OUTCOMES PLUS

The added value provided by community social services

Brent Neilson
with Charles Sedgwick and Sandra Grey

Contents

Foreword

Ehara tāku toa te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini
Success is not achieved individually, but from the work of many people

E ngā iwi, e ngā waka, e ngā karangatanga maha o ngā hau e whā, tēnei te mihi atu ki a koutou katoa.

Tēnā anō hoki i ō tātou tini aituā. Haere atu ki te taha o to tātou Matua i te Rangi. Haere, haere, haere koutou katoa. Rātou te hunga mate ki a rātou. Tātou te hunga ora ki a tātou. Tēnā tātou katoa.

Community-based social services organisations have a long history of working alongside of and amongst communities to create greater wellbeing and self determination. These organisations are part of their community. Overall it is the combination of the organisations own resources, government funding, a skilled and committed workforce along with volunteer and philanthropic contributions that combine to build an infrastructure that is used by communities to pursue their own initiatives and outcomes. Through this postive process community outcomes are achieved alongside of the government directed priority outcomes. In effect the funders, including government, get maximum value for their investment through this doubling up of outcomes and results. Government priorities are achieved and communities become more resilient and self sustaining.

In the wake of the Global Financial Crisis the New Zealand Council of Social Services (NZCCSS) began recieving from its members* and from the wider sector reports of government shifting to highly competitive social services procurment processes. These processes, based around the Government Electronic Tendering System (GETS), were resulting in more and more contracts being awarded to large commercially focussed organisations. This was often at the cost of smaller locally based social services providers. This loss in contracting and funding saw the useful and productive practices of achieving both the government funded outcomes and community identfied results diminishing and in some cases being lost.

The richness of the interaction between community based social services and community led initiatives has underpinned many community development projects. Community based social services organisations contribute in many ways to their communities. They provide opportunities for local leadership to access an infrastructure of venues, office equipment, skills and support to help in implementing local initiatives. Often the governance, leadership and staff of locally based social services emerge from and are actively part of their communities.

In order to better understand how community-based and community-focussed organisations make a difference, how they add value above and beyond the funded outcome, NZCCSS commissioned this report. *Outcomes Plus: The added value provided by community social services* sets out how community organisations achieve not only the government outcome but add value through contributing in a significant way to the communities within which the operate. NZCCSS strongly urges the development of funding strategies that recognise and reward this added value. Not to do so will be

* Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support Services Inc. and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches

at considerable cost to communities and the whānau, families and individuals within them.

Noho ora mai i raro i te manaakitanga o te Atua.

Nāku iti nei, nā

Trevor McGlinchey
Executive Officer, NZCCSS

Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the staff, volunteers and community members from across Aotearoa, who took time away from their work and whānau to meet with us and share their stories, experiences and concerns so honestly. What became apparent throughout this research was the genuine love and commitment community organisation workers bring to the sector, beyond their outstanding professionalism and expertise. Similarly, the strength, determination, mana and appreciation expressed by those community members who were kind enough to contribute their stories to this research, was something that impressed at every turn. To both staff and community members alike, I hope that through this research, your achievements and concerns are given voice.

I would also like to thank Trevor McGlinchey (nzccss), Charles Sedgwick (independent scholar), and Sandra Grey (Victoria University of Wellington) for their continued support and expertise throughout this project. Constrained by time, it was with their patience and willingness to take time out of their own personal and professional lives that this research could progress.

Brent Neilson

Executive summary

Why this study?

Over the last decade, government agencies, the community and voluntary sector, and academics have all noted the changes, difficulties, and tensions being caused by government policies and processes surrounding social service provision. In recent years government processes for buying social and health services have undergone considerable change, change evident in 'Investing in Services for Outcomes', the 'Vulnerable Children and Children's Action Plan', and more recently in the work of the Productivity Commission. While government policy on the one hand acknowledges the significance of the community and voluntary sectors' local connections and infrastructural strength (Treasury 2013), on the other hand the ever increasing targeting of social services and government funding processes ignore the 'added value' of community providers.

This research unpacks the nature of the contribution of community and voluntary sector providers in New Zealand and evaluates the importance that their unique contribution should play in government decisions about purchasing of social services. Our research shows that the value delivered by the community and voluntary sector (their 'added value') precedes and goes well beyond what they are contracted to do by government. This 'community value' – a term better reflecting the kaupapa of the sector and what it delivers – is only possible because of the characteristics and infrastructures that are developed and reproduced in the community and voluntary sector, their 'organisational specific capital' in the words of Treasury. Government policies and funding models which undermine the characteristics and infrastructure of the community and voluntary sector will jeopardise the overall contribution of the sector to individuals, communities, the government, and society as a whole.
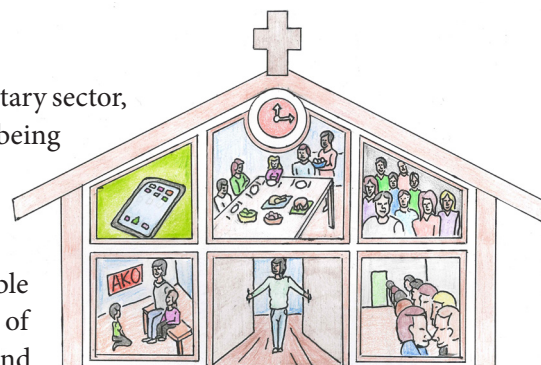
Doing it together, I think, makes a difference. It's not 'us' and 'them', it's 'let's do it together'; it makes them feel valued and normalises things.

Who did we talk to?

Exploring the value the community and voluntary sector brings to individuals, communities, the government, and society is best accomplished by talking with those intimately involved in using and providing social services. We have interviewed over 70 people (staff, volunteers, clients, and stakeholders) in nine organisations from around New Zealand. The information and knowledge shared in the interviews and focus groups have been set in the context of domestic and international research from academics, governments, and the community and voluntary sector itself in order to document in detail the community value of the sector and how this enables the sector to meet the increasingly complex needs of individuals, whānau, and community.

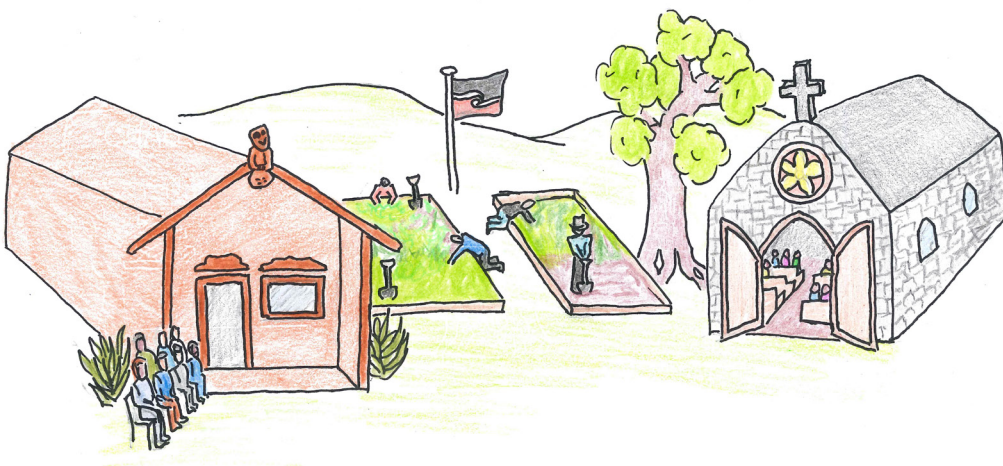# What does the community and voluntary sector provide?

