



COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
EVALUATION
RESEARCH

Retrospective impact analysis:
7 Case Studies

LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

Community Waitakere

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community
Waitakere

The logo for Community Waitakere, featuring a stylized green and red swirl.

Community Waitakere has a vision for a sustainable Waitakere with thriving, connected communities.

Community Waitakere is a community development organisation committed to achieving strong, dynamic, sustainable community and voluntary sectors in Waitakere. Community Waitakere strengthens the links between community groups, organisations, businesses, government and individuals by promoting and modelling collaboration and partnering, enhancing networking and communication, developing projects and helping to foster collective visions of positive change in Waitakere.

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INTRODUCTION

Waitakere has a history of innovation, pilot projects and “national firsts”.ⁱ For both Māori and Taiwi communities, strong leadership, progressive community development and visionary thinking has resulted in increased local capacity and a growing confidence that local action can (and does) make a difference.

The idea that there is something distinct about West Auckland and the way the West organises itself has become something akin to folk-law. Rapid population growth with a concurrent lack of built resources has often meant that the West has had to create opportunities to either better utilise the existing resources available or to strongly argue for on-going and sustainable (re)development. This working “on the smell of an oily rag” community development approach has involved many people over the years and resulted in many networks, service delivery, activism and community participation.ⁱⁱ

Within this mix of activities particular individuals have been identified. These “characters” have had talent, the ability to motivate, and a firm vision. These individuals have added continuity, consistency and an on-going connection with the roots of community. The story of the West is however more than a story about individuals. Rather than particular characters it is perhaps more about characteristics.

These characteristics are an immense source of pride within Waitakere, where people speak of “honest ways of working” and “trust that has been built over time”. The “can do” attitude of “Westies” is often mentioned, as too are the “no-nonsense”, “no-bullshit” approaches to getting things done.ⁱⁱⁱ

The socio economic positioning of many residents and the cultural diversity of Waitakere are both identified as important in the creation of a culture that is distinct from elsewhere. Demographically Waitakere is diverse¹ and this diversity is often positioned as a source of strength.

The people that have gathered around issues and through grass-roots activities have shaped many of the current organisations within West Auckland. These organisations similarly have developed particular ways of working that cannot be separated from the history and context of this place. Often referred to as the “Waitakere Way”, this way of engaging with people and place is a source of tremendous pride for those who work within Waitakere.

The role of local government cannot be overlooked in the development of this “Waitakere Way” of working. As an eco-city it was one of the first to promote triple bottom line approaches to well-being, and it has been an important mechanism in encouraging and promoting collaborative approaches to addressing local issues.

Community Waitakere over its 30 year history has made a significant contribution to supporting the community sector within Waitakere. Operating from a firm community mandate, Community Waitakere has held the space of lead community development organisation for much of this time. The work they have been engaged with has been diverse; and the rewards have been great.

This work has been only been partly documented, captured in annual reports, detailed in meeting minutes and summarised in newsletters.² This adhoc approach to capturing the work of the community sector is unfortunately a common occurrence within this sector, often apologised for by fact that people are too busy doing the work to get around to writing it down. While this excuse has

¹ Demographic information may be found here,

<http://www.communitywaitakere.org.nz/ourwork/community-development/research-project>

² At the time of writing a project to archive this information was underway.

much validity our current contexts are increasingly demanding multiple levels of accountability and more robust processes of evaluation and documentation. The inputs into this sector are being asked to be linked to outputs, outcomes and demonstratable results.

The following case studies represent a response to this new context and a move towards an ongoing commitment by Community Waitakere to provide leadership in the domain of community development evaluation. This is a process that has begun with Community Waitakere increasing its own capacity in evaluation methodologies. This has included a literature review, case study comparison and the construction of an evaluation framework.³

The following case studies build upon this foundation, documenting and describing the learnings from historical activities and now sharing these learnings with others within this sector.

³ Research findings from Stage 1 and Stage 2 may be found here, <http://www.communitywaitakere.org.nz/ourwork/community-development/research-project>

EVALUATION, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND THE INTENTION OF THIS CASE-STUDY APPROACH.

Evaluation is different than other forms of research in that it is utilisation focused.^{iv} In its simplest form it is about understanding the effect and impact of a programme, service, or indeed a whole organisation.^v In order to assess impact however we need to be very clear at the beginning what effect or difference we are trying to achieve. With retrospective evaluation this clarity is not always present.

Evaluating community development “effects” has its own unique challenges. The work of this sector does not have clearly definable borders or boundaries and activities often happen concurrently and with multiple points of overlap.

As a research method a case study approach investigates phenomenon within its real-life context, and is especially useful when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not always clearly evident.^{vi} A case study approach is therefore a useful one to begin to understand community development initiatives.

The value of a case study approach is that it provides a way of framing, retrospectively, the context, the intentions, the process and the outcomes of particular interventions, and allows for narratives to emerge that can provide useful heuristic tools. In other words, by looking backwards, and asking questions about what it was like to be involved in this mahi (work) rich, deep, stories emerge.

The following case studies document specific key initiatives from the past 10 years of Community Waitakere’s history. They were not chosen because they were specifically successful, or because they represent examples of “best (community development) practice”. They were chosen because they are significant milestones in the history of Community Waitakere and because each contains potential learning for both the organisation and for the wider community sector.

Analysing historic events, through the lens of hindsight, is often referred to as allowing for an increased clarity of vision. While this is in part true, the benefit of 20-20 vision can also be clouded by individual perspectives of, and within, these events.

The intention of this evaluation is therefore not to present definite “facts”, nor to suggest that there are no alternative ways of positioning the impact of these various pieces of work. Instead this is a collection of a number of perspectives on events; an identification of the ways that those involved in this mahi have seen the evolution of this work, within a particular context, within a particular time.

The narratives that emerge contain lessons, constructive critiques of historical actions and points of reflection. From what has gone before we learn and as we learn our future practice evolves.

CASE STUDY: 1 COMMUNITY WAITAKERE'S ROLE IN ADVOCACY AROUND THE CHANGE IN REGIONAL GOVERNANCE AND ITS ROLE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY COALITION 4 AUCKLAND (CC4A).

THE FOCUS OF THIS CASE STUDY

The following case-study explores the advocacy work undertaken by the Community Coalition 4 Auckland (CC4A) around the change in Auckland Regional Governance. The main focus is on Community Waitakere's role in this coalition and what can be learnt from this activity about leadership, coordination, and the importance of relationships.

"...we thought we could stop it".

The formation of CC4A was a Waitakere based response to the proposed amalgamation of Auckland's councils into one "super-city". Community Waitakere took a leadership role in the formation and organisation of this coalition. In doing so it became positioned as a staunch advocate for the communities of Waitakere and the "Waitakere Way".⁴ This required careful strategic thinking and direction and was not an easy path to negotiate. Community Waitakere's role in this coalition resulted in mixed responses from some areas of the community.

LOCATING THIS CASE STUDY IN CONTEXT

The Royal Commission on Auckland Governance was tasked to examine Auckland's governance structure and report back to government.^{vii} This report called for the creation of a unitary authority and contained a number of key recommendations about how this could/should best be achieved. This was a well-researched, carefully considered, and forward thinking report; the spirit of which, arguably, offered a model that would shift the locus of decision making from the traditional top-down centralised approach to one that could reflect a more partnered approach.^{viii} Many of the recommendations that would have allowed for this to occur were however ignored by government and what became known as "the Hide model"⁵ became the new planned approach.

