

Watch This Space is a charitable trust caring for a free online street art map for Ōtautahi Christchurch. Street art has been hugely important in the transitional city. In the early days after the earthquake, street art served as public commentary on the shared experience of a broken city. As the rebuild got going, vacant boring concrete walls are transformed into incredible and inspiring works of art. Street art enthusiast and practitioner Reuben Wood is the main force behind the project, and has been part of the street art scene since the time of the Earthquakes. Watch This Space helps identify legal spaces for artists to contribute street art to the city, and helps find artists when street art is called for! The organisation aims to foster and be part of a sustainable urban art ecosystem for Christchurch.

LIVS SITE:

Various, including ExE

INTERVIEWEE:

Reuben Woods

PROJECT TIMESPAN:

various and ongoing

WEBSITE:

https://watchthisspace.org.nz/

Paste-up art by the Slap City Collective

Photo: Kelly Dombroski

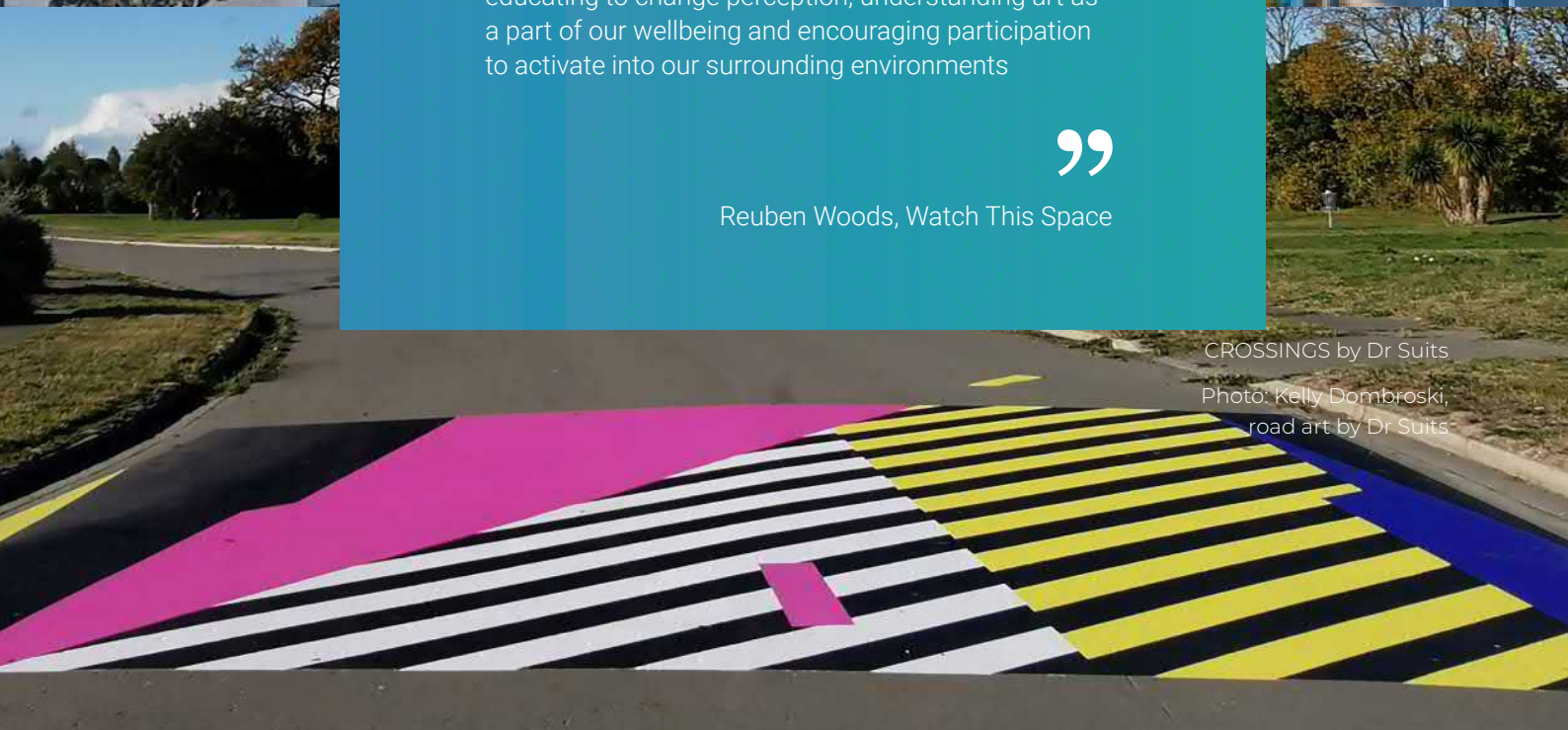
Photo: Paul Daly

“That’s one of the goals that we have, is creating a sustainable urban art ecosystem in the city, so that as a destination young people can grow up and go hey actually, you know what, I really love making art and I love making art in these types of places. There’s a lot of young people who don’t enjoy the gallery art system, art school sort of system. There’s something empowering as well about having your art in a public space. You feel, as I say, that you’ve contributed, there’s a stakeholder sense of pride.

There’s a lot of important work in terms of shifting some of the perceptions that have been instilled … also challenging the way that we conceive the value of art. I think anyone who’s grown up as an arty kid and has grown into an adult involved in the arts, will tell you that part of the problem is that we aren’t raised to see art in the same light as we see other industries… Everyone was on lockdown and what were they doing? They were consuming art, they were watching movies, they were making art at home, they were doing all these things….But we haven’t allowed art to be considered as a valuable contributor to our economy.

I really think we do take those three strands, so educating to change perception, understanding art as a part of our wellbeing and encouraging participation to activate into our surrounding environments”

Reuben Woods, Watch This Space



CROSSINGS by Dr Suits

Photo: Kelly Dombroski, road art by Dr Suits

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

Reviews of the following organisations/projects are included in the research where interviews were not possible.

ART INSTALLATIONS various

Art Chemist by Audrey Baldwin

Photo: Janneth Gill

Art Chemist by Audrey Baldwin, *Glitterbox Pursuits Winter Wander, ShoPop* by Audrey Baldwin and Khye Hitchcock, The Social's projects *Milk Fight* and the artist Street Residency, the Unimed Site performance of *Stuck* by Audrey Baldwin and Julia Croucher, and Agropolis performances

AVONDALE COMMUNITY GARDENS 2020 - present

Avondale Community Garden

Photo: Hannah Watkinson

A community garden began by intermediate school student, Jordan Wilson. The garden gives away all its produce locally.

BIG STREET BIKERS 2020 - present

Big Street Bikers LockyDocks

Photo: Big Street Bikers

Installation of Locky Docks bike stands on LiVS brokered spaces

COMMON GROUND

2019 - present

Common Ground Food Trucks

Photo: Stephanie Defregger

A project in South New Brighton where a row of shops used to be, now used as a pop-up café space, markets and for other community events. LiVS brokered the space in 2018 and it is still used

FESTA

2012 - 2018

FESTA 2016, We Have The Means

Photo: Jonny Knopp, Peanut Productions

FESTA was an annual architecture festival held in Christchurch. The festival aimed to celebrate and explore the recovering city's built environment through a series of innovative installations, talks, and workshops. FESTA provided a platform for local and international architects to showcase their work, engage with the community, and prompt people to imagine a different future city. LiVS brokered numerous spaces in support of FESTA.

FIKSATE

2017 - present

Anastasia Papaleonida at Fiksate; 'Long Trip of the Kokos' was a collaborative show between Papaleonida and Robert Seikon

Photo: Charlie Rose Creative

Fiksate is a contemporary urban art gallery and creative space. Fiksate is dedicated to showcasing and promoting local and international street art and graffiti. The gallery regularly hosts exhibitions, workshops, and events, and has become a hub for the city's urban art scene.

FREE THEATRE Various, ongoing

Ars Acustica (2019)

Photo: Stuart Lloyd-Harris

Avant-garde theatre company (founded in 1979) that LiVS have supported with pop-up performance spaces and a home hub.

HASSALS LANE 2019 - present

Hassals Lane

Photo: Stephanie Defregger

Hassall Lane Studios is a creative hub located in Waltham. The complex houses a variety of businesses and artists, including photographers, designers, and musicians LiVS brokered the site in 2018 and continues to work with the community there.

KOWAHI COLLECTIVE 2019 - 2020

Kowhai Collective

Photo: Stephanie Defregger

A pop-up store of New Zealand artists was supported by LiVS in the Guthrey Centre. They have since gone on to be a permanent store in High Street.

REKINDLE 2011 - present

Rekindle is a social enterprise, founded in 2011, shortly after the Christchurch earthquake, as a response to the amount of waste generated by the disaster. Rekindle uses salvaged materials to create unique and sustainable furniture, homewares, and art pieces. The organization also offers workshops and educational programs aimed at promoting a circular economy.

Rekindle Workshop

Photo: Johannes Van Kan

ROLLICKIN' GELATO 2013

A successful gelato café, originally a caravan on a LiVS brokered site

Rollickin' Gelato

Photos: Neat Places

TEMPLE FOR CHRISTCHURCH 2013

Temple for Christchurch

Photo: Gaby Montejo

An art installation that encouraged contributors to write messages on the large-scale, temple-like construction before being burned at a community event. LiVS brokered the space in central city.

THE SOUND GARDEN 2013

Sound Garden

Photo: Erica Austin

A collaborative project that used recycled materials to create a musical garden.

UNITY GARDEN 2020

Unity Garden

Photo: Hannah Watkinson and Rebecca Parnham

LiVS brokered the space for Giving Seeds of Love to develop a garden after the Mosque attacks in Christchurch. In response to the racist attack at the death of 51 people, the Unity Garden sought to enhance and celebrate diversity and encourage people to come together in anti-racism.

Glitterbox Pursuits Winter Wander

Photo: Janneth Gil

2

FRAMING INVESTMENTS & RETURNS

ENABLING LIFE IN VACANT SPACES

FINAL REPORT

PART TWO

FRAMING INVESTMENTS & RETURNS

Most people and organisations intentionally invest time and energy into activities and projects hoping for a certain return or outcome. In many of the LiVS supported projects and organisations, the hoped-for outcome was some form of 'urban activity' or 'activation'. For Ōtautahi Christchurch, urban activations sought to create vibrancy in an otherwise tragic environment recovering from a sequence of earthquakes. This was the case in many of the LiVS supported central city and East x East projects which focused on activating areas that had been vacated because of earthquake related effects, such as liquefaction, building demolitions, or damage. However, urban activations can also be about place-making – creating environments that reflect the values, desires and stories of the people who live there. Sometimes urban activations might be experimental trials of architecture, art, or community development practices that invite residents to think about and even imagine their place differently. As noted in Part 1, LiVS have supported a diversity of projects in Ōtautahi/Christchurch, but needed a process and language to better explain the holistic intentions and outcomes of their (and others') investments.

In this section we summarise the two frameworks (CEROI and Mauri Ora Compass) used to analyse intentions and outcomes for LiVS-supported projects/organisations. Following that, we group the projects/organisations according to their main social and environmental outcomes.

COMMUNITY ECONOMY RETURN ON INVESTMENT

A 'Community Economy Return on Investment' (CEROI) is a method to think about investment in different kinds of economic, social and ecological futures. Sometimes businesses will have to show how they make decisions based on whether the financial return on investment will be a sum of money larger than the money invested through the use of a 'return on investment[3]' figure using a calculation like the following:

$$\textbf{ROI} = \frac{(\text{gain from investment} - \text{cost of investment})}{\text{cost of investment}}$$

3 : ROI's main appeal is that it is easy to calculate and has a clear number, but it fails to properly account for 'opportunity cost' e.g. what could have been done with the investment otherwise, and 'discounting' e.g. what the future returns on the present investment are calculated to be. In this report we narrate intentions and outcomes from investing for future generations, but we don't apply a 'discount'. This is aspect of the CEROI that could be further developed in future research.

The CEROI invites users to consider a diverse range of investments, including time and energy as well as money, and a diverse range of returns – including returns in environmental wellbeing and social connection (see Figure 1). This is not a new concept and many people make decisions like this all the time. However, what the CEROI does is bring visibility to the kinds of investment decisions and intentions people and organisations make when they prioritise other kinds of returns alongside – or in contrast to – only financial returns.