There are huge benefits in having a local organisation, who know their local community. The staff are local, they're embedded in that community and have that local knowledge and all that extra value. If you contract out to the big providers, particularly off shore, then those groups know nothing about the local community, and you lose that localism.

Participants in this research revealed eight key attributes of the community and voluntary sector which create the 'organisational-specific capital' of the community and voluntary sector:

- their **organisational mission** 'in action';
- their **accessibility for clients**;
- the fact that they are **embedded in the community**;
- their **knowledge of government agencies and community**;
- their **networks and on-going collaboration** with a range of businesses, government agencies, and other community and voluntary sector organisations;
- their **flexibility with regard to time**, including a focus on long-term change in communities;
- the **ability to respond innovatively** to identified individual and community needs; and,
- how they express **manaakitanga** (that is, how they care for their own wellbeing and that of others).

It is only through the attributes listed above that the community and voluntary sector can fully meet the requirements for effective and efficient service set out in government contracts. But the attributes embedded within New Zealand's community and voluntary sector provide much more than simply meeting the government goals. Combined together these attributes of organisational-specific capital enable community and voluntary sector organisations to create and reproduce 'community value'. That is, it enables them to: build connections between people, contribute to social inclusion and cohesion, contribute to the empowerment of individuals and communities, and assist with the development of stronger communities.

The community has been so enriched. Everyone knows [the organisation]. There are mothers I've known my whole life, because I've lived [here] my whole life. Known them, seen them, but being on the course was the first time I had said hello to them. You get to know them, instead of just being a person walking past. You know their name now, you say hello. It's pretty cool.

When a government ignores or undermines the special characteristics, strengths, and infrastructures of the community and voluntary sector it is likely to generate a service provision system that is highly individualised, disjointed from real needs, and is unable to build the overall strength of the community. This does not serve either government or taxpayers well, but more importantly for New Zealanders it will mean the community and voluntary sector will be unable to operate to its full potential.

The negative impact of current government processes

Several times over the last few years, and possibly this year, we're looking at going to the wall, because a lot of that core funding has disappeared. The thought of this place not being able to function is astounding in terms of the resource that it is, but we need the money to survive.

One of the major findings of this research is that government funding and contracting processes are eroding the special characteristics, strengths, and infrastructures of the community and voluntary sector. Government funding practices have led to increased vulnerability due to underfunding; competitive processes have impacted on collaboration between organisations undermining the very networks needed to meet complex social needs; and, the standardisation of services and risk aversion in government policies have cut across innovative social service provision at the community level. While community and voluntary sector organisations are not hostile to accountability requirements (and never have been), the auditing and professionalisation requirements created by governments in the contract environment produce an excessive drain on resources such as time, knowledge, and money.

There is no doubt that organisations are resilient but current Government processes for funding social service provision are straining the very social value created and reproduced by the community and voluntary sector.

The youth centre engages local young people in meaningful activities and programmes to keep them active, informed and connected. … Over the years we've faced many challenges, and have survived through some tough times. But we're resourceful, resilient and committed to raising our children together.

It is only because of the unique characteristics and infrastructures of the community and voluntary sector that this resilience is possible.

Where to from here?

Given what has been learned about the embedded capacities of the community and voluntary sector and how these are needed to both meet the demands of Government contracts and to bring community value in the provision of social services, we argue that government procurement processes need reconsideration. If we are to tackle the major social problems facing New Zealand communities, the procurement processes of the government must take into account not only the delivery of the government specified outcomes but the wider added value – the community value – which underwrites and bolsters all that is delivered by community organisations.

Two considerations must inform government decisions with regard to funding social service provision. First, the wider benefits to communities which are delivered by community and voluntary organisations through their organisational-specific capital must be taken into account in government procurement policies. The real value of the community and voluntary sector is its *embedded* attributes, built up over time and built in some cases because of funding for contracted service provision. In effect, this capital constitutes the sector's 'added value'.

Second, any government decision around funding of social services must evaluate the impact of procurement policies on individuals, whānau, and families. Changes to procurement which do not consider the community value noted above will have negative impact on individuals, whānau, and families.

> *At a local level, I think the work we do is valued, but if we're talking to funders about how they think about the work NGOs do, I think they need to be talking about the value of that work and that we go above and beyond, and that that work is underfunded, and an organisation that was concerned with profit just wouldn't be going there. So much of it is underfunded, so it's about funding NGOs to do this much needed work that we do really well.*

Based on all that we heard during this research project, we recommend that the government and the community and voluntary sector take time to think about ways they can:

- acknowledge the complexity of social issues and the required outcomes in contracts, and
- ensure that community organisations have the resources to realise the organisational-specific capital required to meet complex social needs, as well as the outcomes of any government contract.

Brent Neilson, Dr Charles Sedgwick and Dr Sandra Grey
18 May 2015

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Introduction

T he community and voluntary sector contributes significantly to the social, spiritual, economic, physical, and cultural health and wellbeing of all New Zealanders. Often working with the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in society, the work of community and voluntary organisations is not always visible, yet the services produced by such organisations touch all aspects of social, cultural, and economic life.

It's not 'us' and 'them', it's 'let's do it together'…

Community and voluntary sector organisations share some common principles – those particularly attributed to the sector are the principles of manaakitanga, generosity, empathy, kindness, altruism, solidarity, whānaungatanga, and social responsibility. While it is possible to list common principles shared in the community and voluntary sector, there is a wide variety of services, approaches, sizes, scales and capacities within the sector in New Zealand. This diversity makes it difficult to demonstrate how the work of the sector impacts positively on New Zealand without reverting to generalisations, abstract concepts, taken-for-granted assumptions, and broad rhetoric.

These difficulties in accurately showing the contribution of the community and voluntary sector to New Zealand's social, cultural, and economic advancement are evident in academic work on social service provision. Academics evaluating the importance of the community and voluntary sector often list general attributes they assert exist in the voluntary sector in order to demonstrate the worth of such organisations. For example, a study by Knight and Robson described community and voluntary organisations as being 'passionate, risk taking, persistent … knowledgeable and culturally competent … holistic and person-centred … change-minded [and] partnership focussed' (2007:10, cited in Macmillan 2012). Kramer (1981) identified the unique functions of community and voluntary sector organisations as including their ability to specialise in a problem, group, method, or intervention, the promotion of voluntarism, and their role as advocate and service provider; the latter regarded by Kramer as being the most pervasive and least distinctive function (cited in Billis & Glennerster 1998). Often the value of the sector is equated to what inspires people to work in the sector. For Blake et al. the factors which inspire people to work in the community and voluntary sector are: 'Empowering people, Pursuing equality, Making voices heard, Transforming lives, Being responsible, Finding fulfilment, Doing a good job, Generating public health' (2006:7, cited in Macmillan 2008:12).