The Local Government (Tamaki Makaurau Reorganisation) Act 2009 provided the necessary legislation for the merger of the seven existing councils, and one regional authority, into a single unitary council and the establishment of the Auckland Transition Agency.^{ix} This Act was passed through all stages under urgency in May 2009.^x

The change from local based government to regional governance occurred 1 November 2010 with the establishment of the Auckland Council. The decision to amalgamate was met with significant community opposition.

Before the amalgamation there was an environment of heated debate and vocal opposition. A number of organised protests and significant numbers of submissions to government spoke of the frustration felt by many within the community. Respondents spoke of issues concerning local representation, concerns over process, a lack of consultation and a general sentiment of feeling "done to". These issues presented the need for a coordinated community response.

One of the coordinated responses was provided through the formation of the *Community Coalition 4 Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau* (CC4A). The formation of this coalition and its advocacy work was led in a substantial part by Community Waitakere.

⁴ For more on the Waitakere Way see Craig (2004). Building better contexts for partnership and sustainable local collaboration: A review of core issues, with lessons from the "Waitakere Way". *Social Policy Journal*, 23, p 48.

⁵ So named after the Local Government Minister, Rodney Hide.

WHAT WAS THE INTENTION OF THIS INITIATIVE?

The intention of CC4A was contested from its inception. The stated purpose of CC4A was a dual one, firstly, intending to “raise and represent the voices of all community organisations”, and secondly to advocate for a regional governance model that kept “the local in local government”.^{xi}

The first purpose required a bringing together of community and a sharing of information. It was recognised that to advocate effectively the community needed to be mobilised and to present a united front. This however was not an easy task as within this divergent grouping there were a number of perspectives, not only on the most appropriate and effective ways of advocating, but also on what exactly was being advocated for. The differences in perspectives can be thought of as concerning methods of advocacy on the one hand, and how local representation could best be achieved, on the other.

On the second purpose a central argument being made was that the “supercity” would undo some really positive ways of working that had been developed by the community sector within Waitakere. Local representation would be lost under a centralised model; and that some of the core values and principles of partnership and collaboration were under threat.

To keep this local way of working two options appeared to be present; either stop the amalgamation or argue for a fairer proposal. As one participant framed it, it was a process of, “...getting together around the table saying how do we fight the amalgamation ... because at that time we thought we could stop it”. While another respondent’s perspective held that, “it wasn’t so much about stopping the amalgamation, it was about challenging the process and trying to create a more humane model of governance”.

Methods of challenging the proposed amalgamation were, arguably, even more contested and two distinct methods of activating community support and working towards change were present within CC4A. These were the protest method (later to be led by a splinter group of CC4A the Grassroots Action Group GAG) and a more advocacy based collaborative methodology.

Community Waitakere took a leadership role in CC4A and influenced the processes adopted by this group. In the main Community Waitakere represented and argued for a collaborative response to the government’s “supercity” proposal. This was very much a solution focused approach typified by one commentator’s suggestion that Community Waitakere was “...working *with* the ministers, *with* the local MPs, and *with* the council, and trying to influence things in a much more collaborative way”.⁶

Clarity, around what was being objected to, emerged as the CC4A campaign progressed. This was a rejection of the “Hide model” and a restoration of the original Royal Commission’s recommendations.

DESCRIBING THE KEY PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES OF THIS INITIATIVE

Community Waitakere was recognised by a number of commentators as doing an amazing job of working within an extremely challenging environment and drawing people and organisations together. This was a significant challenge for the organisation and one that required the utilisation of its established relationships and networks. This was a process of working with key stakeholders such as Council and working with others in the community sector. To hold CC4A together required substantial skill, time and resource, much of which was coordinated by Community Waitakere, and much of which, was done on a voluntary basis.

⁶ The “with” part of this quote was emphasised by the respondent.

The ability of Community Waitakere to hold itself in relationships while undertaking advocacy work was identified by respondents as indicative of the maturity and strength of these relationships. An important component of these relationships was the trust other organisations had in Community Waitakere as an organisation. This trust was acknowledged by a number of respondents as central to maintaining the cohesion of CC4A. This trust was also acknowledged as being created over time.

The importance of the process was also acknowledged by a number of participants. Collaborative ways of working especially were seen as vital to maintaining and presenting a united voice. This process allowed the working through of many issues, including finding commonality amongst difference, becoming clear about what messages were to be delivered, and reaching agreement on who best to deliver these messages to.

Financial support from Community Waitakere's partners within Council allowed for increased effectiveness of the CC4A campaign. Some within the local council reported a feeling of shock during this period, and here Community Waitakere's role as an external ally was an appreciated one, as one respondent suggested, "...we were proud of Community Waitakere's role, because it was hard for us as staff, seeing the organisation that we had come to work for [because of its values and principles] being dismantled".

The financial support from council allowed CC4A to undertake advocacy at government level, to have meetings with policy makers, and arguably (suggested one respondent) resulted in a different version of what would become the final plan to emerge. Community Waitakere's involvement with this level of advocacy was however not unanimously supported by all sections of the community sector. For some the relationship with council (especially with a financial contribution) was seen as a "buy off" and a compromise to the integrity of the coalition.

CC4A was not formally evaluated during its active period. Reflecting on this work however it is possible to draw links to a number of indicators of successful community and social wellbeing strategies.^{xii} These include; *awareness raising* (e.g. raising awareness of the issues relating to the proposed amalgamation and allowing community members and community organisations to recognise that a substantial issue existed), *positive media coverage* (initially high and in most instances reflecting positively on the campaigns stance), *the strengthening of strategic alliances* (e.g. between Community Waitakere and Waitakere City Council).

The change to Auckland's governance structure occurred in November, 2010. The campaign run by CC4A reached its conclusion and subsequently disbanded. A community Hui was convened by Community Waitakere with the purpose of identifying ways forward. For some this was met with optimism and as a solution focused position for the organisation to adopt, for others this was perceived as Community Waitakere potentially losing its local focus and trying to (re)position the organisation as a regionally focused one.

KEY LEARNINGS

The change to a regional governance model highlighted the lack of regional structure and mechanisms for getting together regionally within the Auckland wide community sector.⁷

Collaborative ways of working were identified as key contributing factors in allowing for cohesive action. In this case study identifying and then developing support for key campaign messages was also an important way of increasing agreement on key issues.

⁷ A regional response to this void can be seen in the formation of the Auckland Community Development Alliance (ACDA).

Trust is a central component of cohesive advocacy. In this case the established trust that Community Waitakere held within the community development space contributed to validating the lead role that it undertook.

The importance of strong relationships as facilitators of action within community development was demonstrated in this case study. Community Waitakere's established relationships and strong local networks allowed for a greater responsiveness to imposed change. Some respondents spoke of the way that other regions were slower to respond, and contrasted this with the action that developed through the work of CC4A.

Advocacy for, and on behalf of the community requires leadership. This can however be an at times contested role for organisations. Acting "on behalf of" also requires a mandate from the community to do this work. While this was present during the CC4A campaign some respondents spoke of Community Waitakere's role in continuing its engagement activities with "regional issues" as overstepping this mandate and potentially as diminishing their local (mandated) focus.

There are a number of forms that advocacy can take. In this case study two distinct methods are discernable, collaborative and protest. These can exist in the same space at the same time. Some respondents viewed this simultaneous activity as strengthening the limitations inherent in each.