Christchurch Aunties

Photo: Heather Milne

The CEROI was developed by community economies researchers Katherine Gibson, Julie Graham[4] , Jenny Cameron and Stephen Healy. In their book *Take Back the Economy* (2013), they developed a set of questions to highlight the kinds of economies many people around the world want, where both people and planet can survive well. Rather than providing a strict definition of such an economy, they use

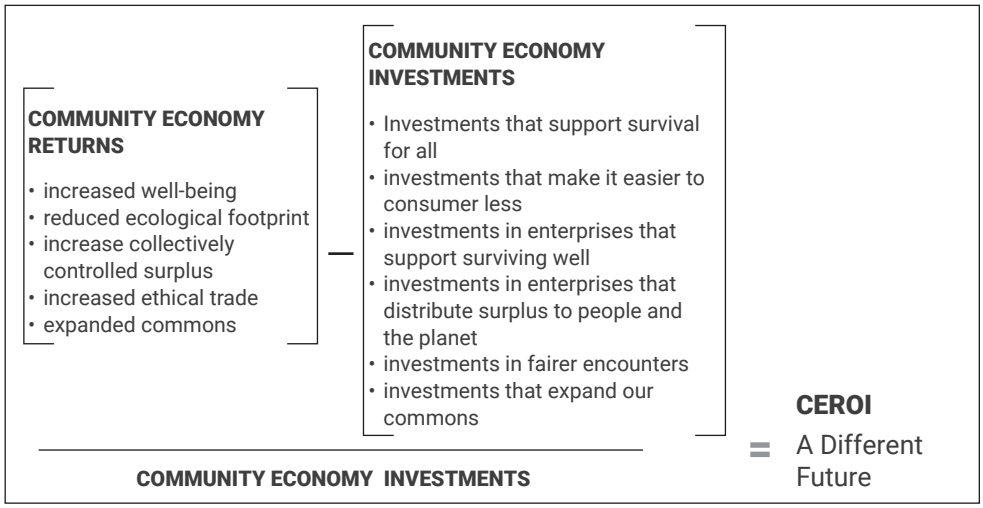


Figure 1:

A Community Economy Return on Investment (CEROI)

six questions to encourage people to consider what such an economy might look like where they live. The six questions are:

- How do we survive together well and equitably?
- How do consume sustainably?
- How do we encounter others in ways that support mutual wellbeing?
- How do we distribute surplus and enrich social and environmental health?
- How do we care for the commons that sustain us all?
- How do we invest in future generations?

Gibson-Graham, Cameron and Healy (2013) develop each of these questions in detail, showing a diverse range of ways that people and organisations all over the world have created economic practices where both people and planet can survive together well. In their 2013 book, they proposed the CEROI as a simple way of exploring investments in these kinds of economies.

4 : Katherine Gibson and Julie Graham often use the pseudonym JK Gibson-Graham. Sadly, Julie Graham died in 2010. Many of her ideas continue to influence, and Katherine continues to use the pseudonym JK Gibson-Graham when working on projects or ideas that were begun with Julie.

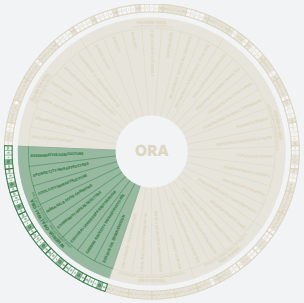
Undertaking a CEROI is complex, and there have been different approaches to using the method. In previous research, our team have experimented with a CEROI for the LiVS-supported urban farm, Cultivate Christchurch (Dombroski et al., 2018 and 2019). In a very different example, Petrescu and colleagues (2021) meticulously quantified a CEROI for the R-urban urban farm and community centre in Paris. The city council evicted the centre and replaced their site with a car park, a decision justified by using a simple ROI. Petrescu et al. (2021) demonstrated – although after the eviction – that the quantified return on investment for R-Urban for one calendar year was 180% when *all* aspects of both investment and return were calculated using a CEROI.

In this work with LiVS, we could not access the kind of data for each LiVS supported

BOX 2:

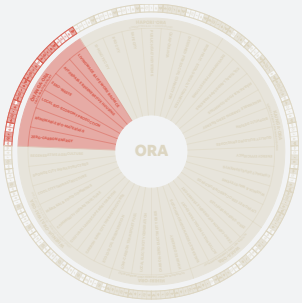
MAURI ORA COMPASS TOOL

THE VERSION OF THE COMPASS WE USED HAD THESE SIX ACTION AREAS FOR MAURI ORA



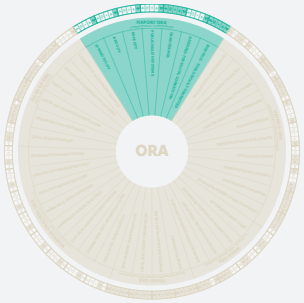
Wai Ora |Whenua Ora

Living, carbon-storing blue and green ecosystems, including ecological regeneration, cultural landscape restoration, regeneration agriculture, mara kai and food commons, and community, carbon sink, cool city and 'sponge city' water infrastructures that protect and restore water and land based ecological wellbeing.



Ōhanga Ora

Circular bio-economy, including zero carbon energy, renewable bio-materials, local bio-economy production, zero waste, affordable regenerative housing, living wages and work-life balance.

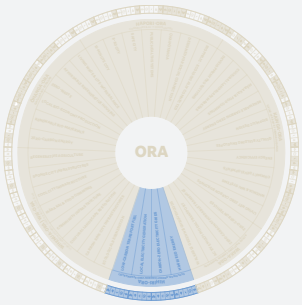


Hapori Ora

Connected and just communities, including accessible, safe, child-friendly, biophilic and ecologically connected city spaces with good public health systems and connection to cultural roots of mana whenua and diverse communities.

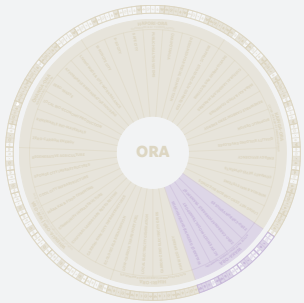
Kainga Ora

Living carbon storing healthy buildings, including compact developments with development protections, quality structures, renewable materials, carbon neutral and culturally relevant design.



Waka Ora

Active and net zero carbon transport, including walkable green neighbourhoods, active multi-modal transport, zero carbon affordable transport, zero carbon vehicles and safe active transport infrastructure.



Hihiri Ora

Ecological energy (using carbon zero renewables), including local electricity generation, low carbon transport fuels, carbon zero electricity grids and hihiri eco energies

Box 2:

Simplified sections ('action areas') of the Mauri Ora Compass Tool

Amanda Yates with additional design by Jen McBride

project that was used for the Cultivate Christchurch or R-urban examples (given there have been more than 700 individual projects, many of which have finished up and gone on to new iterations). Instead, the research team used the CEROI approach (and associated six questions) to analyse the kinds of investment intentions and decisions they made, and the kinds of outcomes they observed on these investments. Given the research was not attempting to quantify the returns on investment in dollar terms, the approach of analysing self-reported investments, intentions and outcomes was considered appropriate.

MAURI ORA COMPASS

The Mauri Ora Compass is an urban wellbeing tool developed by Amanda Yates (Ngāti Rangiwewehi, Ngāti Whakaue, Te Aitanga a Māhaki, Rongowhakaata) and the He Puna Ora | Urban Regenerative Action Lab at Auckland University of Technology team, to help visualise and assess the wellbeing 'returns' (see Box 2).

The Mauri Ora Compass draws on the concept of mauri, understood as the life force inherent in all. It goes beyond Western understandings of animate and inanimate, and foregrounds the life force of rivers, ecosystems, mountains, rocks or buildings alongside that of humans, animals, microbes, plants and more. These things can be in a state of mauri ora (holistic wellbeing), mauri noho (stasis) or mauri mate (decline and illness). The Mauri Ora Compass can help identify how an urban place might navigate towards mauri ora and away from mauri mate. It can also be used to assess how well holistic urban wellbeing outcomes are being achieved (Yates, 2022; Yates et al., 2022; Yates, 2021). The version of the compass we used considers six areas of mauri ora:

THE MAURI ORA COMPASS DRAWS ON THE CONCEPT OF MAURI, UNDERSTOOD AS THE LIFE FORCE INHERENT IN ALL

- *Wai Ora* |*Whenua Ora* – Living, carbon storing blue and green ecosystems, including ecological regeneration, cultural landscape restoration, regenerative agriculture, mara kai and food commons, and community, carbon sink, cool city and 'sponge city' water infrastructures that protect and restore water and land based ecological wellbeing.
- *Ōhanga Ora* – Circular bio-economy, including zero carbon energy, renewable bio-materials, local bio-economy production, zero waste, affordable regenerative housing, living wages and work-life balance.
- *Hapori Ora* – Connected and just communities, including accessible, safe, child-friendly, biophilic and ecologically connected city spaces with good public health systems and connection to cultural roots of mana whenua and diverse communities.
- *Kainga Ora* – Living carbon storing healthy buildings, including compact developments with development protections, quality structures, renewable materials, carbon neutral and culturally relevant design.

East x East participants at a red zone stonefruit tree pruning workshop. Thousands of fruit trees remain in this area of Christchurch where houses have been removed.

Photo: Kelly Dombroski

- *Waka Ora* – Active and net zero carbon transport, including walkable green neighbourhoods, active multi-modal transport, zero carbon affordable transport, zero carbon vehicles and safe active transport infrastructure.
- *Hihiri Ora* – Ecological energy (using carbon zero renewables), including local electricity generation, low carbon transport fuels, carbon zero electricity grids and hihiri eco energies.

Each of these six areas has a list of possible actions (see Figure 2) that could contribute towards holistic wellbeing in a specific place. We did not use the actions of the Mauri-Ora Compass in this research, as we were retrospectively evaluating the kinds of wellbeing outcomes that had occurred from the different activities LiVS had supported. Instead, we further simplified the action areas into an indicator diagram (see Figure 3), highlighting which area/s of the compass the intention and outcome related to.

The Mauri Ora Compass is a dynamic tool that can be used in different ways and contexts. In some instances it is referred to as the Living Systems Compass. The version used in this report draws on earlier conceptualisations developed by Yates and research associates (see Yates 2021; Yates, Dombroski and Dionsio, 2022). We are mindful that the Mauri Ora Compass kitset emerged from academia in the North of Aotearoa, and was first landed as a place-based co-created Compass with mana whenua in Rotorua in the North Island. While there are significant cultural foundations and mātauranga Māori that connect across Iwi (and indeed into the cultures of Te Moananui-a-Kiwa or Oceania), there is also iwi-specific place-based knowledge and protocols. Thus care needs to be taken when using tools in different places. In the case of this work, we draw on the good will of wider members of the Huritanga Urban Wellbeing project, including key members of our Ōtautahi Christchurch

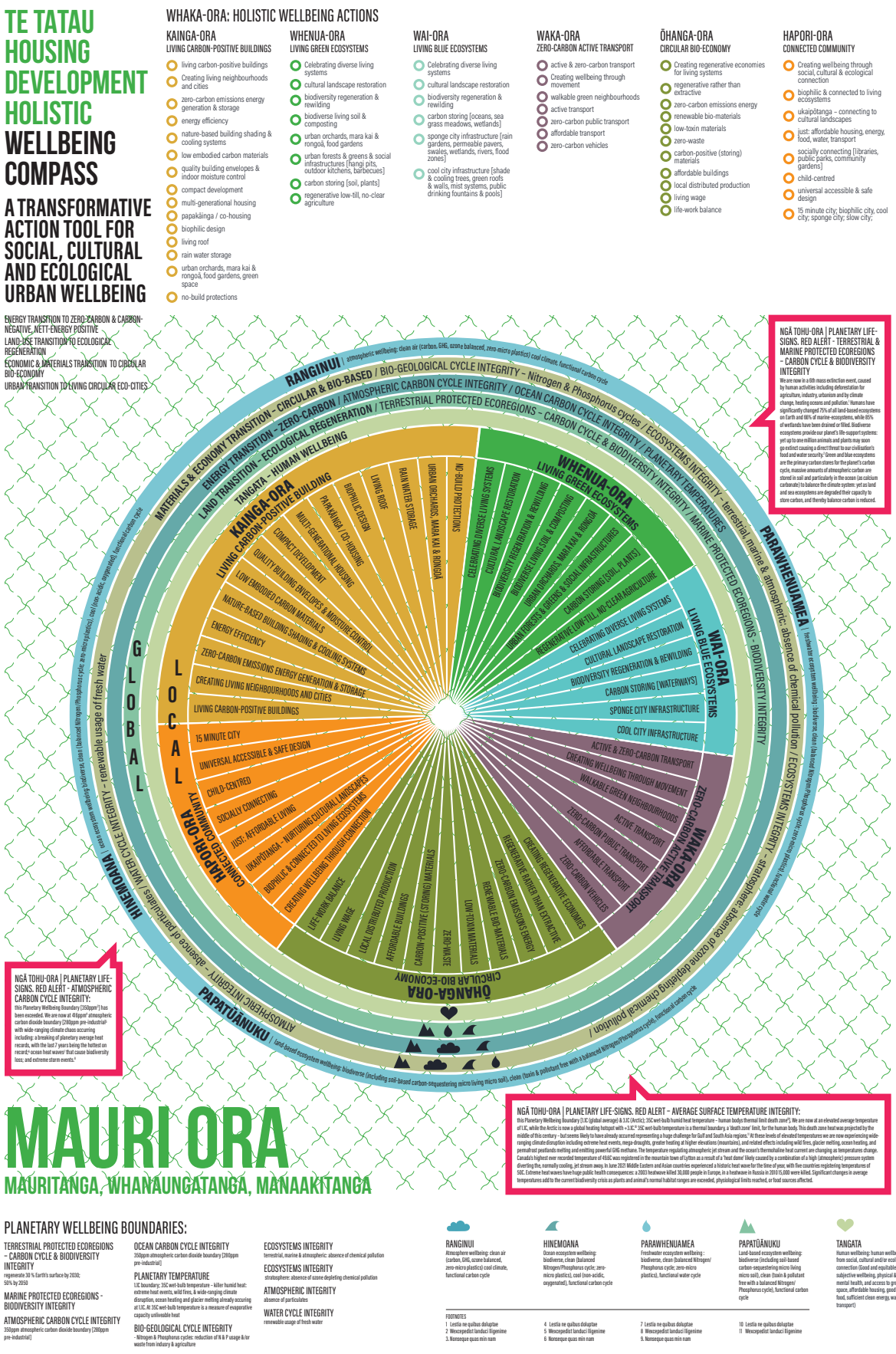


Figure 2:

The Mauri-Ora Compass Tool
Kit of parts designers:
Amanda Yates, Kyra Clarke
& Fiona Grieve

COLOUR CATEGORISATION

In what follows, we use these six colours to communicate the wellbeing outcomes with reference to the mauri ora compass

Figure 3:

Simplified Mauri-Ora Compass Tool

The colours of this simplified Mauri-Ora Compass tool will be used to communicate the 'returns' of each project (see Box 4).

based team situated within or aligned with the Ngai Tahu Research Centre at the University of Canterbury. Dr John Reid in particular led work with Ngāi Tūāhuriri (the hapū who are mana whenua in Ōtautahi Christchurch) on a concordance process between their vision and plans and the Mauri Ora Compass and related data tools. The concordance process confirmed high alignment between Ngāi Tūāhuriri visions and values and a mana whenua wellbeing index developed in congruence with the Compass and the Compass framework itself in a way that validated the framework in this place. That detailed iwi engagement work and concordance process has informed the engagement with the Compass in the LiVS and Ōtautahi Christchurch context, including this project.

Photo: The Social Street Residency

3

IMPACTS & RETURNS OF LIVS SUPPORTED PROJECTS & ORGANISATIONS

ENABLING LIFE IN VACANT SPACES

FINAL REPORT

PART THREE

IMPACTS & RETURNS

OF LIVS SUPPORTED PROJECTS & ORGANISATIONS

In what follows we outline how we categorised the impacts and returns of LIVS supported projects and organisations. In any kind of framework such as this, there are often multiple ways we could characterise each project's outcomes, impacts or 'returns'. As such in Box 3 we document our process here for transparency. See Box 4 for a summary of the key returns for each organisation or project in this analysis.

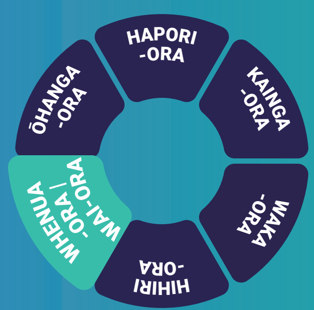
SURVIVING WELL

> What do we really need to live healthy lives both materially and psychically? How do we take other people and the planet into account when determining what's necessary for a healthy life? How do we survive well? (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013, p. xiii)

The CEROI approach encourages people and communities to consider what they and wider ecological systems need to survive well. Investments in surviving well can take many different forms. It can be as simple as choosing a living wage for staff to support their ability to survive well; or choosing an e-bike for deliveries and investing in reducing climate emissions so that all might survive well; it could mean using volunteer time to create spaces of social connection, thus investing in social wellbeing for many.

The LIVS-supported projects and organisations that invest in surviving well included Gap Filler, The Green Lab, the Temple for Christchurch, and Watch This Space (see Box 4). Given this is a broad investment area, other organisations/projects could fit

BOX 3:



ASSESSING THE RETURNS

USING THE MAURI ORA COMPASS

Hapori ora – Connected communities. We categorised the organisation/project as returning hapori ora if it resulted in connecting people together in some way – whether through an event such as performance, or through longer term relationships such as a community garden or sport club. For example, many of Gap Filler's projects involved play-based activities in the city, such as the giant video game (see image). While a community is generally understood to be a group of people with long-term overlapping geographic or other interests or attributes in common, communities can also emerge from being together in a shared place (or commons) that individuals collectively come to care for (Gudeman, 2001; Larsen and Johnston, 2018). The majority of LiVS supported projects in this research have outcomes in hapori ora (connected communities).

Ōhanga ora – circular bioeconomies. We categorised the organisation/project as returning ōhanga ora if it contributed to sustainable economic wellbeing. Usually, this was because it enabled people to make a livelihood, or contributed to some form of circular economy (redesign, reuse and recycling of materials). For example, the public pizza oven around which A Local Food Project grew enabled chef Alex Davies to test out his menu and gather a following for his food. He ended up being able to go into partnership in a restaurant space on the basis of his proven skills as a chef. Whereas, RAD Bikes reuse and repair bikes, and Rekindle teaches people how to reuse, repair and repurpose discarded objects. Many of the LiVS supported projects in this research have outcomes in ōhanga ora (circular bioeconomies).

Whenua ora | wai ora – regenerative ecosystems. We categorised the organisation/project returning whenua & wai ora if it contributed to environmental wellbeing. Environmental wellbeing is not just about minimising damage to the environment, but about contribution to regeneration (Reed, 2007). For example, Cultivate Christchurch actively regenerated the ecosystem of their LiVS site in Peterborough Street, building up some 30cm of soil, by composting green waste from the city through hot compost and worm farms (Goburdhone, 2021). Some of the LiVS supported projects in this research have outcomes in whenua and wai ora.

Waka ora – active accessible transport. We categorised the organisation/project returning waka ora if it contributed to active and accessible transport in the city or used active or accessible transport as part of the project itself. Active and accessible transport includes public transport systems, as well as the infrastructure that supports active modes of transport such as, footpaths, cycleways, bus shelters, and bike stands. For example, Big Street Bikers place their locky dock bike stands in LiVS locations around the city, allowing secure, free bike parking funded partly via the advertising on their stands. The outcome here is improved access to active transport. Cultivate uses electric bikes to pick up green waste bins and make vegetable deliveries. A small number of LiVS supported projects in this research had outcomes in waka ora, usually alongside other outcomes.

Hihiri ora – ecological energy. We categorised the organisation/project returning hihiri ora if it contributed to more widespread use of alternative low carbon energy systems, or reduced fossil fuel usage. For example, Jess from Mamacita's considered the different types of cooking energy and tried to balance the use of fossil fuels with renewable energies. Very few LiVS supported projects in this research had outcomes in hihiri ora.

Kainga ora – Living carbon storing buildings. We categorised the organisation/project returning kainga ora if it contributed to, resulted in, or used more renewable building design in the city, or encouraged culturally relevant design and landscapes (including beautification and public art). For example, The Green Lab's plant-filled temporary coworking spaces and Watch This Space which resulted in striking murals across the city. Many of the LiVS supported projects in this research have outcomes in kainga ora, contributing to place-making of Ōtautahi Christchurch following the earthquakes.

Super Street Arcade by Gap Filler

Photo: Erica Austin

Box 3:

Assessing the returns using the Mauri Ora Compass

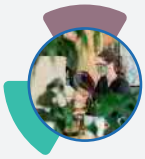
BOX 4:

SUMMARY OF INVESTMENT AREAS & RETURNS

FOR LIVS SUPPORTED ORGANISATIONS/PROJECTS

INVESTMENT AREA

SURVIVING WELL



The Green Lab

Gap Filler

Temple for Christchurch

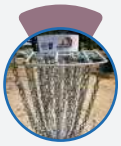
Watch this Space

CARING FOR COMMONS

Common Ground

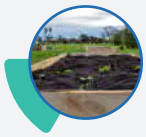
Hassals Lane

East x East



Disc Golf

Redzone Drone Racing



Avondale Community Gardens

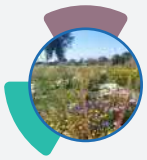
Big Street Bikers

ENCOUNTERING OTHERS

FESTA

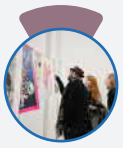
Free Theatre

The food collective



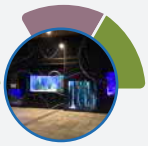
Unity Garden

Dance-o-mat

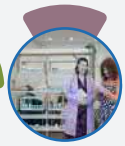


Winter Wander

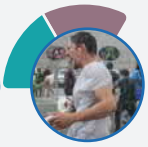
UniMed Site Performance



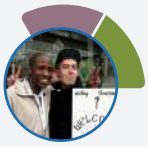
Shopop



Art Chemist

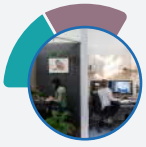


Milk Fight

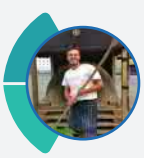


Street Residency

INVESTING IN FUTURES

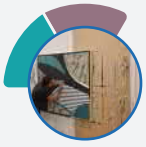


Salt Lane Studios



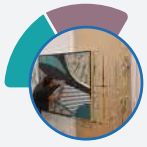
A Local Food Project

Kowhai Collective



Fiksate urban art gallery

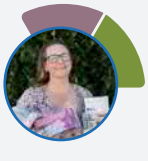
Cultivate Christchurch



Rollickin' gelato

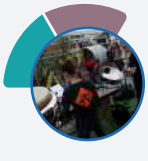
CONSUMPTION & DISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUS

Rad Bikes



Christchurch Aunties

Agropolis performances



Sound Garden

Rekindle

Box 4:

Summary of investment areas and returns

An overview of the LiVS supported organisations/ projects organised according to the investment intention areas from the CEROI, and the primary outcomes from the Mauri Ora Compass. The outcomes are not exhaustive, but rather reflect the diversity across the organisations/projects and the potentially incomplete information we had from interviews and analysis.. In the remainder of this section we describe the kinds of intentions underpinning each organisation/project, grouping these by the CEROI's investment areas. We combined two CEROI investment areas (consumption & distributing surplus) because they have overlapping concerns in the context of Christchurch's art and community scene.

The table is also a guide for the reader as to what comes next, while summarising the wellbeing contributions of these many important projects in an acessible way.

here. However, we prioritised organisations/projects that recognised wellbeing as about more than making a living, and who invested in something more – in joy, in psychological release, in beautiful spaces for wellbeing. As artist participant and project team member, Hannah Watkinson, put it:

> "We were young, we didn't have massive responsibility to think about survival kinds of things for our city, but we had the space to think about what could make it better. We weren't bogged down… by the actual human basic needs side of things. People were doing that. People were taking water trucks out to the suburbs that didn't have water, and people were helping people with the housing and stuff like that. Whereas when we came into the place-making realm, it was in those bonus extras."

Reuben Woods of Watch This Space spoke of the sense of excitement and opportunity to reimagine the city even in the midst of demolition, abandonment, and insurance battles.

> "It just became apparent that Christchurch is going to be in massive need of reimagination and intervention and transformation. The timing seemed to me inevitable that urban art would have a role to play because of the opportunity, the landscape was inviting people to do that."

Reflecting the importance of the role of urban art, participants and grey material highlighted the psycho-social importance of the Temple for Christchurch. Designed and organised by artist Hippathy Valentine, the temple was a set of wooden structures representing the wave form of the earthquake, on which residents wrote their messages (both deeply personal and more mundane). The temple was then shifted outside the city and burned in a ceremony of release.[5] Katie Gossett of Radio New Zealand reported on the event in 2013:

> "While the messages are deeply personal to those who wrote them, they are also meaningful to people like me, who have come to read and reflect."