In the current funding environment, the generalities used by the sector and academics to justify on-going support of and funding for the community and voluntary sector organisations often fail to sway politicians or public servants. What is asked for is detail of how the community and voluntary sector meets government objectives, the mechanisms by which the investment of taxpayers' dollars turn into positive social, cultural, and economic outcomes.

This study moves beyond generalities to unpack the nature of the contribution of the community and voluntary sector providers. We set out in detail the attributes that make up the 'community value' of New Zealand's community and voluntary sector, or what has been described elsewhere as its 'comparative advantage' (Billis & Glennerster 1998). The community value is only possible because of the characteristics and infrastructures that are developed and reproduced in the community and voluntary sector, their 'organisational specific capital' in the words of Treasury. Government policies and funding models which undermine the characteristics and infrastructure of the community and voluntary sector jeopardise the overall contribution of the sector to individuals, communities, the government, and society as a whole. The report further stresses the need for social services purchasing agencies, in an increasingly competitive social services environment, to take full account of the added value which comes out of the community and voluntary sector when making procurement decisions.

Methods

This research uses qualitative methods to understand the contribution community and voluntary organisations make to the lives of individuals, whānau, and communities. The data comes from speaking to the people at the heart of community social service provision – staff, volunteers, clients, and community representatives. In total, nine organisations from the community and voluntary sector participated in this study. These organisations are involved in offering social services within communities from Balclutha to Auckland. Individual interviews and focus groups took place in Dunedin, Wellington, Porirua, Whanganui and Auckland. In all, 70 participants were interviewed: nine managers, 37 staff, 10 volunteers, 11 clients, and three external stakeholders/community representatives.

The method of inquiry operated on three levels. First, each organisation's CEO was interviewed by members of the research team* followed by service and branch or departmental managers; then focus groups consisting of staff and/or volunteers; focus groups of volunteers and/or clients and where possible, external stakeholders and community representatives were interviewed.

* To increase the robustness of analysis and data collection, two researchers were present at each of the interviews/focus groups.

The strength of conducting interviews and focus groups lies in the ability of staff and clients to use stories to explain their world. In the interviews and focus groups, participants provided many examples of how the community and voluntary sector organisation they were connected to contributed to community development and wellbeing. As Macmillan (2012) has noted, the way to better understand the community and voluntary sector's role as both service provider and creator of social capital, means that researchers and governments must look to what matters to those involved; at the ideas, theories and narratives circulating about the sector.

Within the focus groups, participants were encouraged to speak freely and interact with one another. Participants were also able to challenge each other and the research team during the focus groups. This method also allows for researchers to hear common concerns that were outside of what was initially indicated as being the study's area of inquiry.

Once the interviews and focus groups were completed and transcribed, a thematic analysis was carried out by the research team. Analysis of the data revealed eight interrelated characteristics and infrastructures which created the organisational-specific capital of the participating organisations. They are:

- **Organisational kaupapa and mission:** The organisation's values-base, philosophy, or ethos.

- **Organisational accessibility:** Attributes or services provided which promote access to the organisation, services, or personal development.
- **Community-embedded nature:** The organisation's history, visibility and knowledge of the local area and community.
- **Institutional and community knowledge:** The organisation's knowledge of local and national governmental processes, and of the local area and community.
- **Networking and Collaboration:** The organisation's existing relationships with local business, community, local and national government and other community and voluntary agencies.
- **Time management:** The flexibility afforded by community and voluntary organisations to work in a flexible manner with regards to time.
- **Innovation:** The organisation's ability to respond innovatively to needs identified within the community.
- **Manaakitanga:** Processes and qualities of community and voluntary organisations which promote respect, generosity, hospitality, kindness, empathy and support for others.

Together the eight attributes above (which are explored in depth in Section 2) generate and maintain the 'community value' of the New Zealand community and voluntary sector. In Section 3 this report looks in detail at the four collective benefits generated by the sector:
- **Social and cultural capital**
- **Social inclusion and cohesion**
- **Community development**
- **Empowerment of communities**

While our research participants spent much of their time setting out the attributes and infrastructures integral to their organisations and crucial in the development of 'community value', they did provide commentary on current and on-going shifts in government social service procurement processes. Participating management and staff all noted a culture of increasing professionalisation, accountability and risk aversion, standardisation and competition in the community and voluntary sector. They noted that these factors undermine the very structures and attributes which are embedded in organisations and lead to community value.

Section 4 of this report moves to look in detail at the challenges faced by communities and those working in social service provision. The pressures associated with current and emerging funding practices and contract culture, which undermine the organisational-specific capital necessary to create community value include:
- **Increased vulnerability:** Community and voluntary organisations are operating under increasingly insecure government funding arrangements
- **Professionalisation:** Leading to significant changes in community and voluntary organisations' mission and structure
- **Accountability and risk aversion:** Mandatory, external accountability measures which direct resources away from service provision and toward compliance measures
- **Standardisation of services:** Prescribed, standardised services inhibit the innovation which is considered the hallmark of the community and voluntary sector

- **Competition:** The increasingly competitive contract environment further contributes to community and voluntary organisations' vulnerability and inhibits collaboration and the stability of networks

The operating environment of the community and voluntary sector

Our research participants are not alone in critiquing the impact of government policies on the community and voluntary sector. Over the last decade, government agencies, the community and voluntary sector, and academics have all noted the changes, difficulties, and tensions being caused by government policies and processes surrounding social service provision. In recent years government processes for buying social and health services have undergone considerable change, change evident in 'Investing in Services for Outcomes', the 'Vulnerable Children and Children's Action Plan', and more recently in the work of the Productivity Commission. While government policy on the one hand acknowledges the significance of the community and voluntary sectors' local connections and infrastructural strength (Treasury 2013), on the other hand the ever increasing targeting of social services and government funding processes ignore the 'added value' of community providers.

Existing research shows that government funding and contracting processes are eroding the special characteristics, strengths and infrastructures of the community and voluntary – sector (for a fuller discussion of the changes faced by the sector see the Literature Review). The rationalisation and marketisation of social services which have underpinned changes to government contracting processes impose significant pressures on community and voluntary organisations. By jeopardising and diminishing the sector's organisational-specific capital – their unique characteristics and infrastructures – the imposed contract culture risks damaging the shared interests of both the community and voluntary sector and government; specifically, the welfare and wellbeing of the nation's most vulnerable.

Recent government procurement guidelines have focused almost exclusively on processes for achieving 'value for money', this has resulted in national and international corporates bidding for service delivery contracts in areas traditionally the reserve of the community and voluntary sector. Certainly the Productivity Commission has noted the drive to ensure value for money, effectiveness, efficiency and reduction of political risk guiding policy around the procurement of services from NGOs (Productivity Commission 2014:1–3).