The Community sector is not always a united one, and competing interests and differences of opinion at times compound this. In this case, the external threat to valued ways of working, together with collaborative processes, acted as a catalyst for an increased degree of unity.

CASE STUDY 2: THE WAITAKERE COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE

THE FOCUS OF THIS CASE STUDY

The following case-study investigates the history of the Waitakere Community Resource Centre. The main focus is on what can be learnt from this initiative about connection with and within the community sector.

“connection with and within the community”

For many years the Waitakere Community Resource Centre was the base of operations for Community Waitakere. The organisation now manages the Waitakere Community Resource Centre as an important satellite which continues to provide low-cost accommodation and meeting space to groups and organisations within the community sector. Community Hui are hosted here by Community Waitakere and other community sector organisations. The recently evaluated community networking meetings “open-door days” continue to be well attended and valued by a number of different community organisations⁸. Community Waitakere manages the Waitakere Community Resource Centre with a Centre Administrator. This staff member has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Resource Centre, the coordination of community sector training courses and the creation and distribution of the Community Waitakere E-newsletter (see case study 5).

LOCATING THIS CASE STUDY IN CONTEXT

A number of community focused individuals had advocated for the need of a place and space for community groups to base themselves and to offer support to other groups. Together their efforts merged with political will and the Community Resource Centre was established in 1995.

The Community Resource Centre is located at 8 Ratanui St, Henderson. It is a privately owned premise which was leased by the former Waitakere City Council and is currently leased by Auckland Council. It is operated/managed by Community Waitakere. Originally this arrangement was a service contract, with the West Auckland District of Social Services (WADCOSS) contracted by council to provide space and resources to the community sector within Waitakere. With the advent of a Partnering Agreement between Waitakere City Council and Community Waitakere the operation of the Community Resource Centre became a deliverable of the shared work programme (see case study 3).

The usage of the Resource Centre has changed over the last 10 years. It continues to meet many of the original purposes and also has made a recent addition to the services provided from this space with the on-going provision of community sector training programmes.

WHAT WAS THE INTENTION OF THIS INITIATIVE?

The purpose of the Community Resource Centre was originally to be the “base of operations” for WADCOSS (and later Community Waitakere) and as a support and capacity building mechanism for the wider community sector. It allowed for a reciprocal connection between Community Waitakere and the community sector. It also achieved a greater “physical presence” for a number of “new or fledgling community organisations”.

When Community Waitakere was a small organisation the Community Resource Centre provided a suitable space and base of operations. The staff during this period consisted of an experienced community development worker “on the ground”, supported by an administrator. A number of

⁸ To explore this evaluation see www.communitywaitakere.org.nz

other community organisations also availed themselves of the opportunity to utilise this space creating a place focused on the provision of a diverse mix of community based activities.

DESCRIBING THE KEY PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES OF THIS INITIATIVE

The value of having a community development worker onsite was recognised by a number of respondents and as an important part of Community Waitakere's history. This was positioned by some as creating "a real sense of community ownership", and creating a "politicised space" in which the community sector could meet, network, and develop cross sector relationships. This fostered collaboration, a sense of connection with and within the community, and provided opportunities to debate and collectively analyse important local issues. Because of space constraints (as Community Waitakere grew) new premises were needed and the existing staff moved out of the resource centre.

Operating the Community Resource Centre was, suggested one respondent, a process of "learning by doing". A change of leadership within Community Waitakere witnessed a period of change for the organisation. This was also the period of time that saw the instigation of the Tui Glen Hub Project (the planned successor of the Waitakere Community Resource Centre). At this time many of the learnings from the current experience of the Waitakere Community Resource centre were debated (see case study 7). This debate included a focus on the most appropriate organisational structure to support a large scale project like the Tui Glen project (i.e. an incorporated society vs. a trust) and "how" subsidised rental arrangements could be best managed.⁹

As an incorporated society WADCOSS's organisation structure included a number of tenants who were based at the resource centre *also* as members of the executive decision making process. This meant that any decision involving rental arrangements and/or increases in service charges could be vetoed at the executive level, regardless of the operational need to do so. The operational costs of the Community Resource Centre were often in excess of the allocated funding and a subsequent investigation demonstrated that "as things were" was untenable. This was, in part, ameliorated by the successful negotiation of increased funding levels, and later provided an important learning for the proposed Tui Glen Hub Project.

KEY LEARNINGS

The Community Resource Centre is still well utilised and in general is valued by many of the respondents to this research. Respondents continued to emphasise the need for quality low cost community organisation accommodation and meeting space. Whether or not the potential of this space had yet been fully realised was however questioned by some.

The physical presence of a community development worker "on site" at the Community Resource centre was seen as an effective mechanism of community engagement and an important way of creating connection. The loss of this feature was lamented by a number of respondents.

Having a focal point for the community sector to meet and to engage in constructive debate is still viewed by many as important and necessary.¹⁰ That this is no longer the base of operations for Community Waitakere was positioned by some as potentially causing a "disconnect" between Community Waitakere (as an organisation) and the community sector.

⁹ A proposed solution, and as a different model to an on-going subsidy approach, was a scaffold approach to support new community sector organisations, this would have seen subsidies time period bound and increased rental as community organisations grew in capacity to be self-sustainable. This was the suggested model for the Tui Glen Hub Project.

¹⁰ Indeed the concept of community hubs are both topical and emergent features of the community sector landscape.

Sustainability of the resource centre continues to be a challenge in the current economic/funding context.

CASE STUDY 3: THE PARTNERING AGREEMENT BETWEEN COMMUNITY WAITAKERE AND WAITAKERE CITY COUNCIL

THE FOCUS OF THIS CASE STUDY

The following case-study explores the Partnering Agreement between Community Waitakere and Waitakere City Council. The main focus is on what can be learnt from this initiative about partnering approaches to community development engagement.

“Partnering is a way of behaving together”

The Partnering Agreement between Community Waitakere and Waitakere City Council holds significant value for both organisations. It is a formal recognition of a historical relationship and an example of a partnered response to local social wellbeing issues. The agreed objectives resulting from the Partnering Agreement contribute to Community Waitakere’s work programme and the agreement provides a component of Community Waitakere’s operational funding. A partnered approach to community development is a core value of Community Waitakere. It both reflects and contributes to the “Waitakere Way”.

LOCATING THIS CASE STUDY IN CONTEXT

The relationship between the Waitakere City Council and Community Waitakere is a long and supportive one. Historically the Waitakere City Council maintained a funding for service agreement with Community Waitakere (under its former incarnation as the West Auckland District Council of Social Services WADCOSS) with WADCOSS contracted to provide two distinct services; the operation of the Waitakere Community Resource Centre, and “Support, Resources and Training for the Voluntary Sector”^{xiii}.

Findings from research undertaken by the University of Auckland and Waitakere City Council in 2004 “indicated to council that it needed to rethink the nature of its contractual relationship with Community Waitakere”.^{xiv} This coincided with financial information from Community Waitakere which demonstrated that the then current level of funding from council did not cover the “true costs” of delivering the contracted for services.^{xv}

In December 2006 a Partnering Agreement between Waitakere City Council and Community Waitakere was signed. While one aspect of this agreement was financial many respondents spoke of the centrality of relational ways of working as being at the heart of this agreement. This marked a new phase in the on-going relationship between local government and the community sector in Waitakere.

WHAT WAS THE INTENTION OF THIS INITIATIVE?