5 : See the short documentary Temple for Christchurch by Kyle Kastner https://vimeo.com/80164232 and Joelle Daly, 'Temple for Christchurch goes up in flames' 23 September 2013, Stuff News http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/9196113/Temple-for-Christchurch-goes-up-in-flames

This mural on the Cotters Lane building, by artist Koryu, speaks of the shared experiences of people in the Tōhuku earthquake and Tsunami and the Christchurch earthquakes in 2011. It features on a Watch This Space tour. Koryu's mural was painted for the 2022 Flare Street Art Festival

Photo: Kelly Dombroski

Others interviewed in her piece gave their perspectives:

- You write your grief down, you see your grief destroyed.
- Despair, hope, longing, tragedy, loss… I think it's a picture of the people of Christchurch.
- It's a way to let go, there's a lot of people hurting in Christchurch. [6]

The Temple for Christchurch was something more than a 'cool art idea'. It was a therapeutic service, speaking directly to psychological needs and wellbeing. This is a good example of an investment in surviving well – where something more than just bare material survival is prioritised.[7] It highlights the importance of the arts in community wellbeing, and the necessity of such art in a wellbeing-based economy (Mullen et al., no date).

Temple for Christchurch

Temple for Christchurch

Photo: Gaby Montejo

The Green Lab

The Green Lab (previously Greening the Rubble) is another example of attending to the city's wellbeing needs in a more-than-material way. As the current director Khye Hitchcock describes:

> That sort of first group was a little bit guerrilla. They used to send seed bombs into the cordon zones and all sorts of things to literally green the rubble… a lot of it was just about providing something that wasn't rubble to look at.

Humans have a deep-seated need to engage with plants and nature (Stuart Smith, 2020), and this aspect of surviving well was recognised by Greening the Rubble from the beginning and with their ongoing focus on holistic mental and community wellbeing, particularly for marginalised groups. LiVS helped to find spaces for a variety of projects, including the restless forest.[8] Now, in addition to transitional spaces the organisation also invests in longer-term initiatives to support people-plant relationships, with an indoor green co-working space that hosts supportive community groups such as queer games night, writers' support group, te reo speaking time for tangata whenua, and organises community gardening work. Hitchcock says:

6 : See 'Southern Story for 19 September 2013' on Radio New Zealand, Afternoons with Jesse Mulligan https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/afternoons/audio/2569874/the-big-bonfire

7 : This point has been made by a number of Christchurch activists, for example, see for example many of the webinars available through Te Ora Auaha Creative Wellbeing Alliance www.creativewellbeingnz.org

8 : See https://thegreenlab.org.nz/restless-forest/

> We're interested in a deeper connection with local communities rather than exporting a model to other communities, which may or may not work ... We're very embedded in Ōtautahi.

SURVIVING WELL MEANS SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST BASIC MATERIAL SURVIVAL

Like The Green Lab, Gap Filler has also invested time, energy, creativity and more in surviving well in a post-quake city. Many participants mentioned the Dance-o-Mat as an example of the joy and fun that characterised Gap Filler's interventions. The Dance-o-Mat was a temporary dance floor with a sound system and lights, which were activated by a coin in a repurposed commercial washing machine. Dancers could connect their own music via their phone's Bluetooth or usb connections. The idea was to provide a space for release and fun in what was often a drab rebuilding city with no spaces for dancing. One of Gap Filler's founders (and current director) Ryan Reynolds tells the story of bringing outdoor dancing to Christchurch:

> We started socialising the idea of what became the Dance-O-Mat many years ago, and people sort of laughed and said well, no one in Christchurch will use it because it's too conservative here.
>
> A week and a half after we'd removed it and had actually put it in storage for the winter, [one of our team] went by and found two people dancing in the dirt listening to music on their phones, because the Dance-O-Mat had been there. That's the biggest success. We changed the way they thought about what it was okay to do in the city.

Dance-o-mat

Dance-O-Mat

Photo: Gap Filler

Others bringing joy and fun to Ōtautahi Chrsicthurch have found sites for their projects through LiVS. Watch This Space creative director Reuben Woods collaborated with LiVS on the large, grassed East x East space in Christchurch's redzone. Playing with the idea of an outdoor video game, the installation by artists Porta and Bols included pixelated tokens hanging from trees, giant old school video game controllers, and a container painted as a video screen with the words 'play again?'. Watch This Space also runs tours in the city to introduce people to the urban art that has contributed to building a new sense of place in the city. But it is not all joy and fun, as Woods himself writes of the other forms of contribution street artists have made:

Watch this Space

Figure 4:

'Play Again' by artists Bols and Porta plays on nostalgic video games

Photo: Watch This Space

> Urban artists' ability to engage with ideas involving transformation, place-making, exploration, presence, memory and the critique of authority, has ensured that their interventions have been meaningful additions to the transitional city, often in very different ways from other forms of public art and official flows of information (Woods, 2018, p104).

Like the Temple for Christchurch, other forms of street art in Christchurch have enabled public commentaries on specific social and political issues, both angry and humorous. Such interventions like urban art, gardening and other place-making installations are not just about aesthetics (i.e., how things look), but also encourage residents to experience and express feelings and emotions related to their place. This psychological component of 'surviving well' has been cared for and invested in by a range of urban actors enabled through LiVS-supported projects.

The outcomes from these investments have primarily been in the area of 'hapori ora' (connected communities). The connection here is not just person to person, but person to place, and person to nature/plants. The four organisation/projects outlined here also include outcomes in other areas. For example; the Green Lab has environmental outcomes in whenua ora (regenerative landscapes); Watch This Space has kainga ora, (living buildings) as buildings are adorned with culturally relevant commentary and art that shifts in response to community needs.

CARING FOR COMMONS

> How do we maintain, restore, and replenish the gifts of nature and intellect that all humans rely on to survive well? How do we care for our commons? (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013, p. xii).

People rely on natural and cultural commons to meet their everyday needs, although some may not recognise it. Commons can include places that are shared by a community, or other resources that are accessible to a group of people. Communities using commons often develop relationships and rules of care to stop them being degraded and over-used, or privatised and only benefiting certain individuals/groups[9]. Gibson Graham et al. (2013) provide an overview of how well-

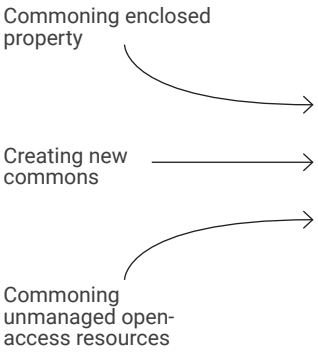
9 : Any discussion about commons in settler colonial societies should consider how and where land and other resources (and the implications of this) were stolen or appropriated from Indigenous people (c.f Bargh and Otter, 2009; Diprose et al., 2017).

The Temple for Christchurch

Photo: Gaby Montejo

managed commons differ from other kinds of resource management and use (see Table 1). Importantly, commons can have any form of ownership structure (private, state, collective etc) as long as the other conditions outined in Table 1 are present.

DISTINGUISHING COMMONS FROM OTHER TYPES OF RESOURCES



ACCESS	USE	BENEFIT	CARE	RESPONSIBILITY	OWNERSHIP
Narrow	Restricted by owner	Private	Performed by owner or employee	Assumed by owner	Private individual Private collective State
Shared and wide	Negotiated by a community	Widely distributed to community and beyond	Performed by community members	Assumed by community	Private individual Private collective State Open access
Unrestricted	Open and unregulated	Finders keepers	None	None	Open access State

Table 1:

Distinguishing commons from other types of resources

The shaded area indicates the criteria for identifying commons. 'Commoning' refers to the process of bringing either private or open-access property and resources into common access, use, benefit, care and responsibility. Modified from Gibson-Graham, Cameron and Healy (2013) under creative commons licence.

Investing in caring for commons can include practices like putting a conservation covenant on a shared space, using a creative commons licence for a resource so it can benefit many, and opening up a privately owned space for common use. Many of the LiVS supported projects help private landowners share their spaces for community use. The projects are developed, and more importantly *maintained*, through investments of time, energy and finances, for community use.

While many LiVS supported organisations/projects contribute to caring for commons, those discussed here have negotiated widespread collaboration between very different groups, communities and individuals caring for different sorts of commons that are accessible to a relatively large number of people. In particular, we highlight how the East x East project required significant negotiation and community investment in decision-making around the use and care of commons, and the Big Street Bikers project as an example of commoning practice.

The East x East (ExE) space is part of a wider area of land that is administered by Land Information New Zealand (LINZ). The East x East space is a large open space in Burwood that resulted from houses being demolished after the site was 'redzoned' following the earthquakes. Representing LINZ, Glenys Browne has been managing the use of the land in the last few years. LiVS had the license to manage one part of the land (see Figure 5). As Browne notes in an interview, because of the commons nature of the site, any installations or projects "have to benefit the community".

PROJECTS ARE DEVELOPED AND MAINTAINED THROUGH INVESTMENTS OF TIME, ENERGY AND FINANCES, FOR COMMUNITY USE

While anyone could suggest a project, applicants could not just put a project in place because they “feel like doing it” but needed to articulate “what the benefit to the community might be”. Some applicants are not experienced in articulating community benefits and part of Browne’s role has been to help people do this, as well as other tasks (such as a health and safety plan and liability insurance). LiVS has taken up much of this work in the ExE site, and also commissioned projects that would bring benefit, identified through engagement with the local community.

East x East

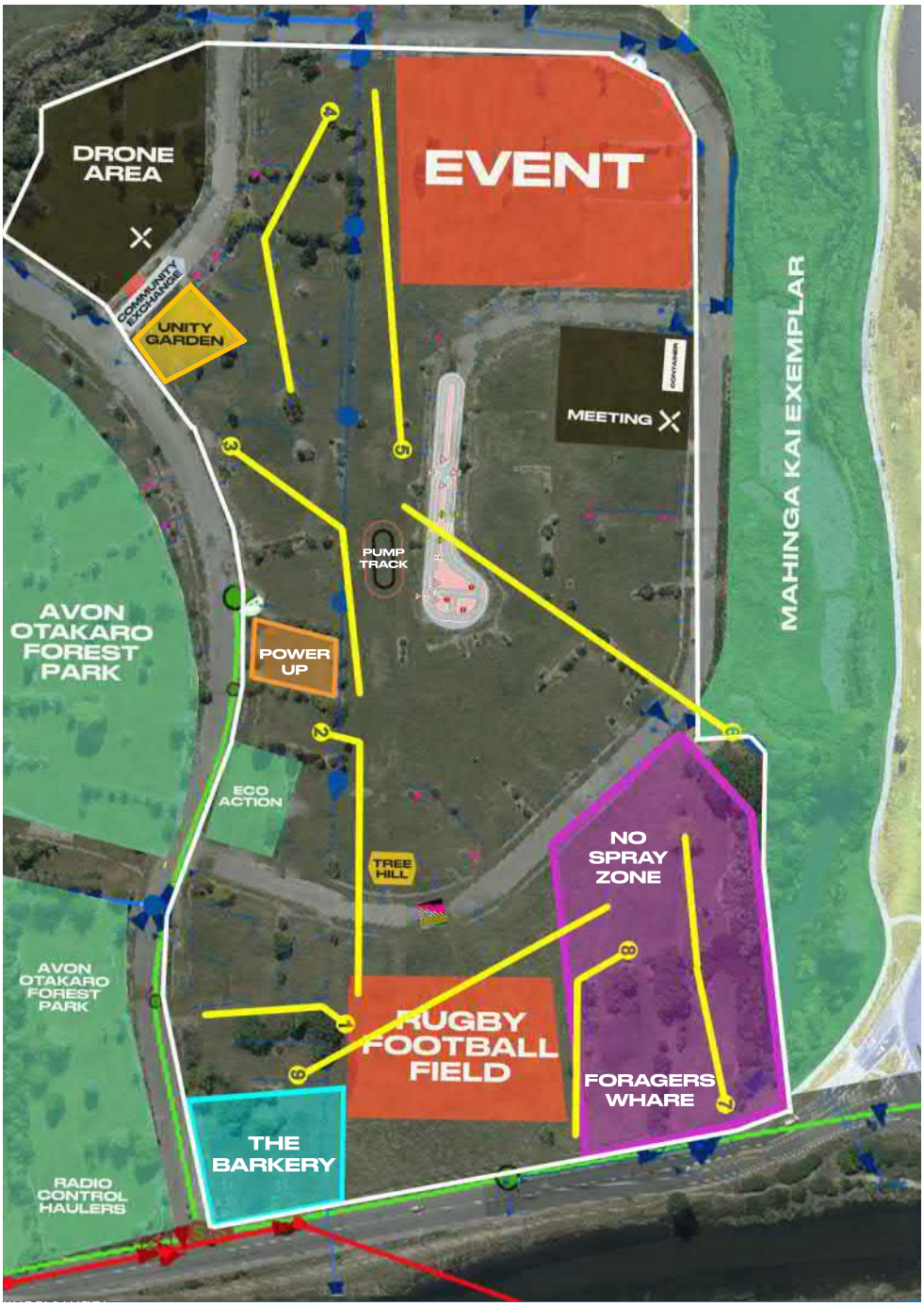


Figure 5:

Map of East x East

Hannah Watkinson was employed by LiVS to lead the process of engagement with the Burwood community. She described how important place connection has been throughout the engagement process:

> The most important thing, with East x East, for me, was when I came into it, it had been seven years, but people still have a lot of emotion. People still feel connections to land that they feel like they were unfairly treated over. The biggest thing for me was being able to say, I'm from here, I lived through this in the same area.