Furthermore the rationalisation of government-funded social services has resulted in two tendencies: the centralisation of social service provision; and, the move by government to shift funding to more prescribed contracts with increasingly competitive tendering and high-level managerial requirements. This centralisation of services is exemplified by ACC reducing the number of agencies providing localised services from a total of 86 to just six; two of which are large national or international corporates which offer their services nationally (Bennett 2012). Similarly, District Health Boards have chosen over 60 per cent of their home healthcare service providers as national/international corporate. This means two or three larger corporate replace the seven and 12 small or, localised, community organisations to provide social services (personal correspondance, CEO of NZCCSS 2014).

Concern about the implications of this contracting environment for the community and voluntary sector are not new. As well as being repeatedly raised by the community and voluntary sector itself, researchers have noted detrimental shifts

in New Zealand. Nowland-Foreman (1997) explored what constitutes community and voluntary organisations and concluded the pressures related to the market model of service provision are likely to result in the dissolution of differentiation between community and commercial organisations. Nowland-Foreman (1998) later questioned contract culture in the community and voluntary sector context and its impact on civil society. This paper concluded the tightening control of community organisations through government funding contracts, runs the risk of jeopardising attributes of the sector, such as their ability to mobilise community resources, to deliver appropriate and accessible services, and provide a means for citizen participation and engagement.

In identifying a range of social and health service interventions that contribute to positive change for New Zealand families and the organisational factors that provide effective environments of support, Munford and Sanders (2001) argued such approaches are increasingly difficult to maintain under a system of contracted social services. Crack *et al* (2005) in their analysis of seven organisations explored the emergence of contract culture, its impact on various defining attributes of the community and voluntary sector, and concluded with exploring the funding crucial to the sector. They argued that the current funding system needs substantial improvement to ensure the role of community and voluntary organisations in society is sustained.

Cribb (2005) looked specifically at accountability mechanisms of government contracts. She concluded that while the best interests of communities are of utmost concern to both government and the community and voluntary sector, the trade-offs required by the competing demands imposed by government-enacted accountability measures create unnecessary tension within the sector. More recently, Grey and Sedgwick (2013) explored the voice of the community and voluntary sector in public debate. The research concluded the democratic voice of the community and voluntary sector has been silenced by successive governments, through contracts with strong managerial requirements.

While previous research has signalled some general problems around the new approach to the way government buys social service provision, what has not been fully explored is a more critical understanding of the sector's role in society; the link between the sector's comparative advantage and the impact on community; and, how this advantage is increasingly undermined by requirements of contracted social services. In this research we build on the recent work of the New Zealand Treasury to further understand what the community and voluntary sector do, and how they do it.

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What makes the community and voluntary sector effective?
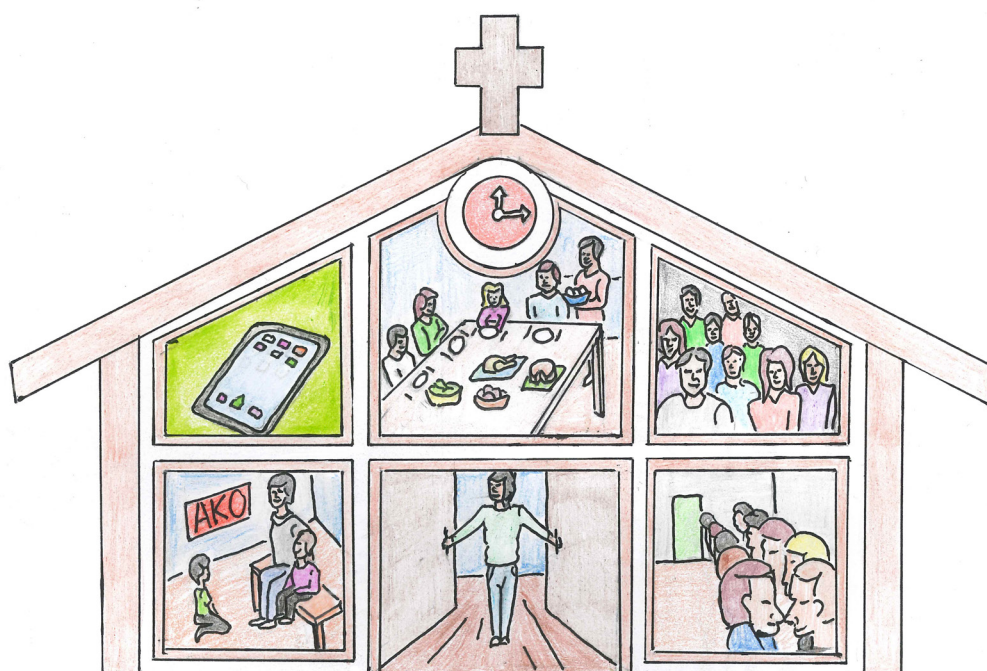
Organisational specific capital

In *Contracting for Social Services*, the New Zealand Treasury (2013) explored the performance of the social services 'market' and the challenges of social sector contracting. The aim is to provide advice on the effectiveness and efficiency of initiatives operating to improve social outcomes and the delivery of social services. The Treasury drew out several themes from interviews with 22 community and voluntary sector representatives to establish a basis for understanding the provision of social services from a provider perspective. Of the community and voluntary sector, Treasury stated: 'The motivations and values of people working for social service providers are an important feature of the market. The aspects of voluntarism and 'doing the work for the better good' are not easily measured or tangible, but offer an important element that is different from the corporate market' (2013:16). It went further to note:

> Providers of service compete through non-price differentiation, for example demonstrating 'best fit' for a contract. In the main, 'best fit' is linked to the community the organisation supplies, or the skills it has built up supplying similar services. In economic literature, this can be referred to as *organisational specific capital* (Treasury 2013:13. Italics added).

Community organisations are seen to have specific organisational capital which they can draw on to deliver services for communities in innovative, responsive and specialised ways (Treasury 2013:2).

I love my job. I do see things where I feel sorry for our staff. Seeing one person do a ten-person job, but that's all of us. But we deal with it, because it's not all about the money, it's about helping people. And I think I'm in a good place, because I'm with good people who share my values and who are worried about our people and our community and getting everybody on the right track.

Our research examines those attributes which comprise the *organisational-specific capital* of community and voluntary organisations. The attributes – the unique characteristics and infrastructures of the community and voluntary sector – combine to build the community value of the sector and allow it to meet not only the contract requirements set by government, but a range of individual, family, whānau, and community needs.

Organisational mission

One attribute of organisational-specific capital held by the community and voluntary sector relates to the organisation's kaupapa and mission. While a mission is ostensibly an idealised statement of organisational values and intent, this research revealed the importance of mission in maintaining integrity in an increasingly tenuous environment of change and challenges. For some this mission was developed in the religious tradition of charity, kindness and empowerment; for others it was steeped in whānaungatanga, manaakitanga and tikanga Māori. Similarities, however, abound with all organisations sharing basic underlying principles.