The Partnering Agreement is a succinct one page document that outlines the background and purpose, the guiding principles, the shared outcomes, roles and responsibilities, how the relationship will be managed, resourced and reviewed (see Appendix one.). The value of this was stated by a number of respondents, with one interviewee suggesting that, “instead of having quite intricate MOU’s [memorandum of understanding] which are often just signed and put away, the key principles and commitments are on a one pager that can be framed and is always in front of you”.

The Partnering Agreement was one of the first of its kind in Aotearoa New Zealand, generating significant interest around the country. There has been interest in both the principles that underpin this agreement and the concept of a shared work programme. Unlike a contract for service arrangement, the Partnering Agreement calls for mutual agreement on shared work programmes.

Each partner has clearly defined responsibilities within this arrangement, while working towards common outcomes.

DESCRIBING THE KEY PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES OF THIS INITIATIVE

The Partnering Agreement, through a retrospective lens, can be seen as both symbolic and pragmatic. It was symbolic in the sense that a partnered way of working had already been established and activated within Waitakere; especially between Council and Community Waitakere. As one respondent framed it, “we were already in a partnering relationship ... having an agreement in place just formally acknowledged this”. The Partnering Agreement also symbolised recognition by council of Community Waitakere’s role and skills within the community sector. It was an acknowledgment of a history of working within Waitakere, trust in this way of working, and that Community Waitakere “had proved their worth”.

The pragmatic elements of the Partnering Agreement are multi-faceted and include both relational and financial benefit. Community Waitakere was recognised for the ways it was already networked into the community, and could provide council with increased access through these networks. One commentator suggests that it was important to have an organisation external to the “political influence” experienced by council and a potential “quality control mechanism”. Another respondent commented that this added “community legitimacy” to the work undertaken by council; that with a strong community partner, “...community did not feel done to by council”.

This brokerage role has been achieved by Community Waitakere through the maintenance of existing networks and collaborative participation in new and emerging ones. These networks continue to be an important mechanism that allows for collective approaches to social wellbeing issues. The Partnering Agreement was an acknowledgement that network maintenance carries substantial cost and a formal way of insuring that these costs could be covered on an on-going basis.

The Partnering Agreement has also allowed Community Waitakere increased access to the political decision making processes within council. This has meant greater opportunity for advocacy of behalf of the community sector and has meant that Community Waitakere has been able to involve community in the activities and decisions made by council.

The sharing of work programmes was acknowledged by a number of respondents as an important component of the Partnering Agreement. This has resulted in a number of specific activities and has allowed both partners to engage with opportunities that perhaps alone would have been more difficult.

Together the Council and Community Waitakere have been able to better define the common space within which they each work, and to find places where value can be added to each other’s work. This has become an increasingly sophisticated relationship with shared work programmes moving from the language of objectives to outcomes, and a continuing (re)articulation of strategic focus.

There is significant value in the Partnering Agreement with a number of shared outcomes. Some of this value is quantifiably difficult to measure yet is evident in the “action readiness” that this relationship facilitates. The value of this has been proven at times of challenge and at times of change. It is here that these relationships become visible, with supportive, coordinated responses which can be activated quickly and effectively (see for example case study 1).

Respondents remarked that one of the most striking elements of this arrangement is the relational stance that the Partnering Agreement both requires and fosters. As one commentator frames it, “it’s not council telling you what to do, you are actually negotiating it...there has to be a high level of trust there and strong relationships in order to do this in a robust way”. This was challenging for some and rewarding and invigorating for others. As one interviewee, reflecting on their first

experience of meeting with the other partner, describes, “it was a sitting side-by-side...each accountable to the other...that blew me away...it was so new, so refreshing”.

KEY LEARNINGS

The sharing of work programmes was recognised by respondents as a central component of the success of the Partnering Agreement. This has allowed for an increased focus on specific goals and increased agreement on sectorial objectives (indicators of successful community and social wellbeing strategies).^{xvi}

The Partnering Agreement is a mutually beneficial initiative that increases the likelihood that strategic objectives of both parties are achieved. For Community Waitakere the Partnering Agreement has resulted in increased advocacy capacity, improved stability and improved alignment of community development goals (all indicators of successful community and social wellbeing strategies).^{xvii}

The Partnering Agreement is an important mechanism for recompensing the financial inputs necessary for this and other relationship development. Relationship building takes time and costs money; this agreement recognises this and represents a valuing of this community development work.

Partnering was discussed by respondents as a different way of working (i.e. different from more traditional funding for service arrangements).¹¹ Partnership was positioned as an investment which yielded significant returns. A number of respondents spoke of the behaviours (e.g. acting with respect, sharing of information) associated with this way of working and of the increased levels of trust that were necessary for this approach to succeed. Respondents spoke of the building of trust and the strengthening and solidification of relationships, especially in the development phases of this agreement.

As staff that hold responsibility for the maintenance of this Partnering Agreement change, the way of “being in relationship” will also change. In this way the Partnering Agreement between Community Waitakere and Auckland City Council is a living and evolving one.¹²

¹¹ This has been also been acknowledged in other literature (c.f. Department of Internal Affairs. (2007))

¹² How this relationship, and how this agreement will be impacted by the change to regional governance is currently being negotiated.

CASE STUDY 4: THE WAITAKERE WELLBEING COLLABORATION PROJECT

THE FOCUS OF THIS CASE STUDY

The following case-study explores the development of the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project. The main focus is on what can be learnt from this initiative about collaboration and cross-sector ways of working.

“...to collectively identify collaborative focus areas”

Community Waitakere (as WADCOSS) provided an important information sharing mechanism for the community sector through its support of the Community Wellbeing Network. Community Waitakere has been consistently involved with the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project; being “around the table” as a key player and as strong advocate for the community sector. It has also convened a number of calls to action, and currently co-convenes the *Strong Local Economies Call to Action* and is a member of the *Collaboration Steering Group*. Community Waitakere’s involvement with the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project has changed and evolved since the inception of this project.

LOCATING THIS CASE STUDY IN CONTEXT

Within Waitakere City, and amongst the people who call this place home, there has been a long history of community engagement with local issues. One manifestation of this is the many networks and forums which have resulted in increased coordination and collaborative responses to address a number of “cross cutting” social issues.

The Waitakere City Council has played an important role in finding ways of supporting and strengthening these “grass roots” activities and promoting and encouraging cross sectorial ways of working^{xviii}; based, in part, on a growing awareness that “Council could not do it alone” and needed the support of other agencies and the wider community.

Central Government has also influenced the context of collaboration through promoting joined-up, results ways of working.¹³ The Local Government Act 2002 outlined a new vision and approach for local governments. The promotion of social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being became a key role of Local Government.

Since 1996 the Waitakere Community Wellbeing Strategy has seen community-wide Wellbeing Summits hosted, supported and attended by hundreds of agency and community representatives.^{xix} From these summits a number of calls to action have emerged, each with a particular focus on a cross cutting social issue.

The Waitakere City Council had a lead role in establishing the framework of the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project. (see Appendix two.). The Community Development Unit within Council had established on-going relationship with central government (through the *Waitakere Intersector Group*) and concurrent yet independent relationships with the community sector (through the Community Wellbeing Network).