Having people engage with the space respectfully was a core goal of the ExE project. The shared space has become one in which the use, benefit, and access are distributed throughout the Burwood community mainly. The care, maintenance and responsibility of the site has been shared between LINZ, LiVS and community users (see Table 2).

EAST X EAST AS A COMMONS

	ACCESS	USE	BENEFIT	CARE	RESPONSIBILITY	OWNERSHIP
Commons	Shared and wide	Negotiated by a community	Widely distributed to community and beyond	Performed by community members	Assumed by community	Private individual Private collective State Open access
East x East	Burwood community and beyond	Open	Burwood community and beyond	LINZ, LiVS, community, projects and organisations	LINZ, LiVS, community	State

Table 2:
ExE as a Commons

Through the ExE site, LiVS has supported a number of projects, including Watch This Space's 'Play Again?' active 'video' game (described earlier). Reflecting on the shared and wide access and use of ExE, Watch This Space creative director Reuben Woods described an important aspect of dynamic commons:

> I think at the core there is a community, but then I also think it does shift based on who we engage with and who we hope to encourage, I guess, through what we're doing. That's one of the goals that we have, is creating a sustainable urban art ecosystem in the city, so that as a destination young people can grow up and go hey actually, you know what, I really love making art and I love making art in these types of places… I think one of the attractions for me of the concept of commons as well is that it doesn't have the entrenched idea of being a fixed thing. It is somewhat amorphous and open to change… [this was] perhaps the energy of transitional architecture that was explored and celebrated post-quake…

Other projects supported on the ExE space have a smaller community. For example, The RedZone Drone Racing club is an all-ages club for people who build and race their own drones. Drone racing involves competitors wearing virtual reality headsets that stream the camera feed from a camera mounted on their drones. Drones go

PEOPLE STILL FEEL CONNECTIONS TO THE LAND

at speeds of 160 kilometres per hour, and race through a course with slalom-like gates. Prior to having a safe, fenced space in the ExE site, they met in different parts of the RedZone, hauling their gear in the boots of their cars as needed. Club president Nathan Van Slooten was just a teenager at that time, without access to a car, which made this difficult. Safety issues included people and animals walking or running through the course while the drones were racing. Once a site on the ExE was secured, the club was able to secure grants to invest in fencing, protective gazebos for spectators, a club computer, internet access and a large container to store equipment. More than three thousand individual races are recorded on the club's website, with more than 1000 individual entries. The club has begun to host much larger events such as the 2023 New Zealand Open. Van Slooten notes that it is 'still a closed tight knit community because internationally [the sport] is still relatively small', and at the time of the interview, their club was made up entirely of men. The members range between the age of 14 and 'late 50s'. The club has been a base for new Canterbury residents to develop social connections. Van Slooten described how a member who was new to New Zealand joined the club and now counts other members as some of his closest friends. Van Slooten describes the importance of clubs for social connection:

> "…because it's kind of what a hobby is for – really especially once you start working you've got your work friends and then your hobby or something to try and connect, especially when you move over from a different country and you haven't grown up [here]."

Redzone Drone Racing

Red Zone drone race at night

Photo: Nathan Van Slooten

There has long been concern about men's mental health in Aotearoa New Zealand. Studies note men between the ages of 20 and 40 have the highest suicide rates and lowest healthcare utilisation (Johnson et al., 2008), while more recent research has highlighted the significant role men's social networks play in fostering wellbeing (McKenzie et al, 2018). The Drone Racing Club not only cares for the commonly owned drone racing equipment, the course, and storage container, but actively fosters

men's social networks and community wellbeing. Like other clubs, these networks can provide social connection and care for members in times of difficulty. For example, Van Slooten highlighted the virtual racing events that ran during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown that helped people endure social isolation. He also described the importance of 'getting outdoors', and the way care for the land on which the group meets is embedded with care for other members. While participating in activities may not necessarily improve men's mental health when 'compartmentalization' strategies are used (McKenzie et al., 2018), extending men's social networks is an important precursor to more supportive social relations and adaptive masculine development based on trusting relations (Wester et al., 2007). The outcome of investing in care for these commons is a more connected community accessible to those with a shared interest in building and racing drones.

Similarly, the disc golf[10] course installed on the ExE space invites a commoning community to gather around a shared interest. Chris Davies, whose company Vortica designed and installed the disc golf course noted that working with LiVS to get the course installed was extremely smooth (compared to other attempts with another organisation). Davies described the multiple benefits of the sport and course:

> "It's the only activity I'm aware of in which four generations of the same family group can actively participate and all enjoy. Because I don't count watching television as an activity. It reconnects locals, community locals, with their park spaces, which generally speaking are classified by councils as under-utilised. People haven't connected with those parklands. Even if they take their kids down to the playground at their park, they don't engage with that parkland, they just sit there watching their kids."

10 : Disc golf can be played alone or in groups, and involves selecting frisbee discs and attempting to get them in a metal basket in the minimum number of throws.

DISC GOLF CAN BE A RECREATION, A FAMILY ACTIVITY, A GAME, A SPORT - ALL ON THE SAME COURSE AND ALL AT THE SAME TIME

11 : https://udisc.com/disc-golf-growth-report

For Davies, disc golf is a great way for people to reconnect with nature and foster environmental awareness with the trees, grass, air and wind, because "you and your discs interact with every single one of these things". A global report on disc golf by U Disc reported a huge upsurge in play during the COVID-19 pandemic, starting from March 2020.[11] The outdoor nature of the sport supports active lifestyles without the close contact of gyms or other competitive sports that closed during lockdowns.

Davies notes that the socio-economic demographics of disc golf are almost the opposite of ball golf:

Disc Golf

> "You don't need to own a BMW or Mercedes, and I think the local disc golf club's got $10 a year membership. But you don't even need to be a member of the club to use it. Because it's not a formal sport, you don't have to book a tee-time. There are no clothing requirements. There are no behavioural requirements apart from common decency, and no-one's enforcing the rules on you. So, it's a free activity, and the neat thing about disc golf is that it can be a recreation, a family activity, a game, a sport - all on the same course and all at the same time."

This example shows how an investment in caring for the commons of disc golf courses has wellbeing outcomes in the areas of community and individual wellbeing, as well as connected communities: connecting players together, but also connecting players with nature in place through play.

Avondale Community Gardens

Another project in the ExE area that connects humans with the nature is the Avondale Community Gardens, founded and run by Jordan, who was just 12 years old when he started it. Jordan's aim was to grow fresh fruit and vegetables and get other people interested in growing food. An active Facebook page is updated regularly with pictures of the garden, and many community groups participate in donating soil, seeds, tools and more for the garden. In her interview Glenys Browne spoke of the joy of supporting a young person to start a community organisation and garden, and other participants in this research also mentioned Jordan's enthusiasm and skill with gardening. While the gardens are mainly cared for by Jordan, the donations and interest of others in the community illustrate care for the commons of the garden and youth wellbeing more generally. The food produced is distributed for free, with no entry barriers.

Hassals Lane

Commons in other parts of the city are also actively cared for by groups of people – including the site of Hassals lane in Waltham. Previously used by Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT) for horticultural training, and then by Seven Oaks School, the site is owned by Ara Polytechnic and now shared by a range of people and organisations. LiVS have administered access and use of the site on behalf of Ara since 2014.

Currently the site houses the 20:20 compost initative, several artist studios, the Free Theatre, a bush kindy, a play area and other storage facilities that are on short term low-cost lease.[12] Until recently, Christchurch Aunties stored furniture and other supplies for Women's Refuge there. The site is mainly maintained by the Canterbury Permaculture Institute. While at the time of research, LiVS still managed most of the governance, a group of 'commoners' are emerging and there is potential for the group to work together to create a more formal organisation to manage the space. In this way, care for commons can be extended beyond the immediate spaces used by each group, into investing more collectively into commons care with ecological and community wellbeing outcomes (whenua ora and hapori ora).

12 : https://www.canterburypermaculturein stitute.co.nz/projects-8

Big Street Bikers

Finally, Big Street Bikers have sought to create a bike lockup commons, where free bike security is enabled through advertisements on the secure bike stands. LiVS brokered the central city sites for the organisations very first locky docks. Given the high rate of bike theft in Christchurch, particularly of e-ebikes, the service has been welcomed throughout the city. Founder Andrew Charlesworth spoke of his passion for making biking easier for more people. While it is not exactly a commons or commoning community, the organisation has enabled the public use of previously private spaces, while providing a free bike locking service.

13 : While other LiVS supported organisations/projects facilitated caring for commons, those discussed here show a range of different ways that individuals, collectives, public and private entities can care for commons that have wider access, use, benefit, care, and responsibility than privately owned land or more conventional approaches to publicly owned open access resources.

The outcome from intentionally investing in commons described here are enhanced whenua | wai ora (living blue and green ecosystems), hapori ora (more connected and just communities), and waka ora (active transport)[13] . Caring for commons is not

COMMONS ANALYSIS OF HASSALS LANE AND BIG STREET BIKERS

	ACCESS	USE	BENEFIT	CARE	RESPONSIBILITY	OWNERSHIP
Commons	Shared and wide	Negotiated by a community	Widely distributed to community and beyond	Performed by community members	Assumed by community	Private individual Private collective State Open access
Hassals Lane	Hassals Lane tenants and local community	Hassals lane tenants and local community	Hassals lane tenants and local community	LiVS, Canterbury Permaculture, Hassals Lane tenants, local community	LiVS	State (Ara)
Big Street Bikers	All bike users and advertisers	Bike users with app	Bike users with app and advertisers	Big Street Bikers	Big Street Bikers	Private, state and other ownership

Table 3:

Commons analysis of Hassals lane and Big Street Bikers

just about the 'common' site or place either – it is also about building communities of people who work together to maintain or share a resource, and in the process foster individual and collective wellbeing.

ENCOUNTERING OTHERS

> What types of relationships do we have with the people and environments that enable us to survive well? How much do we know about those who live in distant places and provide the inputs that we use to meet our needs? How do we encounter others as we seek to survive well? (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013, p. xiii).

People often encounter each other as they go about meeting their daily needs; shopping, getting help from neighbours, accessing shared commons and through purposeful connections. But face to face encounters have reduced with new digital encounters and online retail opportunities. For Gibson-Graham et al (2013), encountering others includes encountering *distant* others, others whose lives are affected by the decisions and transactions people make in Aotearoa New Zealand. A CEROI approach to intentionally investing in 'spaces of encounter' encourages connections with others in ways that support their wellbeing as well as ours. Many of the LiVS supported organisations/projects enable such supportive encounters with others.

Some of the LiVS supported organisations/projects infuse face to face encounter back into the city; including through dancing together in public, participator art, and food collectives that involved public preparation and shared consumption of food. Others encourage awkward, uncomfortable, and therapeutic encounters, challenging participants to encounter where their food comes from, the kinds of inequalities present in the city. Others enact ethical decision-making in their

The food collective

Tacos at Sun Dog Diner

Photo: Jessica Lynch

business transactions, practicing social procurement[14] or sustainable procurement.

Jess Lynch is one such person ensuring her values are reflected through food production and exchange. She helped set up The Food Collective, a post-quake group of experimental foodsellers mainly in the Gap Filler site The Commons. Jess started Mamacita's taco truck near The Pallet Pavilion in The Commons, one of a small number of food providers in the central city.

> So I started what we called the Food Collective there and was bringing on a little bit of a - we were trying to make a little hub there with some different food vendors and stuff like that… They needed me there specifically to be food for their nighttime activations [setting up] all the different concerts that they would do in, New Year's Eve and things like that. At that time it was really quite a new venture for us but we grew from that and we were quite a force for a while there at all the different events.