The mission or values statements of the nine organisations at the heart of this research centred on inclusive, caring and affirmative language, such as 'empowering', 'strengthening', and 'working *with* communities' and 'whānaungatanga'. Organisational values were without exception client and community oriented. The missions and values statements often implied or directly stated a focus on *sustainable* and *long-term* change, a view confirmed through interviews and focus groups. For this reason, and with constant reference to their respective missions, the participants who took part in this study often spoke of what was 'right', what best served the community, and what was in keeping with their often long history of service provision and expertise within the sector. A manager explained their organisation's focus on the staff/client relationship and how this relates to service provision:

> *We have a model that is very much about the relationship, very focussed on service coordination and the client.*

Inherent in another manager's response was the link between the organisation's values and their conception of clients as extended whānau:

> *That's what I like about our values. What we're able to do is look at our strengths and look at our whānau assets and work to develop that base.*

For another, the importance placed on tikanga Māori and a philosophy of whānau, love, pride and empowerment was key to the success of an organisation that supported a predominantly, but not exclusively Māori community:

> *[Our organisation] is based heavily on tautoko of whānau, aroha, mana and empowerment. It's a journey, and it begins here with whakawhānaungatanga.*

The organisational missions create an occupational subculture focussed on clients and service. And it was understood as being important for attracting and retaining staff in a sector where demand for services and emotional strain are high. Mission and values are therefore extended to staff, clients and community alike:

> *What's really wonderful about the organisation is the values, principles and mission … It's genuine. The staff all have the same idea. They're just people from*

That's what I like about our values. What we're able to do is look at our strengths and look at our whānau assets and work to develop that base.

the community that work with us. And that compassion, it does spread – not only through the staff but in the community too. So that's a big attraction. Staff and clients come here for the environment, for the values that this organisation runs on.

Management and staff, while indicating their mission as being integral to the organisation and an essential reference point in the development of new programmes, strategies and prioritisation, also spoke of the pressures of continuing to uphold and work to the parameters of their mission in the face of scant resources, increasing numbers of those in need and the rising complexity of issues emerging in the community.

The rising complexity of issues brought by clients and increased demand for services were raised within all participating organisations. Very often this increasing complexity results in crisis situations which see community and voluntary organisations providing food, housing, transport, care for children, drug and alcohol counselling and other services, often after hours.

> *Whereas two or three years ago we were seeing people with one or two issues we needed to address, now it could be four, five or six things, but our funding hasn't increased in six years.*
>
> *It's never just one problem, there is always another stage and unless you recognize this you miss the point. You can find out what works for them and what doesn't work. You can help build their own sense of mana, remove the individuals deficit, but then there is their partner whose total world is geared to getting money – sometimes in the wrong way – and it is not the only solution just to leave him. There is also the relationship with their children you must recognize all the problems that come with that too.*

This complexity relates to the severity of needs within communities, but also speaks to the fact that there is an increasing need by clients and whānau for multiple forms of service, with single-service provision understood by community organisation workers as not addressing the root causes of social issues experienced by clients.

Organisational mission statements and values-based philosophies were expressed by participants as a defining attribute of what they did and how they went about doing it. The integrity of the organisations' respective values was viewed as extremely important as community and voluntary organisations recognise, first and foremost, their responsibility to the communities in which they work. While the possibility of 'mission drift' was spoken about during the interviews and focus groups, managers who participated noted that community organisations would 'dig deeper into the pocket' to avoid any 'mission drift' and find innovative new ways to continue to serve their communities in a manner which adheres to their kaupapa or mission, even if this was at significant cost to the organisation both in terms of time and resources. As one manager noted:

> *So if we get people coming through the door that don't have those obvious issues, and because of our overall ethic, we don't say 'go away because you don't have kids and you don't have family violence'. Single people and those who don't have kids, or people requiring help with relationships, or mental health issues … [Our organisation] stretches the definitions broadly to help those people.*
>
> *In this manner, community and voluntary organisations are able to provide services, stipulated in government contracts, to targeted groups, but also to individuals seeking services that may fall outside of the increasingly limited criteria set by government.*

It's never just one problem, there is always another stage and unless you recognize this you miss the point. You can find out what works for them and what doesn't work. You can help build their own sense of mana, remove the individuals deficit, but then there is their partner whose total world is geared to getting money – sometimes in the wrong way – and it is not the only solution just to leave him.

Organisational accessibility

Participants' at all nine organisations spoke about the importance of accessibility – in one form or another – as one of the important characteristics of the community and voluntary sector. What they meant was that community and voluntary organisations operated in ways that overcame 'barriers' which had in the past prevented clients from accessing services or acquiring the tools for personal development. This accessibility is historic and is intrinsically linked to each organisation's long-standing in the community, mission, and unique structural characteristics which have been maintained over time. This history and intimate knowledge of the community also allows for integrated services, and participants often spoke of their organisations in terms of its being a 'one-stop-shop'.

The following three forms of accessibility were expressed as being crucial to overcoming the barriers experienced by clients and for promoting sustainable change for individuals, their whānau, and communities.

Accessibility through geographic location

Distance to the organisations offering social services and support was often cited as a barrier to accessing services, particularly by clients. For many community members in need of social services having a means of support located in the heart of the community, or near other crucial facilities like supermarkets, makes seeking support or keeping appointments significantly more likely.

> *People come to the city centre for all sorts of things; to shop, or go to winz, or go to an appointment, and then [our organisation] becomes their home away from home. They come, have a coffee, meet friends or have a meeting. They have to come into town for these things, and we're right here, and have been for 40 years …*

Added to this, by locating services in a readily accessible location an organisation increases awareness of the services on offer, while upholding the organisation's standing in the area by becoming a visual beacon within the community.

The organisation's location and resulting awareness of the support available contributes to the community-embedded nature of organisations, particularly those with a focus on community development. In the face of the increasing centralisation of government agencies (exemplified by the recent changes made to acc) community and voluntary sector organisations' physical place in the community becomes an important aspect of organisational-specific capital.

Accessibility through ancillary and supportive services

Related to this geographic accessibility is the accessibility generated through ancillary and supportive services which support the core, often organisational-specific programmes. Participants spoke of how organisations provided transport, childcare, food banks, meals, and micro-counselling for clients. Added to this sometimes staff and volunteers found they were attending appointments with other agencies in support of clients, attending playgroups and community groups when a client is nervous or reluctant to attend, and acting as 'triage for community' for a number of issues and enquiries. Such ancillary and support services are often unfunded and rely on donations of time, resources, and the expertise of community and voluntary workers. The provision of ancillary and supportive services, also rely on the foresight of organisations to identify such services as necessary in the pursuit of community

staff and volunteers found they were attending appointments with other agencies in support of clients, attending playgroups and community groups when a client is nervous or reluctant to attend, and acting as 'triage for community'

wellbeing. Again, these services are crucial in overcoming the barriers which stop clients from getting support or truly benefiting from the many programmes on offer.

We provide services in homes because there is poor public transport in the area and a lot of people don't have cars. We've identified transport as a barrier to support for our community, so it's important we offer that service.

For many these barriers may stem from physical disabilities, illness, a lack of financial resources, or other personal issues.

The three most common forms of ancillary and supportive services noted by research participants were transport, childcare and advocacy at the individual level. However, participants identified a raft of supportive responses that were often specific to the unique circumstance of individual clients and whānau. A social worker described the role food parcels play:

Sometimes food parcels are provided to a family, which allows them time to save money to register their car, or warrant of fitness, or pay doctors accounts. So we give them some food so it frees up money for a couple of weeks.