The question “why don’t we all meet together” was broached, and in 2002 the Waitakere Government Inter-sectorial Group and the Community Wellbeing Network¹⁴ jointly hosted a collaboration forum.^{xx} The outcomes of this forum included the initiation of the Waitakere Collaboration Project and the establishment of a Waitakere Collaboration Strategy Group.^{xxi}

¹³ See for example Ministry of Social Development (2003) *Mosaics: Whakaahua Papariki: Key findings and good practice for regional co-ordination and integrated service delivery*.

¹⁴ Often referred to colloquially as the “network of networks”.

WHAT WAS THE INTENTION OF THIS INITIATIVE?

An early description of this project states that it was “...an initiative to facilitate government, community and Waitakere City Council to collectively identify collaborative focus areas and work together on them”.^{xxii} One commentator describes this as a “three legged stool”, with “community”¹⁵ as the necessary “third leg”.

The Community Wellbeing Network acted as this third leg and Community Waitakere provided an important “stabiliser” for this network, in part, by providing a mechanism of information dissemination. The Community Wellbeing Network selected representatives to act for and be a conduit of information back to the community sector in this newly established tripartite initiative.

As one report has framed it, these representatives were to: “feed in any grassroots issues...provide a feedback loop...have the mandate to speak on behalf of the Community Wellbeing Network...participate in the upper levels of decisions...be an active participant in the three-way collaborative towards better well-being outcomes in Waitakere City”.^{xxiii}

DESCRIBING THE KEY PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES OF THIS INITIATIVE

The Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project marked a new way of working, contrastable in many ways to the usual hierarchical arrangement from central government *down* to local government, and then *down* to community organisations. In this new arrangement the goal was to work *across* levels and *across* issues, with each party meeting as equals.

The Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project was positioned by one respondent as another expression of a partnering approach (with an emphasis on the behaviours of being in such a relationship), and as a particular exemplar of what is often acknowledged as “the Waitakere Way”.¹⁶

The Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project involved “a high level of sophistication”, with areas that were in conflict with political and/or organisational and/or community mandates identified and addressed. One strategy was for the individual involved to remove themselves from that particular discussion (i.e. to identify a conflict of interest and the limits of their possible involvement).

The resolve to work together was prioritised over individual points of conflict. As one respondent frames it, “we didn’t get into a huff about it... we identified that collaboration could not always be three way...this was unlike other places where single issues often result in collaborations falling apart”.

The Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project has had an overriding focus on coming together to address priorities; with the wellbeing component of this project title identified by a number of respondents to this research as a “uniting” focus.

The subsequent Calls to Action (with their narrower focus on particular ‘wellbeings’) have resulted in a number of effective and on-going initiatives, often taking on “a life of their own”. Here the convenors of each Call to Action were acknowledged by a number of respondents to this research as an important catalyst of success; providing facilitation and creating a “seed bed” for subsequent projects to “take root and flourish”.

¹⁵ It is important to note that the term community in this description relates to community organisations, what has had been described as “institutional community”.

¹⁶ For more on the Waitakere way cf. Craig, D. (2004). Building better contexts for partnership and sustainable local collaboration: A review of core issues, with lessons from the “Waitakere Way”. *Social Policy Journal*, 23, p 48.

A bi-product of this form of collaboration has been the new relationships that have resulted from people coming together. As one respondent framed this, “ [it is] the number of people that come together at the summits, get together in Calls to Action... they are working on calls to action, they then get to know each other, and work together on all sorts of other things”. In this way both the process and the activities are important, as it is *through the act of getting together* that a sense of shared commitment is enabled; a commitment both to the issues at hand and to the people involved.

Coordination of the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project by skilled practitioners has been instrumental to the success of this project. They have been able to take a meta-view and coordinate across the sectorial interests of central government, local government and community organisations. This role has been undertaken by workers within council and has provided an important mechanism of cross sectorial connection.

Collaborative processes, an important component of the functioning of the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project, require enormous work. Historically this has been an issue as the “transactional costs” of this work have often been hidden. This has meant is that often the cost of this work has been provided, in particular within the community sector, on a voluntary basis.

In the case of Community Waitakere’s involvement with the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project the financial cost has been addressed, in part, by building collaboration into both the shared objectives and the shared work programmes of the Partnering Agreement between Community Waitakere and Waitakere City Council (see case study 3 for a more in-depth discussion of this).

The Community Wellbeing Network acted as the conduit of information back to the community sector. Obtaining and maintaining a mandate to represent this sector has had its own unique challenges and the cohesion of this network has changed over time.¹⁷

A number of respondents expressed the view that contextual issues have resulted in a recent lack of focus for the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project. For example, the change in regional governance, particularly at the time of transition) has been a preoccupation for both those within council (as they have adapted to it) and those within the community (as they formed opposition to it, see case study 1). Importantly however, relationships have been maintained throughout this time of change. This can perhaps be explained by the solidity of trust that has been accumulated over time.

Local involvement by central government agencies has reduced considerably in recent years, caused in part, by a move to a more centralised way of doing things, the reduction in the public service generally, and increasing demand on key decision makers by other local governments. Parts of the collaboration project have suggests one commentator have “been chipped away over time ... and new ideas are needed to take this project further”. Finding ways of allowing these new ideas to emerge is a current opportunity.

KEY LEARNINGS

The Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project provides an example of a collaboration that has offered new opportunities to engage with social issues that cut across sectors. It has resulted in a number of important outcomes including; increasing the agreement on the definition of a particular issue or problem, gaining support to focus on these issues, and increasing the numbers of individuals and groups who can be counted on to provide sustained action to address these issues (all indicators of successful community and social wellbeing strategies).^{xxiv}

¹⁷ The story of this network is outside of the scope of this case study.

The community sector was recognised by a number of respondents as a central and necessary component in this tripartite arrangement with this “grass roots” voice adding both breadth and depth to future solutions to social issues.

Respondents suggested that a number of contextual factors have had a negative impact on the cohesiveness and impetus for sustaining the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project. One respondent clearly articulated the need for new energy in order to revitalise this project.

Trust was positioned by many respondents as central to the success of the Waitakere Wellbeing Collaboration Project. This included trust in the agreed process, trust in representative organisations and trust in each other to be acting in good faith.

Community Waitakere was identified as an important connector within this sector and its role as a mandated representative of the community sector was acknowledged. This lead role requires an on-going mandate, and some respondents to this research questioned who was currently “speaking for the sector”. While others have recognised the importance of mandates from above¹⁸, respondents to this research emphasised the importance of mandates from below.

It is within collaboration, and especially the activities that can result from this, that trust and commitment are formed. One respondent suggested that this was not secondary to the actual outputs or outcomes of collaboration but *primary* in importance. In a continuum developed by Craig and Courtney (2004) collaboration marks a position on the path to partnership.^{xxv} It is therefore a prerequisite of more fully developed sustainable relationships.

¹⁸ See for example Department of Internal Affairs. (2007).

CASE STUDY 5: COMMUNITY WAITAKERE NEWSLETTER/E-NOTICE BOARD

THE FOCUS OF THIS CASE STUDY

The following case-study explores the development of the Community Waitakere E-notice board/newsletter. The main focus is on what can be learnt from this initiative about community connection and information dissemination.

“Informing the community sector”.

Community Waitakere’s E-notice board/newsletter is an important connection and information dissemination mechanism for the community sector within Waitakere. It is both email and web-based. Community development seeks to connect people in order for them be better informed and better able to act on this information. The Community Waitakere newsletter/E-notice board has an important role in achieving this goal.