For Lynch, buying local and making sure her products come from 'happy homes' is a 'no-brainer'. She gives examples of different decisions made around the kind of energy she uses, the kinds of animal products she will use, the kinds of 'backdoor' exchanges that support small start-ups and the kinds of social and environmental procurement practices that underpin her business. Lynch was one of several chefs, including Alex Davies (see next section) who spoke mainly of their commitment to freshness and good relationships, rather than abstract environmental values. This reflects what Johanisova et al (2020) call 'rootedness in place', a characteristic of what they call 'eco-social enterprise'. For these eco-social enterprises, 'closing the loop' in a local sense is an important part of their enterprise's transactions. Johanisova and colleagues give the example of 'when farm manure is ploughed back into a field whence the animals were fed' and understands such practices as 'connected with the idea of returning surplus to the ecosystem that made the surplus possible' (2020, p 67). Lynch speaks of a similar value that attracted her to

14 : Social procurement refers to 'a suite of activities that are essentially concerned with generating various types of socio-economic outcomes' through procurement (McNeill 2020, p255). It often refers to public sector organisations enacting their socio-economic goals by directly supporting businesses that contribute to these.

working with urban farm and youth-supporting enterprise Cultivate:

> “They would take the restaurant waste and then you could buy those vegetables back from them and it was wonderful, right? It wasn’t as perfect as you want it to be, you didn’t always get what you wanted and they couldn’t do everything with every waste that you had but it was just such a great idea, right? The thing is the more we promote that and try to support that, maybe that could be the norm.”

Lynch notes that sometimes this required her business to be more flexible and at times, accept reduced profit margins. For example, she decided to purchase an electric van for running errands in her current business, Sun Dog Diner. Yet such decisions were not framed as ‘environmental’ decisions as such – but rather in terms of commitments to a particular place. Larsen and Johnston (2017, p13) write how place-based struggles can transform the human-environment relationships through ‘the difficult challenge of living together, especially when it comes to living together in ways that respect and support life, livelihood, and land’. Lynch’s examples of ethical decision-making in her businesses are part of an intentional investment into encountering others – including nonhuman others – in ways that supports her, and their wellbeing. The outcomes from this investment include ōhanga ora (circular bio-economies) and shifts towards hihiri ora (post-carbon energy).

The CEROI broadly frames ‘encountering others’ as enacting ethics through market and nonmarket transactions (see Gibson-Graham et al., 2013). However, LiVS has supported a wide range of art installations and performances[15] that create and foster opportunities to encounter others in both transactional and nontransactional spaces. A key person involved in many of these art projects is Audrey Baldwin who facilitated The Art Chemist, a pop up shop that prescribed healing art adventures and experiences for people who came in for specific and general ailments.[16] Nine

15 : We draw on Hawkins (2011, p 465) who understands art as an ‘ensemble of practices, performances, experiences and artefacts rather than as a singular ‘object”. This incorporates a range of practices, from objects, performances and installations (what are often termed ‘relational aesthetics’), to temporary art, sound art, public sculptures and social art (Bourriaud 2002). Over the last few decades ‘participatory art’ has become increasingly popular and is more concerned with collective interactions, rather than an art object to viewer interaction (Bishop 2004). Participatory art often places emphasis on the formation of community through the process of participation, exploring the open-ended and democratising processes of participation (Diprose 2015).

Art Chemist

Art Chemist by Audrey Baldwin

Photo: Janneth Gill

16 : https://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/125052247/art-chemist-opens-in-central-christchurch-to-help-heal-people-with-art

performance artists were involved – and prescriptions ranged from giving people maps to fun art adventures to poignant tales of loss and finding connection through art. Baldwin, like LiVS board member Gaby Montejo, was a member of The Social, an artist collective focusing on interactive and site specific works to create space for artists to engage with other artists, and the wider public. This group was a significant actor in post-quake art in Christchurch, and highlights once again the importance of art in community wellbeing (Blomkamp, 2014).

FESTA

Encounters in Ōtautahi Christchurch have also included the five Festivals of Transitional Architecture (FESTA) held betwen 2012 and 2018. From its outset, FESTA sought to invite encounter with *possibility*. The first FESTA, *Lux* (2012), created lighted urban interventions in the dark and empty city centre, and for some residents, was their first visit back to the central city after the earthquakes. The festival had different themes and directors each year, and provided a space for transitional architectural interventions designed by both students and more senior architects throughout Australasia. Director Jess Halliday writes that despite many changes in organisation and design,

> At its core, FESTA is still conceived as an event that seeks new ways to create meaningful connections between and within communities and urban place in a co-operative and open way. We understand FESTA as providing a platform for city-makers and citizens to "imagine and experience Christchurch differently" and to create opportunities for the denizens of Christchurch to get directly involved in the remaking of their city (Halliday 2017, p183).

17 : Christchurch Conversations is also partly funded by the Huritanga Urban Wellbeing Programme, the funders of the research we are reporting here. https://teputahi.org.nz/christchurch-conversations/

Te Pūtahi Centre for Architecture and City-Making, the charitable trust behind FESTA, has now moved on to other kinds of city-making interventions, including the speaker series *Christchurch Conversations*, and new festival *Open Christchurch.*[17] In 2021, the FESTA Facebook page posted:

> Five festivals, seven years and over 60,000 participants later, FESTA is saying farewell. From LUXCity to FEASTA!, we – and all those who have contributed, participated and attended – have reimagined Christchurch and celebrated urban creativity over Labour Weekend.

While some of the FESTA interventions were fantastical evocations of different futures meant to inspire and delight, others had serious material underpinnings of, for example, use and re-use of materials. Similarly, the 2016 festival invited participants to think about their encounters with the more-than-human world around them, and to think about the effects that waste materials might have on other beings and ecosystems.

The final 2018 FESTA focused on imagining different kinds of food futures (FEASTA!), an appropriate theme for the Waitaha Canterbury plains where unsustainable farming practices have been criticised (Pawson, 2018). The role of food in encounter is thus reiterated – from The Food Collective, to the Milk Fight, to FEASTA!, where encounters with other people and distant parts of the world are threaded through food, and an ethic of getting what we need for our wellbeing with attention to the

wellbeing of others, both human and non-human.

The kinds of investments that have supported these diverse food, art, and festival projects include time, energy, food, household goods, toiletries and more. Outcomes include kainga ora (living carbon-zero buildings and good urban design), and hapori ora (enhanced spaces for community connection). FESTA in particular, has enabled architects and designers to socialise urban sustainability and imagination, while fostering collectives of people interested in different kinds of urban and architectural futures, thereby helping shape emerging student-architects.

CONSUMPTION AND DISTRIBUTING SURPLUS

> What materials and energy do we use up in the process of surviving well? What do we consume? What do we do with what is left over after we've met our survival needs? How do we make decisions about this excess? How do we distribute surplus?
> (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013, p. xiii).

Consumption is often framed as key activity people engage in as economic actors (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013). Consumption is often studied as part of identity production and fetishization (Mansvelt, 2005), and increasingly framed as a symptom of systemic issues that threaten human societies and the life supporting capacity of the earth (including overconsumption, planned product obsolescence, pollution and waste). However, consumption can be consciously considered, and at the most basic level is about how people meet their surivival needs and make decisions about what to do with excess (Gibson-Graham et al, 2013). Many of the LiVS supported organisations/projects have encouraged people to rethink and introduce new consumption practices by redistributing and repurposing things that might otherwise be considered waste. This is important for urban wellbeing in Ōtautahi Christchurch and beyond, particularly the need to consume in ways that do not harm the possibility of future generations surviving well.

Milk Fight

Some of the most iconic LiVS supported provocations relating to consumption have been by performance artists. Artists from The Social not only fostered encounters with others, as in the previous section, but also challenged participants and viewers to reflect on consumption practices. One such performance was *The Milk Fight*, a large-scale fight with milk with live commentary and music. Participants were invited to throw milk at each other. Journalist Will Harvie describes it:

> "Milk Fight" was a 2014 Festa event arranged by artist Gaby Montejo to illustrate how the dairy industry seems to provoke argument in New Zealand, or something. Whatever, it was fun. [18]

Another performance on the LiVS-brokered Agropolis Urban Farm site was Hana Aoake's *Meat Prize*. In this performance, Aoake begins plastic wrapped and 'dressed' with herbs, looking like a large piece of meat prepared for a roast. In the

18 : https://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/124260439/what-became-of-the-transitional-project-movement-in-christchurchs-rebuild

Hana Aoake's Meat Prize

Photo: Tanya Mariel Iniguez

performance, she fights her way out of the plastic. Her commentary:

> "Whenever I go anywhere I am aware that my body may be treated as public property. Much in the same way that animals are exploited and dismembered for human consumption; the gendered body exists beneath a structure of oppression.[19]"

19 : https://chchsocial.tumblr.com/post/72038933969/meat-prize-hana-aoake-whenever-i-go-anywhere-i/amp

Agropolis performances

The site of Aoake's performance was the Agropolis Urban Farm, a concept piece for FESTA 2014, the urban farm demonstrated the capacity of communities to grow food in temporary spaces. The farm was the precursor to Cultivate Christchurch, which involves youth interns in urban farming on temporary sites (see page 48). In these three examples (and many more in the genre), performance and social art was used to reflect and express the relationships enacted through different consumption practices, and the impacts of these on other people, animals, and the wider environment. Here, art acts as public pedgagogy, raising awareness and prompting critical reflection and change (Schuermans et al., 2012).

Milk Fight by The Social

Photo: Ed Lust

Sound Garden

Rekindle

Consumption, production and surplus are also core to a number of different reuse projects on LiVS-brokered spaces. Gaby Montejo's *Soundgarden* was a Gap Filler project that celebrated making fun sounds in the city with a collection of sound creating instruments made from recycled junk. Rekindle is one organisation that has actively supported communities to rethink consumption by reusing and repurposing items through craft and skill workshops. Rekindle specialises in 'Resourceful Skills Workshops', and featured in the 2016 FESTA on resourcefulness and zero waste. Rekindle also ran the 2018 *Necessary Traditions* festival, which celebrated and taught skills that enabled reuse of materials as well as use of foraged materials. Rekindle teach rope-making from tī kouka, spoon and spatula making from recycled or pruned wood, harakeke flax weaving, embroidery and repair of clothing, and many more skills for radically renewable consumption.

Abu Obaiah et al (2021) documented the kinds of volunteer investments into reuse of discarded and foraged materials, and the kinds of community outcomes that emerged. They speculated that Rekindle's investment in skills development had benefits to the commons of future consumption and recycling knowhow practices of those who attended the workshops but also a much wider ripple effect group locally and internationally. Here, consumption is reimagined as integrated with production through handcrafts that invite people to treasure their materials and redesign and develop them for different kinds of uses. This bringing together of consumption and production can help connect people meet their survival needs, and also help highlight what surpluses might be available in urban contexts.

WHAT WE CONSUME AND WHAT IS SURPLUS TO CONSUMPTION IS A MOVEABLE AND FLEXIBLE RESPONSE TO OUR SURROUNDINGS

What we consume and what is surplus to consumption is not a fixed amount but a moveable and flexible response to our surroundings. For Gibson-Graham et al, surplus is what is left over after survival needs have been met (2013), but what these survival needs entail is partly dependent on environment. In a relatively cold place such as Waitaha Canterbury, survival needs and consumption must include energy costs, shelter, heating and warm clothing and bedding. In other parts of the country and the world, these survival needs and consumption expectations are different. Gibson-Graham et al also invite businesses to think about what their survival needs might be (called 'survival payments') and what their surplus distribution might look like – divided between 'business payments' that go back into a business to build its capacity, and 'distribution payments' that often go to shareholders or owners. In tough times, shareholders and owners can choose to reduce their distribution payments and make sure that all employees are getting adequate survival payments. Organisations can also consider environmental sustainability to be a bottom line for survival payments, factoring in the 'more-than-human' systems and entities that we all rely on. Financial surplus is just one kind of surplus, however, and in the projects that follow, surplus has been understood as something material as well as financial.

RAD Bikes is an organisation that was founded to help people get cycling. RAD

Rad Bikes

stands for 'Recyle a Dunger', dunger being a colloquial term for an old decrepit car or other machine. The idea was simple: to take bikes that people did not want and fix them up and give them to people who needed them. Alongside this, to teach the skills for people to fix up their own bikes. The underlying goals of the organisation, which started as a Gap Filler project, is to get more people on bikes. This is framed as a waste minimisation and carbon emission reduction strategy, as well as a strategy for building wider community and urban wellbeing. Director Jess says

> "Really early on, we did a waste minimisation research project looking at everything we did. We just realised the biggest thing we can do is get more bikes out there. That's like - rather than quantifying how much tonnes of metal recycling or anything. ...Just upping our output to get people on bikes is our focus."