Several clients described the importance of an organisation's provision of transport for ensuring clients were able to get the help and support needed but also in terms of its symbolic importance in the community as the beginning of a journey toward personal development. Clients spoke of recognising the organisation's van in the community prior to approaching the organisation, of how the van not only makes accessing services possible but leads to changes in their own behaviours:

The van run makes things possible for a lot of the mums in the community. If it wasn't for the van run, some of us wouldn't make it in … for some people too, it's the organisation – you have to be ready when that van comes; you've got to have the household ready and the kids ready. So you learn those things too, just by being picked up. You become conscious of those things, so if you have a meeting at 10 o'clock, you know you have to be ready because the van leaves at nine. So you learn quite a lot, and that's just from the van run.

The importance of providing childcare was also expressed as a crucial form of ensuring accessibility of services. One community organisation worker who was integral in the founding of her organisation spoke of childcare as being a barrier to change which was identified in the community during the early days of the organisation:

When we started it was literally door knocking. We would walk around the streets of [Auckland] and just sit with mums on the back steps, to see if they would like to do a course. And they'd be 'oh no, I've got young children' and we'd say we would look after them. Or 'I've got no transport', and we said we'd provide that. We said we'd provide childcare and transport to get them to a course, and we did.

To know that their children are on site is huge for a lot of these mothers. Some of these women don't have any support in the world. They want to change, they want a better life for themselves and their little ones, and for many, having affordable childcare made easy can be that difference.

For marginalised groups, or those going through difficult times with little in the way of friends and family, services which increase the accessibility of support can help families and individuals to make those crucial 'first steps' needed toward bettering their situation. Offering support that contributes to a client's ability to take a second step into meaningful and lasting involvement with social services and personal development initiatives is

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a crucial component in the work of community and voluntary organisations. These services also go beyond increasing accessibility to services offered by the organisation, with several participants noting they also provide transport and support of clients attending doctor's appointments and meetings with other organisations and statutory agencies to ensure clients receive the assistance they need.

Emotional accessibility

Existing work on the community and voluntary sector notes the importance of making sure that organisations are emotionally accessible if individuals, whānau and communities are to get the help they need. The dissolving of power dynamics, coupled with the organisations hospitable ethos – contributes to the emotional accessibility of community and voluntary organisations (Billis & Glennerster 1998). This was reflected by participants in this research.

Clients participating in this study spoke of feeling uncomfortable, awkward and ashamed when dealing with the more rigid structural characteristics often inherent in statutory agencies. Staff hierarchy is also often less evident in community and voluntary organisations, particularly smaller organisations with fewer staff.

Emotional accessibility also comes in the form of the open, friendly and trusting relationships fostered between staff members and clients. This trust is the result of many factors unique to community and voluntary organisations. Community and voluntary sector organisations, their staff, and volunteers make themselves accessible and build trust through revealing personal experience, and maintaining visibility within the community. One social worker expressed the sentiment and attitude indicative of participating organisations of this research:

> Doing it together, I think, makes a difference. It's not 'us' and 'them', it's 'let's do it together'; it makes them feel valued and normalises things.

Research suggests that often it is the mere perception of similarities between an organisation's staff members and clients which can help to develop openness and trusting relationships (Barnoff *et al* 2007). Several volunteers and paid staff participating in this research were once clients of the organisations they are now working within. Therefore, staff members and volunteers from the community who have lived shared experiences become valuable sources of inspiration and support for community members, a point expressed by several participants of this research. Workers in the community and voluntary sector who were once clients of community organisations take their personal experiences and knowledge gained through programmes previously attended, and are then trained and supported in acquiring the necessary expertise to work with others. This approach ensures emotional accessibility and highly personal service provision and programmatic support. A programme coordinator who first came to the organisation 11 years ago as a client explained her unique position:

> We get [clients] pretty much at rock bottom. There are a lot of ladies who have lost their children or about to lose their children through CYF. And when we do get them coming to courses, when they have to come we get them in the angry stage because they don't want to be here. But the benefit, I think, and why I've stayed here so long, is the outcome. I was actually one of those mothers; I was a referral, so I know exactly what they are going through …

Another community organisation worker spoke of generic community programmes which do not take into account the community and individual circumstances of those in need:

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Quite often it's culturally inappropriate, or the facilitator does not understand or have knowledge of their [the clients'] environment, or they judge and measure them against their own personal values, most times coming with their own criticisms and bias.

Being embedded in the community
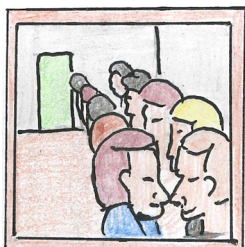
Linked to the notion of geographic accessibility is the importance of the community-embedded nature of community and voluntary organisations. Through owning, or using, community buildings and centres of support, community organisations create a cohesive sense of place, as well as the capacity to mobilise collectively around community-specific needs and interests.

[The organisation] is a community house and a social service provider … There is synergy … People often comment on the different feel the building has, and how they feel coming here, as opposed to other places. [The organisation] embodies 'added value', in that sense.

The organisation at the heart of the quote above incorporates social enterprise into their operations in the form of a community café which emphasises hospitality in the holistic sense of the word. The organisation and building act as a meeting point in the heart of the community, where various community activities take place. The building itself therefore acts as an integral site of social cohesion, inclusion, and as a space for the creation of social capital.

As well as physical location, the community and voluntary organisations are embedded in communities due to their historical connections to a place, with one organisation that participated in this research providing services for over 120 years. Even those organisations that had been part of their communities for only 20 years shared a rich history in the area of service provision and support within the communities in which they operate.

There are huge benefits in having a local organisation, who know their local community. The staff are local, they're embedded in that community and have that local knowledge and all that extra value. If you contract out to the big providers, particularly off shore, then those groups know nothing about the local community, and you lose that localism.

The organisation's place in the community, physically and culturally, as well as through its history and reputation, fosters accessibility and visibility within the community. This embedded nature and history puts community organisations at the forefront of identifying community-specific needs and interests. Trust is built as the organisation, and sometimes the building it is housed in, is considered an integral part of the community, serving community needs and interests. As is the fact that staff and volunteers are 'locals':

I often see the staff in the community, down the main street, or at school events. Some don't even have children, or their children are all grown up, but they still come down to support us. They're a part of the community too, and I don't feel weird coming up to them when I see them out, telling them how I'm doing, just like I've learnt to do with the other mothers.

Institutional and community knowledge

Institutional and community knowledge are crucial to the community and voluntary sector's role as social service provider and advocate, both at the individual and community levels. As such, knowledge and expertise constitute a key attribute which enables them to fulfil the terms of a government contract and much more.

Knowledge of the community, of families and individual clients is one of the keys to accessibility outlined earlier and allows for innovation in everyday service provision. This knowledge is accumulated over time and is the result of grounded experience within the organisation and the communities themselves. This knowledge and experience is also shared between agencies through networked relationships and the movement of staff and volunteers between organisations.