LOCATING THIS CASE STUDY IN CONTEXT

Community Waitakere has continued with WADCOSS’s commitment to strengthen the community sector through information sharing. Historically a bi-monthly (paper based) newsletter provided relevant information to WADCOSS members and other community organisations. Community Waitakere has also provided information sharing resources to other community organisations (including, the Community Economic Development CED Trust, Inspiring Communities and Auckland Community Development Alliance ACDA).

With changes in technological availability and capacity the current Community Waitakere newsletter/E-notice board has grown and evolved to a 3-4 times weekly emailed/web-linked repository of community information. With an email data base of more than 630 operational accounts this connection/information network reaches across sectorial and regional divides.

WHAT WAS THE INTENTION OF THIS INITIATIVE?

The Community Waitakere newsletter/E-notice board intended to be a key information dissemination point for the community sector. This is in keeping with Community Waitakere’s strategic objective to support the community sector in Waitakere through “connection”.^{xxvi} While this occurs in a myriad of ways (e.g. the hosting of forums, network meetings and Community Waitakere’s own community network meeting the “Open-Door-Days”) an important component of this information sharing is the use of information communication technology.

The Community Waitakere newsletter/E-notice board can be seen as one of most successful aspects of this information sharing work. Originally intended to be user generated, with those using this service adding their own notices, this service is currently facilitated and moderated by the Resource Centre Administrator, based at the Waitakere Community Resource Centre.

DESCRIBING THE KEY PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES OF THIS INITIATIVE

The Community Waitakere newsletter/E-notice board is perhaps one of the most recognised “value added” services that community Waitakere operates; arriving in email inboxes across the region toward the end of most working days.

There was general consensus from all respondents that the Community Waitakere newsletter/E-notice was a valuable service, both for deliverers and receivers of community information. This was typified by one respondent’s comment who stated, “the notice board provides a great local resource and information sharing for all Waitakere and community groups” and that because of this “the community are better informed”. Another commentator recently fed back, “I just wanted to say thanks for your daily newsletter. It is one of the most readable and informative ones I have seen in my community work days and I look forward to reading it each day”.

The Community Waitakere newsletter/E-notice board allows for community sector organisations to keep abreast of current events. Allowing for; “knowing what is going on; knowing about training and development; law changes; new initiatives; all these good things”, “opportunities to participate”, “promoting other organisations”, “free advertising for groups with no budget”. Without this information sharing mechanism a potential suggested outcome was that “...we don't know what is happening, we as community groups are [therefore] isolated and not working collectively”.

KEY LEARNINGS

The Community Waitakere newsletter/E-notice board was recognised as an important mechanism for linking people to events, issues and opportunities. Due to varying levels of technological literacy in the community sector the assistance of an administrator remains important.

It is valued by those working within the community sector with a majority of responses to this evaluation suggesting that the Community Waitakere newsletter/E-notice board has resulted in an increased level of community connection and involvement. This is a recognised indicator of community and social wellbeing^{xxvii}, and when considered in relation to the number of individuals and groups that subscribe to this service, demonstrates a successful initiative.

Information communication technologies provide an efficient mechanism to support the connection of community organisations. A centralising dissemination point allows for a large target audience to be reached with little effort.

Access to this no cost resource was positioned as vital to organisation who operate on minimal budgets.

The importance of regularity was noted by a number of respondents allowing for information that is timely, relevant and actionable. So too was the importance of clear headings, allowing for a “quick scan” before a more “in-depth read”. The Community Waitakere newsletter/E-notice board was identified as an important way of increasing community engagement with particular issues and increasing the visibility of particular campaigns.

CASE STUDY 6: COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCES

THE FOCUS OF THIS CASE STUDY

The following case-study explores the Community Economic Development Conferences. The main focus is on what can be learnt from this initiative about community economic development (CED) as an emergent field of practice and the factors that support this conversation.

*“...a new way of thinking
for the community sector”*

Community Waitakere took a lead role in the organisation of the two Community Economic Development Conferences (2010 & 2011) and importantly demonstrated leadership in the promotion of these new ideas. The CED conferences allowed for an increased articulation of CED as both a concept and as an activity. The on-going impact of this conversation continues in community development spaces.

LOCATING THIS CASE STUDY IN CONTEXT

The first CED conference (*Developing a Social Economy*) was held in Waitakere in February 2010.^{xxviii} The CED website was established in August the same year, issuing regular e-bulletins to a growing database of CED practitioners and supporters. The interested generated through these activities evidenced the need for a second conference which was held in April 2011, titled *Making it Happen: from Possibility to Profitability*.

With a focus on social enterprise, social finance, developing community assets and how profits can be utilised for the benefit of communities, these conferences represented the introduction of a new conversation for many community development and social service practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand. The second conference was held at the Trusts Stadium Waitakere; attracting over 300 delegates and 50 presenters from the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and from within Aotearoa New Zealand.

Funding is an on-going and at times contentious issue for many organisations within the community sector. Some of this contention relates to the seemingly ever shrinking government investment in this sector, ideas around the often cited notion of ‘funder capture’, and finding ways to work collaboratively within a context of competition. As Community Development in the Aotearoa New Zealand context is extremely grant dependant, CED can be seen as offering an alternative paradigm.

CED has an established grounding in many overseas contexts (supported in a large part by enabling government policy) yet in Aotearoa New Zealand it remains an emergent concept with minimal (but slowly expanding) practice base.

WHAT WAS THE INTENTION OF THIS INITIATIVE?

The first CED Conference intended to introduce and establish an on-going conversation about alternative ways of generating income for and within the community sector. As the CED website frames it,

This Conference was aimed at building an increasingly strong, resilient and financially sustainable community sector. Through introducing the concepts of social enterprise, social finance and community owned assets community organisations were empowered to consider possibilities to become more entrepreneurial, develop independent income streams and so reduce their reliance on government and philanthropic grants.

This represented the introduction of the idea that community enterprise could increase the viability of community sector organisations and that community ownership of assets could help to create organisations that were sustainable.

The second conference built upon these ideas and further sought to embed the idea, that within challenging contexts (including, economic, social and environmental), “community is the centre and heart of life ...and [socially ethical] economic development is a critical aspect of a healthy community”^{xxix}.

In many ways this was a challenge to the long standing binary that views business and community perspectives as in opposition. Here the conferences sought to caution against this perspective, captured well by Hutchinson’s admonishment that, “if we get too caught up in this oppositional thinking ... then we start to deny the very real gifts and insights that we have for each other’s work.”^{xxx} As another respondent framed this, it was about asking “What are the possibilities that can emerge when we reject these polarities”?

The first conference sort to begin a conversation around CED, the second conference continued this conversation and began to describe *the how* this work could be progressed.

DESCRIBING THE KEY PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES OF THIS INITIATIVE

Community Waitakere provided the necessary organisational support for these conferences. It also allowed (due to its local, regional and national networks) promotion of these events to a large and diverse audience. Community Waitakere’s reputation (as a leader within the community development space) was cited by a number of respondents as increasing the credibility of these conferences.

The first conference was an attempt to introduce a new conversation into the community sector and to inspire individuals and organisations within this space to consider new ideas and ways of creating alternative income streams. As one respondent explained “this was a new way of thinking for the community sector...this was not what community sector organisations do [generate profit]”. This conference was therefore an attempt to “bring this conversation out of the closet”, “to feel proud of exploring these ways of thinking” and to “seek solutions to grant dependency”.