Among many other things, RAD bikes is a community of people helping to redistribute surplus bikes. One thing we discussed in our interview was the number of people who start working on community wellbeing projects while on parental leave from paid employment. This was the case with Jess, who told the story of her involvement as follows:

> "I was coming off maternity leave and it all just slotted into place... I don't really want to do architecture fulltime. I really enjoy this. Maybe I could do this."

In this way, we can think of organisations like RAD being sites of investment for people who want to contribute to community wellbeing rather than having their

RAD Bikes workshop

Photo: Jess Smale

surplus time and energy and labour taken up by an employer. This taking control of one's own time was a theme in many interviews, but Jess articulates it well. The conversation continued:

Facilitator:	It's quite interesting in this interview process, seeing how many of these kinds of projects are sometimes taken up by people on parental leave. There's that flexibility?
Interviewee:	[time to] reassess. Yes.
Facilitator:	A reassessment and thinking about what do I want to spend my time on…
Interviewee:	But also, totally practical. Like I say to people. It feels purposeful. It's flexible. It's social. When you're at home with a baby, tearing your hair out.
Facilitator:	Yeah. Something to look forward to.
Interviewee:	Yeah, and fits in with family. But also, shows our kids that that's a legitimate part of - or thing to do.

In other organisations interviewed, people talked about deliberately using a strategy of having lots of part-time employees, to cater for the reduced work hours of people with chronic illnesses. For people like Jess who began as volunteers, board members and then sometimes end up in paid roles, the pay is not necessarily the first reason for involvement, but more of a stipend to recognise the contributions they have begun to make in their involvement. The danger is that as the organisations grow and develop, people remain on wages well below sustainable levels with little room for growth. While some transitional organisations such as Gap Filler and The Green Lab have gone on to offer consultancy services to supplement organisational incomes, many organisations, LiVS included, continue to make ends meet with a mixture of grants, donations, volunteer labour and contributions from users. The distribution of surplus, then, is both material (in the form of bikes in the case of RAD Bikes) but also financial (with donors and grants) and in the form of labour (both volunteer and underpaid). As researchers have shown in many parts of the world, this kind of precarity makes it difficult to sustain such projects and organisations (Bain & McLean, 2012; McLean, 2022). Those organisations who had secured 3 year funding grants had a sense of expansive creativity that was difficult for more precarious organisations to realise. Yet the wellbeing outcomes from these organisations are here evident. The challenge for Ōtautahi and elsewhere is how to make more significant long term investments in the important work these organisations are doing.

The kind of labour involved in getting funding is significant and complex. RAD Bikes uses a complex spreadsheet for calculating the cost:benefit ratio when it applies to a variety of funds, including city council funds and foundations such as Rata. Jess notes that she usually tries to secure enough co-funding so that one dollar of funding is producing more than five dollars of value. In this strategy for calculation, the investments into rethinking consumption and distributing surplus bikes are put into dollar values, with estimated dollar returns, similar to the work of Petrescu and colleagues (2021) on the community economy return on investment developed alongside a Paris urban farm. This approach can clearly communicate to funders

that their funds have impact. The time required to undertake and prepare these reports, however, is rarely accounted for, as Jess says:

> “You’re just like - it’s not really billable. You’re like do I use up the money that you’ve given me to get the money that you are going to give me?”

Christchurch Aunties

Investing in waste minimisaton and distributing surplus bikes is definitely a real cost both financially and in terms of time, but the returns are well traced in Jess’s work with tables showing RAD Bikes’ outcomes. This kind of project has outcomes in waka ora – (active and low carbon transport), and ōhanga ora (circular economies of waste reduction and reuse).

For Christchurch Aunties, redistributing other people’s surplus is their core business. One of the founders, Heather Milne, spoke of how the organisation connected low income communities with high income communities via surplus furniture and domestic goods. Christchurch Aunties uses a wide network of contacts via Facebook to put out calls for specific furniture and household items needed by Women’s Refuge, a national organisation supporting women and children affected by family violence. Many women wanted to help, but sometimes those with the most financial resources did not have social connections with the people who needed help. Christchurch Aunties sought to bridge that gap, by providing a way for surplus items (and donations of cash) to be distributed to those who need it, as Milne puts it:

Christchurch Aunties surplus supplies

Photo: Heather Milne

> “So they don’t know what to do with it. They’ve got the stuff but they don’t know what to do with it. So we’re the go-between and often those people in [wealthy suburb] are nervous or scared or not sure what’s needed, don’t know how to go about it, desperately want to support and help but aren’t really sure and they’re not familiar with other suburbs.”

Christchurch Aunties used a LiVS supported space in Hassals Lane as a storage unit for surplus supplies, including toiletries and and household items, that could be redistributed as needed. In 2021, they moved on to their own building. Milne spoke of the journey of Christchurch Aunties being one of greater boundary setting for herself as when the organisation started, everything was stored in her small house that she shares with her two children. The LiVS site enabled Milne to set a bit more of a work-life boundary as the organisation started to take off. The space at Hassals Lane was a start point for expanding the organisation

outside of Milne's house.

> It showed us - it was this great in-between space, which doesn't sound very respectful but it showed us how much we've come but it also showed us how much more we need and how much more we can grow. When we had the Love Grace handbag campaign[20] we received over 400 handbags and there were two spots that you could stand in and it was all over the floor, piled up. That space has seen a lot of things and we've always felt safe there too.

Surplus space, surplus items, and time and energy were all invested into women and children's wellbeing in Ōtautahi Christchurch. The outcomes are a more connected community (hapori ora) and better home environments (kainga ora) for women setting up a new home after leaving an abusive partner.

20 : This campaign was set up by the family of Grace Millane, a young woman from the UK who was murdered on a date while travelling in New Zealand. Donors filled near-new handbags with needed toiletry items, which would be gifted to women staying at Women's Refuges. See https://www.lovegrace.co.uk/

The examples illustrate how people have intentionally invested time, energy and creative know-how into a variety of projects which help others to reduce, reuse and rethink consumption practices, and distribute surplus wisely to support social and environmental wellbeing. The outcomes of these investments include new communities of people with the know-how for repurposing and recycling – contributing to a circular community economy (oranga ora) and access to sustainable transport (waka ora), among other things.

INVESTING IN FUTURES

> How do we store and use our surplus and savings so that people and the planet are supported and sustained? How do we invest for the future?
>
> — JK Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron and Stephen Healy

Investing in the wellbeing of our future generations and our planet is an urgent task for this decade. LIVS has enabled a number of projects that directly invest in the futures of specific individuals and groups in changing the world, and in the wellbeing of Ōtautahi Christchurch.

When we think about investment, we often think about shareholders, who invest financially into companies with the expectation of return. In fact, we often think that companies *must* create a return for investors, a way of thinking known as *shareholder primacy* (Healy 2018). Yet, as Healy (2018) argues, this way of understanding investment is relatively new, and there are many exceptions. Healy makes an argument that the corporation is a form of 'common-wealth', and can operate more like a commons, where business managers, investors and workers all contribute together within a legal structure of the corporation that lives on longer than the individual. Returns on investment can be long-standing too, and indeed, can be 'more-than-financial'. Safri and Madra (2020) writing on diverse forms of finance argue for three ethical principles of finance and investment for the 21st century: heterogeneity, justice and transparency. We can see each of these ethical principles

emerging through the the kinds of investments that LiVS-supported projects have made.

For many of the LiVS supported organisations/projects, investments included people's time, energy, and creative and emotional input. These investments often come from volunteers, a form of 'sweat equity' whereby the project or organisation sees returns (financial and more-than-financial) that are a direct result from the nonmonetary investments made in the organisation or project. For example, the urban farm Cultivate has been the recipient of finances from different philanthropic organisations (or arms of organisations, such as Vodafone), where the expectation was that the money would result in outcomes that were transformative. Our research team worked with Cultivate on a previous project specifically looking at the way Cultivate staff and interns invested their time, emotional energies, and physical energies in certain practices that provided a range of outcomes for individuals, the organisation and the wider community (see Dombroski et al. 2018, 2019 if you are interested in these co-produced evaluation tools). The outcomes in that work were assessed against the stated values of the organisation. For example, interviews with Cultivators (staff, interns and volunteers) showed that people valued relationships. A practice or regular action that invested in the achievement or realisation of that value could be the example that is listed in Table 4, 'leaving people alone when they are grumpy'. Many people in the organisation valued 'real food', and this was practiced by feeding volunteers and youth a regular lunch created from vegetables grown on Cultivate sites.

Cultivate Christchurch

The point of such an exercise was to widen what 'counts' as investment, and to also highlight the vast diversity of investment practices.

The Kitchen Garden at Cultivate Christchurch

Photo: Alison Watkins

EXAMPLES FROM VALUE-PRACTICE EXERCISE WITH CULTIVATE CHRISTCHURCH

INDIVIDUAL/ INTERPERSONAL		COLLECTIVE/ ORGANIZATIONAL		PLACE (Wider Community & Environment)	
CULTIVATORS		**CULTIVATE**		**CHRISTCHURCH**	
VALUE	**PRACTICE**	**VALUE**	**PRACTICE**	**VALUE**	**PRACTICE**
Respecting Others	Punctuality	**Non-hierarchical workplace**	Really listening attentively	**Supportive community**	Broccoli bonds
	Speaking with Care		Providing flexible work conditions		Volunteers
Attentiveness	Eating breakfast	**Listening to youth needs**	Biomimicry (learning from & emulating the natural world)	**Real Food**	Feeding volunteers & youth good food
Relationships	Leaving people alone when grumpy	**Pragmatism**	Using organic methods where possible but not exclusively	**Balancing competing needs**	Providing an open day for community & volunteers

Table 4:

Examples from value-practice exercise with Cultivate Christchurch

In that project, we also co-created assessment rubrics to assess how close to achieving the values the organisation and those within the organisation might come (see Table 5) and what it would look like. This approach to investing in futures centred on the values and practices of one organisation. It was co-produced by a team of researchers who first gathered and reflected back the values and practices they were seeng in the organisation. In that project, we then worked in two workshops to identify further values and practices, then arrange them in the tables above (Dombroski et al., 2018).

WE CO-CREATED ASSESSMENT RUBRICS WITH RESEARCHERS, INTERNS AND STAFF

In this project with LiVS, we used the Mauri Ora compass to assess what the outcomes might be. For the Mauri Ora compass, we have mainly indicated the area of outcome that might be generated through the investments of time, energy and finances for LiVS enabled projects. For Cultivate, we consider their major outcomes to be in hapori ora (connected communities), and whenua ora | wai ora (regenerative ecosystems). Cultivate's skilled farm managers work to regenerate the land on which is sits, even when it is their temporarily. The organisation began by collecting green waste and food scraps from central city businesses (that are not serviced by the council green waste collection) and turning this waste into soil (see Figure 5). The bins were collected by e-bike, and young people were employed or interned with the organisation, sometimes as an alternative to being in the justice system, and sometimes on Ministry for Social Development short-term paid internships. The outcome of all this investment was the regeneration of the soil on the sites that Cultivate had temporary access to, *and* as our report argued, young people who could better care and make decisions around the wellbeing of land and soil.

CO-PRODUCED DESCRIPTIVE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING RETURNS ON INVESTMENTS

	INDIVIDUAL/ INTERPERSONAL	COLLECTIVE/ ORGANIZATIONAL	PLACE (Wider Community & Environment)
	CULTIVATORS	CULTIVATE	CHRISTCHURCH
 Mature	Self-aware; able to effectively care for and manage self and others; able to articulate emotional and physical needs and move to have them met in a healthy way; can focus on and complete tasks unsupervised to a high level of quality	Able to listen deeply; effectively models what it means to be in a healthy community through attunement to the needs of youth workers, volunteers, cultivators, customers, investors and other stakeholders	Has the resources and community endorsement to lead the way environmentally; is an integral part of the connected local and organic food community puzzle; increasing carbon sequestration
 Thriving	Self-aware; able to care for and manage self and relationships with others; able to articulate emotional and physical needs; can focus on and complete tasks; empowered to act in the world	Able to listen; often models what it means to be in a healthy community through attunement to the needs of youth workers, volunteers, cultivators, customers, investors and other stakeholders; maintains clear behavioural expectations and processes	Developing the resources and community endorsement to lead the way environmentally; building capacity to be part of the connected local and organic food community puzzle
 Growing	Developing self-awareness and can sometimes articulate emotional and physical needs; completes some tasks; has a developing sense of personal agency; developing appreciation for environmental and food issues	Some capacity to listen and model what it means to be in a healthy community; developing clear behavioural expectations and processes; developing the capacity to care for and respond to some concerns	Identifying some resources and building community endorsement; developing connections with local and organic food community; developing carbon sequestration practices
 Wilting	Not yet listening or reflecting on behaviour; not yet articulating emotional and physical needs; not yet able to care for or respond to others; not yet completing tasks	Limited or no capacity to listen; not yet able to model what it means to be in a healthy community; no clear behavioural expectations and processes; not yet able to care for and balance multiple concerns	Limited resourcing and little community support; undeveloped connections with local and organic food community; reducing carbon sequestration; tick-box/ bureaucratic relationship with funders/supporters

Table 5:

Co-produced descriptive assessment criteria for assessing returns on investments

Cultivate's ethic of care was impressive, particularly in practices of caring for both plants and young people, and seeing regenerative and holistic outcomes for both hapori and whenua.