Knowledge of existing networks and alternative avenues of support for both staff and clients is another crucial area of knowledge that accumulates over time from both individual and shared expertise, and an organisation's long-standing in the community. A social worker spoke of how community knowledge is integral to service provision as organisations cope with increasing numbers on waiting lists, increasing needs, increasing complexity, and a scarcity of resources, with many organisations having not received any increase in government funding for over six years.

> *We have the local knowledge of being a longstanding organisation. We may know these people; we may have dealt with them before and built up that relationship, so we can often put something in place in the interim to hold them over until we can deal with it properly … We have local knowledge, we know the family names, and we have a good working history of what's gone on with that family. That makes a huge difference.*

Participants in this research spoke of an increased need to provide individual advocacy for clients due to a number of factors related to the complexity of issues discussed earlier, including language and cultural barriers, and the increasingly complicated reality of various customer service aspects of statutory agencies, such as the increase in online customer support. For many clients of community and voluntary organisations simply having access to a welcoming environment where staff members are only happy to help with online applications or assist in navigating through the often confusing processes of statutory agencies, particularly in communities where personal computers are uncommon, can make a significant difference in their obtaining support.

In their role as advocate, community organisation workers spoke of accompanying clients to government agencies and of using their knowledge of changes in policy to assist clients with, for example state housing. This institutional knowledge is crucial when working with welfare recipients and those who may not be familiar with the different processes, or aware of eligibility criteria when applying for various services. Community organisation workers and clients alike spoke of the difficulties many people encounter while applying for various forms of support, particularly those for whom English is a second language.

> *I have clients that are Iranian and the language barrier is huge. We've asked and asked to stick with one case worker [from a statutory agency], because then that case worker knows the background and the family doesn't have to come in and*

We have the local knowledge of being a longstanding organisation. We may know these people; we may have dealt with them before and built up that relationship, so we can often put something in place in the interim to hold them over until we can deal with it properly …

try and explain in their broken English. Instead they have to come in and explain to a different person and that keeps happening, and then we go back to the case manager and they never reply to the emails … And then [the clients] are too scared to go in. They're intimidated by the whole process … And the thing is, it's frustrating for us and we know the system, but they expect clients to get all these forms and know all the processes.

A budget advisor spoke of her role as an advocate:

I think budgeting is about advocacy. Most of the time we're their voice, so we're speaking to all sorts of people on their behalf: creditors, lawyers. The complexity of what's coming though now, is crazy. Mostly it's insolvency or contract law, not just your usual budget. It's all pretty full-on.

These quotes speak to both the professional and institutional knowledge of those working in the community and voluntary sector, and again the increasing complexity of issues staff and clients face. It is this complexity, and the increasing demand for services that requires the marriage of both community and institutional knowledge. Community and institutional knowledge can therefore be better understood as simultaneously required to ensure quality, timely and often deeply personal service provision to those most in need.

Networking and collaboration
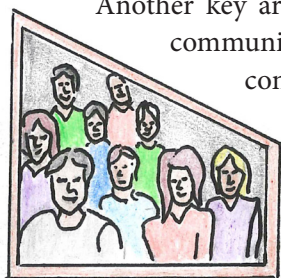
 Another key area of the organisational-specific capital which enables the community and voluntary sector to meet the demands of government contracts as well as the needs of individuals, whānau, and communities, is the existing relationships that organisations have built with other NGOs and statutory agencies. These relationships are closely linked to the local and institutional knowledge held within an organisation, the collective and individual expertise of staff members and volunteers, as well as the history of an organisation within the community and sector.

Networking, like knowledge, operates at different levels. While comprehensive networks are crucial to the organisations' ability to effectively meeting clients' needs which can require referrals on to other agencies, they also allow for innovation and effective problem solving within the sector. It was repeatedly stressed by participating community organisation workers that social problems are never single-solution problems. Extensive and effective networking based on community and institutional knowledge and reciprocal trust between organisations and agencies results in immediacy of support for those in need, and eases the pressures of increasing demand and complexity. When dealing with the increasing complexity of issues within the communities in which they work, holistic services that make use of extensive networks and the problem solving that result from networked activity are often crucial to effective service provision. These networks are comprised of individuals and organisations that have accumulated local knowledge of the community and governmental policies. As such, a network can be thought of as the sum total of relationships known and used by community and voluntary organisations and constitute spheres of influence, expertise, sources of help, support and knowledge accumulated over time.

Most of the time we're their voice, so we're speaking to all sorts of people on their behalf: creditors, lawyers.

A family worker explained how existing relationships also allow communication between agencies in identifying areas of need within the community, or gaps in the provision of service in a time of increasing complexity of needs, and changes in thresholds and criteria for service provision:

It's about generating knowledge; who's doing what in the community. Also identification of common issues. It can also lead to further professional development. There might be training that needs to be identified, or we get to know what other organisations are doing. So, it's about better service for clients …

Key individuals are often crucial to networking and collaboration as a result of their time spent working in and with the community, expertise, commitment, and the local and institutional knowledge they bring to an organisation. Community organisation workers have often been a part of the sector for a number of years (both in community and statutory agencies), forming lasting professional and personal relationships across the sector and community, and developing vital expertise.

Flexibility and choice about how to use time
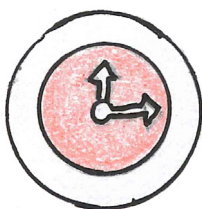
Central to the stories many participants in this research told about meeting the needs of clients and empowering communities was the flexibility and time afforded by staff and volunteers to spend with clients. However, flexibility and time was also important to participants as it impacted on their ability to develop relationships and networks, to undertake professional development, to meet with funders, and to develop new programmes and methods of support as changing needs are identified within the community.

Additional time spent supporting those in need

Both staff and clients spoke about the time community staff members were able to spend with clients on a day-to-day basis.

A recent example is a worker who worked until 9pm at night with a family in hospital, under very complex circumstances; there are actually three parts of our agency working with that family. There's huge pressure. Often we get workers taking clients to EPS [Emergency Psychiatric Services] and sitting with them until whenever someone else can come to be with that family. So because we're visiting regularly, we come across these families in great distress, often very disorganised. The child of the client is the one that is going to be at risk if we don't see the family through a crisis. That's happening increasingly. We're not getting back to our own families because we're sitting in police stations or hospitals with families that don't have support in their world.

There's also the fact that we care for people. It's the right thing to do, to sit with someone when they're in a place of crisis. They've come to you, and you're able to support them through that. We're here to support people and support families.

While this was noted by staff as being an extreme case, it was stressed that these circumstances and this level of dedication by staff was not uncommon for the organisation in question. The responses in this research would also indicate such dedication is not uncommon across many community and voluntary organisations. In these unforeseen times of crisis, community and voluntary workers will often go

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above and beyond in their support of clients; working late and often unpaid to ensure the safety and support of their clients.

Two participants whose mother had been receiving home-based support spoke to the manner in which time was a factor in the care received by their mother:

I don't think they felt they had to rush away, even though they had other people to go to. It was the structured way in which they felt they could spend extra time, or contact for some extra support.

The additional time spent with clients serves many functions in the delivery of services. While clients receive the increased levels of support, care and inter-personal relationships, staff members are able to assess other aspects of individual or family need that may fall outside of contractual obligations. This commitment, which underlies all aspects of organisational-specific capital, is not merely the result of the organisations' respective mission statements but a necessary aspect of working within a sector where many risk 'falling through the cracks', others have very little support from family and friends, and crises can be difficult to predict.