Community Waitakere’s established networks and its external communication systems were utilised as an information dissemination mechanism in the organisation of these conferences. Community Waitakere’s relationship with Waitakere City Council was also an important way of allowing for communication with other local councils which resulted in a strong representation of council delegates at the conference. Both avenues of connection resulted in previously unengaged individuals and groups taking action on attending these conferences (an indicator of successful community development).

Another important element in the successful organisation of these conferences was the employment of a key worker¹⁹ (funded through an ASB grant). Utilising established knowledge of community economic development (gained overseas) and drawing from international sources, a number of established “experts” in this field were engaged. This further increased the knowledge base and the experiential resources available for these conferences.

Represented at the first conference were a mix of community development and social service organisations, social entrepreneurs, local and central government, and businesses. This last grouping had minimal representation indicating underdeveloped relationships with this sector.

The second conference attracted a similar mix of sector and Intersector groups. With a focus on more of the pragmatics of CED this conference picked up on the conversation that had begun at the first conference. Concrete examples of CED from both international and domestic contexts demonstrated both the possibility and actuality of CED in action. The peer-to-peer nature of these

¹⁹ This key worker was later a key driver of the CED trust (see, www.ced.org.nz).

reflective examples were highlighted by one respondent as a particularly valuable way of allowing for the transmission of learnings. This, it was suggested “ was not about some expert with a PHD ... [but that] this is other practitioners saying this is what we did, this is what was challenging, what didn't work, etc.”.

Vox populi²⁰ recordings were made after the 2011 conference and, as a tool of evaluation, represent a quick way of gaining and capturing individual perceptions of value. Here commentators spoke of the ways the conference had allowed them, “to get with like-minded people” and to feel that, “I'm not all by myself”^{xxxi}. Other respondents spoke of the “amazing energy”, and being reminded that “you just need a few people with drive and commitment to create something that changes neighbourhoods, changes communities and changes the world”.

CED conversations have continued post these conferences and these ideas continue to make inroads into the wider community development agenda. One of the tangible manifestations of continuity is the CED Trust, active at the time of writing, and responsible for a regular E-Bulletin, which updates and helps to link CED practitioners and encourage the development of local networks.

CED continues to be a strategic object for Community Waitakere. It is visible in pay-to-attend training held at the Waitakere Community resource centre, which meets the dual function of increasing capacity within the community sector and contributing to organisational sustainability.

KEY LEARNINGS

The support of an established organisation enhances the credibility of new and emergent fields of practice. In this case Community Waitakere, because of reputation and established networks, was instrumental in ensuring the objectives of these conferences were met.

More people are aware of CED as both a concept and as an activity because of these conferences and there has been a change in how this agenda is understood and perceived (an indicator of success).

These conferences provided the mechanism to share these learnings so that others may understand what has worked well elsewhere. Community economic development as a process of learning by doing, and learning from mistakes has been highlighted in some commentaries.^{xxxii} Practitioner based peer exchange was positioned by a number of respondents as a particularly effective way of sharing learnings.

Many respondents spoke of a feeling of connection, both to ideas and to other conference delegates. This signals that these conferences enhanced collegiality. Tracing the mutually beneficial relationships that resulted from these connections would further provide evidence of successful community development.

Connection between the community sector and the business sector is underdeveloped. This was evidenced by the reported organisational affiliation of the delegates. Exploring ways of strengthening these connections may allow for increased support of CED as a concept and enhance the processes of its activities.

²⁰ literally “voice of the people”; this is a style of interview popularised in broadcasting journalism, usually with members of the “general public”

CASE STUDY 7: TUI GLEN HUB PROJECT

THE FOCUS OF THIS CASE STUDY

The following case-study explores the proposed development of the Tui Glen Hub Project. The main focus is on what can be learnt from this initiative about working with conflict and how community development organisations must at times work within contested contexts.

“...a grand and hopeful vision”.

The Tui Glen Hub Project was for a time “the talk of the town”. The goal was to build a purpose designed facility that could accommodate a number of community organisations and become an important meeting place and conference space for the community sector. The planning of this project coincided with a number of organisational changes to and within Community Waitakere; some as a result of getting ready for this project and some as a result of this project not going ahead.

LOCATING THIS CASE STUDY IN CONTEXT

Tui Glen reserve is located approximately 800 metres from the centre of Henderson.^{xxxiii} It was the site of the first registered camping ground in Aotearoa New Zealand.^{xxxiv} The construction of a purpose built community resource centre on this site (i.e. the Tui Glen Hub Project) became an important goal for Community Waitakere (WADCOSS).

The change from WADCOSS to Community Waitakere in 2006 (i.e. the change from an Incorporated Society to a Charitable Trust) was in large part predicated on the need for a more robust organisational structure that could accommodate a huge capital project such as Tui Glen.

Community Waitakere had been supported through the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) funding to develop an internal structure, to develop processes and policies, and to scope the community around the idea of a new resource centre. This scoping project was the continuation of a number of previous conversations that had identified a need within the community sector for both increased levels of accommodation and a central information hub within Waitakere for the community sector.

The Tui Glen Hub Project would have fulfilled this need. Due to a number of complicating factors the Tui Glen Hub Project was discontinued in 2008.

WHAT WAS THE INTENTION OF THIS INITIATIVE?

Community Waitakere operates the Waitakere Community Resource Centre in Ratanui St (see case study 2). Historically increased demand for this limited space came from within Community Waitakere (as its own staffing levels increased) and externally, from both existing and fledgling community organisations. The external need for more space was evidenced by a substantial waiting list (for space at Ratanui St) and through the scoping project funded by the DIA.

The intention of the Tui Glen Hub Project was the provision of a large scale, purpose built, community sector accommodation and conference/meeting space facility. As one commentator framed this, “to be a big grownup version of what was already being done at the [Ratanui St] Resource Centre”. A point of difference however was that this project was planned to be financially sustainable, incorporating aspects of community capacity building with social enterprise.

DESCRIBING THE KEY PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES OF THIS INITIATIVE

One respondent stated that the Tui Glen Hub Project was “a grand and hopeful vision”, but also, suggests another respondent, “a huge undertaking for a small organisation”.

The mandate for the Tui Glen Hub Project was obtained through significant community consultation, and was premised on the fulfilment of an identifiable need within the community sector. Support for

this project came from a number of quarters, including Community Waitakere's partners within council. A number of funding streams had been secured including Waitakere City Council having paid for the architectural design and for plans to be drawn.

A project manager had been successful in obtaining this level of support and held responsibility for the "on the ground work" that was necessary for a project of this scale. This worker had taken the project to the point of implementation and readiness for resource consent.

The Tui Glen project was a large scale proposal and would have required substantial changes to a number of surrounding features and aspects of the Tui Glen reserve. This including changes to traffic flow, the status of particular trees and consideration of the current status of the reserve as a park space. Each of these domains being the responsibility of different parts of the Waitakere City Council, and as such required consultation across council. This added complexity to the process of working with council, which can often be seen, from the outside, as a single entity.

During the resource consent consultation phase a formal objection to the project was lodged by an effected resident within the neighbourhood of the Tui Glen reserve. The project manager attempted to find a way forward with this resident and a number of compromises were considered. Reaching a point of impasse this objection resulted in a subsequent legal challenge that requiring effected parties to enter into a process of formal mediation and subsequent panel hearings.

Both the project manager and the manager had left Community Waitakere before the resource consent hearing process had begun. This resulted in the incumbent manager "inheriting a project that had been carried a long way along" and being put immediately into a position of responsibility for the hearings process of a contested resource consent.