Other LiVS supported organisations have deliberately invested in community spaces for art and creatives. Salt Lane studio is owned partly by Hannah Watkinson , and began as a co-working space for artists and creatives in a different location. Hannah started out trying to set up a popup gallery by negotiating with various landowners in the city directly. LiVS provided advice for that project and then a few years later, the relationship was renewed when LiVS helped get Salt Lane studio off to a good start. LiVS sponsored six spaces in the co-working space, and took responsibility for filling them. Eventually, some of the artists and creatives who used them were able to make enough money to pay their own space, and others could use the LiVS spaces. Eventually, a large enough community of co-workers was established and

Figure 6:

Cultivate collection bins and urban farm

The collection bins from Cultivate (foreground) with the urban farm (background) taken by Sophie Merkins.

Hannah was able to get a loan to purchase a warehouse further down Tuam Street, where many of the creatives and artists still work today. In an interview, Hannah says

> “Things evolved from the gallery end. I decided that what seemed to be most important was workspace, like places for people to come and work together, even if they were working on their own things. But taking on something like that, [although] it grew from a cool group of people who were all committed to being involved ... taking on a commercial lease, something like that was terrifying. Then I met up with Jane [LiVS director at the time], and she was really, really into it.”

Salt Lane provides a connected working community for artists and creatives, with a return in hapori ora, and is now run independently without LiVS support.

Rollickin’ Gelato is another example of a LiVS supported project that has transitioned. Rollickin’ Gelato began as a food truck run by 15 year old Jed Joyce, whom LiVS support by finding sites.[21] Alex Davies began contributing to A Local Food Project, using the pizza oven at The Commons to build a customer base and eventually open his own restaurant. He uses local organic and sustainable foods and currently runs his own boutique restaurant Gatherings. He said of his time on LiVS sites:

> “…activating spaces like that, it essentially gave me confidence which I didn’t necessarily have. It gave me an opportunity to push the boundaries with limited risk to myself, had I signed up to a big lease with a greedy landlord. I might have been a little less free in what I was doing… And then it exposed me to an audience as well, which in turn ended up resulting in me having a 50 percent share in a restaurant. After I finished at that place, I had the confidence to go out on my own place.”

Alex uses sustainable and regenerative ecosystem values to source ingredients,

21 : See an article here: https://www.odt.co.nz/star-news/star-our-people/chilling-out-christchurchs-gelato-entrepreneur

thus while investing in young people's careers and businesses, LiVS enabled projects have also seen outcomes in whenua ora | wai ora as well as ōhanga ora.

The investments described in this section have helped to create affordable and safe work spaces for artists and creatives, supported fresh food economies, and intervened in lives of young people. These investments are long-term, transforming Ōtautahi Christchurch and beyond.

Investing involves creating and somehow retaining a 'surplus' to be invested. But this investment doesn't have to just be invested in a single business with a financial return. The surpluses created through using private land for common use, for example, enable new transformative wellbeing initiatives to get off the ground with lower start up or ongoing costs. LIVS has a network of supportive property owners and managers who enable this investment in future generations to be made.

The outcomes of these investments include kainga ora (wellbeing enhancing buildings and places), whenua | wai ora (healthy blue and green living ecosystems) and hapori ora (more connected communities).

Gap Filler's giant video game (close-up)

Photo: Erica Austin

Cultivate Christchurch Garden

Photo: Alison Watkins

CONCLUSION: COMMUNICATING VALUE

Figure 7:

Huritanga: 10 years of transformative place-making

One outcome from the research was the book Huritanga: 10 years of tranfsformative place-making book was released in spring 2022 by Life in Vacant Spaces: https://www.livs.org.nz/10yearsoflivsthebook

Photo: Jen McBride

This research was conducted in partnership with LiVS to explore and communicate the value and impacts of their work, and to contribute to international research in meainginful collaborative impact evaluation and communication. In our research with both LiVS and the many organisations and projects supported by them, many recognised the urgent need for ways to communicate value to funders and investors.

The projects and organizations reviewed here demonstrate that LiVS enables a vast array of wellbeing initiatives that contribute to the wellbeing of Ōtautahi Christchurch residents, the environment, and future generations. The majority of outcomes related to "increased community wellbeing," but a number of other outcomes or "returns" were also identified. These returns are in whenua and wai ora or regenerative ecologies and in ōhanga ora – contributing to economies that meet people's needs in some way without harming the environment. The main findings were that LiVS –- and the sector more generally -- contributes to a wide range of urban wellbeing outcomes through investing in a wide range of projects that prefigure and experiment with different ways to address the key concerns of community economies. While we did not collect data on ethnicity per se, it appears that the majority of projects supported were run by Pākehā. Increasing the diversity of people who have access to LiVS support is important for equity, and should be investigated by the LiVS board and staff. We also did not collect data related to gentrification of places that LiVS projects are hosted. In a disaster recovery setting,

gentrification was not a huge concern among the people we interviewed. However, we recognise that this will change over time as more of the city is rebuilt. The rebuild has shifted the kinds of vacant spaces that LiVS works with, from vacant demolition lots through to subsidised indoor spaces in new buildings, and the recently launched LiVS incubator (a container kitted out for short term projects situated in the central city Cashel Street). This shows that LiVS has put thought into the costs of gentrification for artists, creatives and start-ups.

The findings of this research on LiVS and its supported projects and organizations are significant for a range of stakeholders in Christchurch, including its residents, city council, funding bodies, and other interested parties. By demonstrating the vast array of wellbeing initiatives enabled by LiVS and the positive impacts on community wellbeing, environment, and future generations, this work highlights the importance of investing in projects that experiment with different ways of addressing the key concerns of community economies.

This report is complemented by two public-facing outputs: the LiVS exhibition based on this material, which was exhibited in a vacant site on Cashel Street in September 2022, and a short book summarizing the main findings of the report to celebrate ten years of LiVS work in Ōtautahi Christchurch. These outputs are part of our experiment with communicating the returns on LiVS's investment of volunteer and paid time, expertise, energy, funds, and more over the last ten years.

In the exhibition, the book, and this report, we used two approaches to categorize the intentions and identify the outcomes LiVS-supported projects/organizations have had:

1. Community economies scholarship, which highlights a number of key concerns for urban areas in the 21st century: surviving well, caring for commons, encountering others, consumption and distributing surplus, and investing in futures.

2. Mauri Ora Compass, to identify the outcomes that resulted from these investments in the areas of:

- Whenua Ora | Wai Ora (Regenerative Ecologies)
- Hapori Ora (Connected Communities)
- Ōhanga Ora (Circular Bio-Economies)
- Kainga Ora (Healthy Homes)
- Waka Ora (Active and Accessible Transport)
- Hihiri Ora (Moving toward Carbon Zero Energy)

FESTA

The Festival of Transitional Architecture was a weekend long major event that encouraged people to enjoy and participate in the city differently, as well as encouraging creative thinking about the possibilities for architecture in the city of Ōtautahi Christchurch and elsewhere. LiVS brokered numerous spaces in support of FESTA.

info@livs.org.nz / livs.org.nz

Figure 8:

LiVS exhibition poster

The exhibition in September 2022 took place along the length of Cashel St, Christchurch. The curated exhibition of photos and text was a collaboration between Kelly Dombroski, Rachel Shiels, Hannah Watkinson and Life in Vacant Spaces

Photo: Travis Dombroski

The report, exhibition, and book also experimented with a different method for evaluating the returns on investment in terms of community wellbeing, regenerative ecologies, circular bio-economies, healthy homes, active and accessible transport, and carbon-zero energy. In the context of multiple socio-ecological crises, the role of post-earthquake place-making organizations such as LiVS will continue to be important as we face additional natural and social disruption. Ultimately, the work they do is important for creating a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable Christchurch that prioritizes the wellbeing of its people and the environment. The book is downloadable from the LiVS website, the Building Better Homes Towns and Cities website, and the Community Economies Institute website. After the release of the book, we also wrote a short piece for the academic news service The Conversation, which resulted in a number of invites to present this work in international and national arenas, most notably for the United Nations Development Programme Urban Talks series hosted in Istanbul (Dombroski & Yates, 2022). These methods of communicating the value of LiVS work have thus reached a range of different audiences.

But what has this process and research taught us about the process of documenting and communicating the value of such work? To answer this question we turn to the literature on impact evaluations, and assess our approach against this literature.

MEANINGFUL IMPACT EVALUATION

The process by which we evaluated LiVS work was meaningful and useful partly because it was collaborative and collective, and it focused on broad outcomes of LiVS work rather than the documentation of 'deliverables'. In previous reports to the city council, LiVS has experimented with documenting the number of projects, the type of projects, the land area used and other measurables. However, these deliverables do not demonstrate the outcomes that came about due to the investment in LiVS work – they merely represent the initial work that LiVS has inputted into the community. One of the gaps in the literature on impact evaluations is how you do multi-organisation or multi-project evaluations relatively quickly and simply, and also how you communicate value without necessarily converting things to (sometimes bizarre) monetary proxies. Corvo et al., (2022) suggest research is needed to explore "value chains and multi-stakeholder ecosystems" to shift the focus beyond the technical issue of calculation towards the relationships and practices through which value is created. This ecosystem approach to meaningful evaluation is what we have experimented with in this work.

Our approach has more in common with 'outcome mapping' or 'outcome harvesting' (Smutylo, 2005), where evaluators work in partnership with programmes to identify outcomes that are influenced by programme work if not wholly attributable. This

differs from accounting methods which insist that if something is not *valued* (quantified and reified in monetary terms), then it is *valueless*. But for a much longer period of time, in much broader geographical and cultural contexts things have not been quantified and reified and were understood to be so important as to be *invaluable*. How do we value the invaluable of community and urban wellbeing, or at least, communicate it to a wider public who might benefit from such as investment in the invaluable? The method we have trialled here, though far from complete, is a step towards recognising what is invaluable to a flourishing society in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This does not mean the method is without limitations. The limits of using the Mauri Ora wellbeing compass to organize and think about returns mean that the arts and heritage focus of LiVS support was not easily accounted for as a group in its own right – but only for what it offers to community and urban wellbeing. However, in the process of conducting the analysis, the returns on different art interventions were distributed in different ways - investing in encountering others or challenging consumption or surviving well together with returns mainly in the area of hapori ora, connected communities. This is part of the limitations of using a structured framework to do analysis. It could be overcome by working with the community of interest to develop an appropriate compass based on their intentions – rather than 'importing' one that was put together mainly as a demonstration.

We reflected on whether we needed both frameworks. In the end we have understood the CEROI framework as asking an open set of non-normative questions and the Mauri Ora compass as a set of normative answers to those questions. The CEROI asks, among other questions, how do we survive together well? And the Mauri Ora Compass provides an answer for this time and place, a visualisation and normative description of what urban areas would look like when designed to enhance mauri and wellbeing for all. In terms of impact evaluation, then, we are left with a sketch of a method: identifying the questions of social and environmental change with communities of action, and detailing the desired outcomes for mapping, valuing and communicating with communities and stakeholders at the heart of these actions. This method for accounting for, valuing, and communicating the 'invaluable' at the heart of community work is one which needs further development and experimentation with a wider range of different communities: a shared project that we hope this report will contribute to.

FINAL WORDS

In the context of the climate emergency, different kinds of transitional spaces have and will emerge. The role of place-making organizations such as LiVS will have a growing importance around the country as additional natural and social disruption occurs on a wider scale – for example, with the wide range of 'stickered' buildings after Cyclone Gabrielle. Our work has shown that the work of such organisations has real wellbeing outcomes. Our work has experimented with different ways of visualising and communicating wellbeing outcomes, through a report, a book, and a public exhibition. In the end though, the challenge goes back to funders, both public and private – are they able to listen and respond to the evidence and communications by investing in urban wellbeing?

Photo: The Kowahi Collective


The
Kōwhai
Collective

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