For Community Waitakere, as an organisation with an established relationship with council, a relationship that saw both financial and professional (within the community development support of the project, this was an especially fraught position to be in. Indeed the depth of this relationship was used as a legal challenge by the lawyer working on behalf of the objecting resident and this impacted on the usual format of the hearing process.

Typically a resource consent hearing is heard by two elected council members and an independent commissioner. In the case of the Tui Glen Hub Project however a conflict of interest challenge was issued which meant that council could not be represented, and that this hearing could only be heard by the single commissioner. A pre-pre hearing was held with one commissioner and a subsequent pre-hearing held with a different commissioner. During this process Community Waitakere went without adequate legal advice (in part because it was thought unnecessary and in part because the cost was prohibitive).

The final hearing saw all three parties, Waitakere City Council, Community Waitakere and the legal representation of the objecting resident meet. To get to this point took almost a year and was an extremely difficult personal and professional journey for all involved. The final judgment from the commissioner was a declining of the application for resource consent.

The decision to accept or to reject this judgment was both an organisational and an ethical dilemma for Community Waitakere. Resulting in emergency Community Waitakere Board meetings being held and the answers to this situation debated.

Community Waitakere had certain obligations under its shared work programme with council including maintaining accommodation support for the community sector. As an organisation Community Waitakere had built its internal capacity in accordance with the requirements of the Tui Glen Hub Project hiring new staff. This placed pressure on already scarce space at the existing resource centre and threatened the organisations ability to meet its shared work programme

obligations. To mitigate this threat Community Waitakere moved premises to a recently vacated space in Henderson Valley Rd thus ensuring that it could maintain its agreed responsibilities.

The ethical component of on-going action was arguably more difficult to reconcile. On one hand there was the responsibility to the follow through with the proposal both in response to the need of the community for a facility of this nature, and to the support of funders. While the other hand consideration had to be given to how an on-going legal challenge could be funded (i.e. using what was effectively ratepayer funds in order to mount a legal challenge to both council and ratepayers), and importantly how this could impact on future relationships.

Funding was found from interest monies and legal advice was sought. The decision to follow this process to the next step, Environmental Court mediation, was agreed to be necessary if Community Waitakere were to honour their commitment to representing the interests of the community sector.

Mediation again saw the three interested parties debate the issues. In this triad were Community Waitakere, the opposing resident and their legal representation, and representatives from the various parts within council. In this latter conglomerate of interests there were a number of different perspectives and levels of support for the project. For example, while Community Waitakere's partners in the Community development unit were in full support, the traffic department were interested in the impact on vehicular flow, and the arborists on protecting trees.

The outcome of this process of mediation was another stalemate, and Community Waitakere decided to return to the Community Waitakere board in order to reach a final decision on the next course of action. It was agreed that the project had been rendered (due to substantial concessions over possible uses) unsustainable. With consideration of this (a primary goal having been the self-sustainability of the Tui Glen Hub) and on review of the organisational principles of Community Waitakere, the decision to halt any further action was reached.

The journey to reach this conclusion had been a long and difficult one and is one that contains a number of points of learning.

KEY LEARNINGS

In the case of the Tui Glen Hub Project there was a wide range of diverse stakeholders each with differing perspectives. The importance of "taking people with you on the journey, especially the people impacted by the initiative" was recognised as a central learning from Community Waitakere's involvement with this initiative.

Community development needs a community mandate for action. In this case study a community mandate added legitimacy to the goal of the construction of a purpose built community hub. It also provided an ethical foundation for continued action within a contested process.

The Waitakere City Council Community Development unit supported and trusted Community Waitakere to lead this development. The willingness of a local council to support the objectives of community development organisations is an indicator of success.^{xxxv}In this case however this support was insufficient to lead to the completion of this project.

Relationships are central to community development work. Relationships however can have unexpected consequences. In this case the closeness of Community Waitakere and Waitakere City council was partly a liability when it was positioned by the legal team opposed to this development as representing a conflict of interest.

The importance of taking the opportunity to get good legal advice, in a timely fashion, was highlighted as an important learning from this experience. While there is often significant cost in doing so, had this occurred the result of this initiative may have had a different outcome.

The necessity of a well-timed, well prepared for, handover between new and existing staff, especially during such projects, was particularly identified by one respondent.

The goals of community organisations may find themselves in opposition to the interests of some within the community. In this case study many respondents pointed to the influence of one resident as being the centre of opposition to this project.

Careful, respectful, negotiation needs to be an on-going consideration for community development organisations.

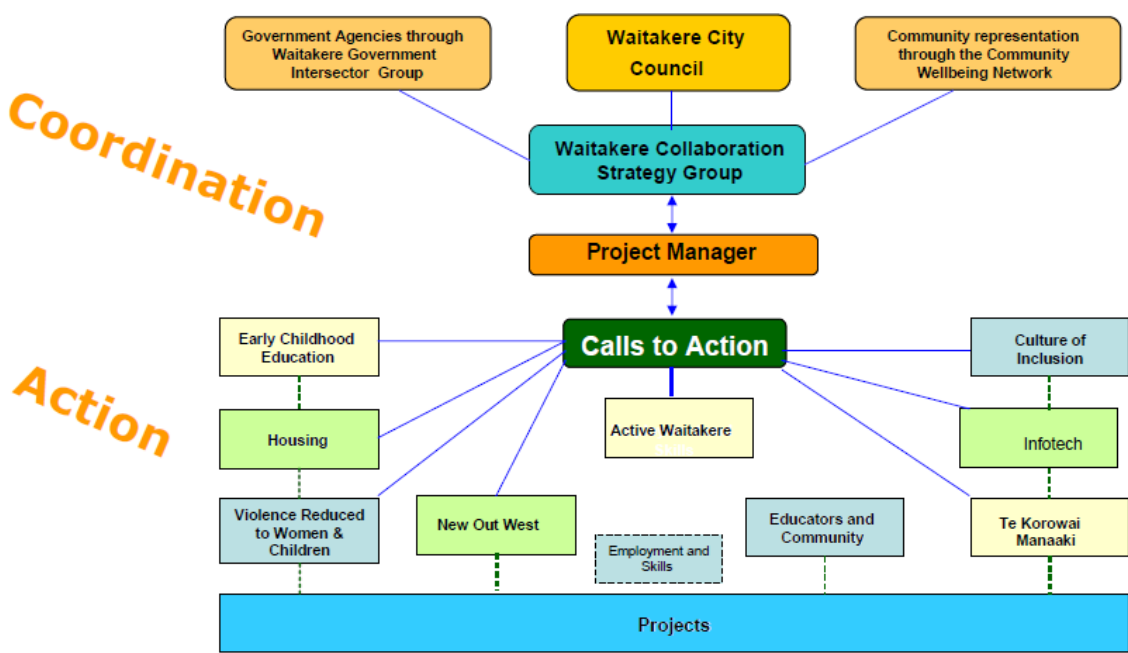
APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE.

Partnering Agreement: Community Waitakere and Waitakere City Council.
<http://www.communitywaitakere.org.nz/images/partnering%20agreement.pdf>

APPENDIX TWO.

How it fits together now



Source: Conway, K. (2007). Presentation Waitakere Wellbeing Summit
<http://www.waitakere.govt.nz/ourpar/pdf/wellbeingsummit/2007/kimpres.pdf>

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