Work beyond the constraints of a contract in terms of long-term service
A commonly held position from participants in this research was that they 'meet the need of the family, rather than the need of the contract'.

… our home-based contract is for helping people for a three month period, but we seldom stick to that three months because the clients' needs are such that they won't be addressed in that period of time. So, because we're not profit driven, we don't have a formula as such we stick to. If the client's need is greater than what we're funded to do, we stick with that individual.

It's kind of like we get to make the boxes fit the people, not the people fit the boxes. We're still bound by privacy, safety, and those standards; we still deliver a professional service, but we can meet people's needs.

Staff members spoke of clients as 'not being a number' or a 'box to tick'. This sentiment and the flexibility afforded to community-based staff members results in highly personalised service delivery, a fact appreciated by staff and clients alike. To work strictly to the requirements of a contract, in terms of the time allocated to spend with clients, was viewed by staff as being a de-personalising, and even dehumanising act, which often did not take into account the best interests of the individual, or community, when it was deemed that an individual or family would be better served by more intensive support.

This extra time spent with clients is not simply the result of organisational values which stress compassion and a focus on the needs of clients. Many organisations are experiencing a shift in thresholds for service provision. As statutory agencies are dealing with increasingly complex client issues, with multiple needs, community organisations are feeling the pressure to deal with more acute cases, previously dealt with by statutory agencies.

There's been pressure put on our service to move up into that more high risk area, which is leading to the issues we are seeing being more complex, and we are having to be involved for longer. We're having increasing numbers in processes that take time, so what we're contracted to do and the need we're seeing aren't matching up. We're often with our families for longer than the time we're contracted for …

Additional time spent with clients is not simply the result of organisational values and flexibility, but a response to various pressures and the changing nature and complexity

So, because we're not profit driven, we don't have a formula as such we stick to. If the client's need is greater than what we're funded to do, we stick with that individual.

of social issues in the community. While the number of those in the community in need of help continues to grow, and complexity of issues rises, a repeatedly expressed concern from management is that funding has remained stagnant.

Our focus is not just on short-term but long-term outcomes

Flexibility in the use of time in everyday circumstances and beyond the constraints of government contracts was cited as being a response to organisational missions, a dedication to community and quality service delivery, a response to the complexity of issues, but also a dedication to long-term, sustainable change in the community. One programme coordinator expressed a common view:

> *These aren't quick fixes, it's a journey. Not many organisations would be willing to stick with a family and see them through to the desired outcome, some five years down the track, but that's what it takes and we do see those results.*

With sustainable change and sustainable community development as a core element of organisational ethos, staff spoke of being 'in it for the long haul'. They spoke of a commitment to outcomes that may not be easily quantifiable three months from the first point of contact, but was crucial to the health and wellbeing of the individual, family, and ultimately the wider community.

Time spent developing infrastructure, operations, and networks

As well as the flexible nature of time in supporting of clients, community and voluntary organisations devote a large proportion of time – often unfunded – to creating and maintaining infrastructural capacity; operations and the details of service and programme provision; and, the networks and partnerships, new and old, which are vital to the effectiveness and full range of support on offer.

Two types of networking were identified in this study in relation to time management. The first involves on-going coordination with government departments, including the police and courts. This relationship must be maintained, particularly as it relates to the immediacy of services and support during times of crisis for clients. As was noted earlier, this form of networking, institutional knowledge, and expertise is central to community and voluntary organisations' role as advocate.

Clients of community and voluntary organisations are increasingly required to navigate through online government application forms, in an environment where government policies often undergo rapid and repeated change. Processes to gain support through statutory agencies are often difficult for clients who may not have computer access or the necessary computer skills. In these circumstances, community and voluntary organisations offer assistance in this process. This form of personal advocacy not only helps clients gain the support they need for themselves and their family, but it is also an opportunity for clients to familiarise themselves with different processes and gain confidence in new environments.

> *They go in with you and be advocate … their social workers were so lovely. I would have given up ages ago, because every time you go into a government department, they shoot you down and say 'you need this' and 'you need that' … they helped me with that and now I'm heaps more confident in those situations …*

Networking is also vital to community and voluntary organisations' knowledge within the sector, to professional development in the form of training, and for programme coordination, with one organisation spending over 20 hours a month meeting with both government and non-governmental agencies for training, general networking, programme preparation and feedback.

These aren't quick fixes, it's a journey. Not many organisations would be willing to stick with a family and see them through to the desired outcome, some five years down the track, but that's what it takes and we do see those results.

A second form of networking identified in this study relates to a critical, historic residue of years of local knowledge and relationships, established and maintained in a spirit of community. This can involve relationships established with local Iwi, Pasifika and immigrant communities, local service providers, businesses, local government, schools, hospitals and recreation centres. Crucial to this form of networking and collaboration, is coordination, and therefore time. Relationships, partnerships and collaboration within the community must be established and maintained if networks are to remain strong, and community development is to be promoted. Strong community networks, which community and voluntary organisations have developed over time, and continue to develop are therefore integral to all aspects of the sectors on-going work, from service provision to the recognition and development of leadership in local communities and the promotion of social cohesion.

Innovation
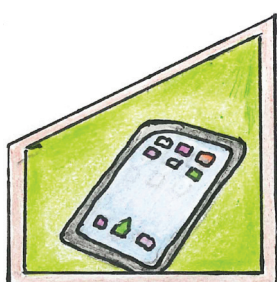
The local and institutional knowledge held by community and voluntary organisations collectively creates the flexibility to allow them to respond innovatively and appropriately to needs identified within the community. The knowledge, accessibility, networking, innovation and expertise outlined in this study also allow organisations to tailor services to meet individual and community-specific needs, creating highly personalised services. Due to rising demand for services and increasingly complex issues confronted by service workers, several staff members described waiting lists as 'exploding', and even 'the biggest waiting list we're ever had in the history of the service'. In such an environment, the ability, knowledge, expertise and experience needed to act innovatively is crucial for both the wellbeing of clients and the integrity of organisational values. Identifying community needs and acting on those needs has always been a defining characteristic of the sector.

As an innovative response to issues around youth wellbeing, one organisation established a youth centre in an outer suburb within walking distance from main bus routes, a taxi stand, public library, shops, churches, schools, healthcare and social service providers:

The youth centre engages local young people in meaningful activities and programmes to keep them active, informed and connected. We believe in strengthening young peoples' sense of self and community belonging. Over the years we've faced many challenges, and have survived through some time times. But we're resourceful, resilient and committed to raising our children together.

A programme coordinator spoke of the concern over duplication of services as being an area of innovation:

If you look at some of the research that has been done as the forerunner to this work, we've been talking about helping the vulnerable, targeting Maori and Pacific peoples, lower socio-economic, reducing poverty, reducing debt. So what we've done is completely reframed that, because as a community we want to achieve health and wellbeing in a different way. So instead of 'reducing poverty', we're talking about 'growing financial independence', instead of how we can reduce debt, we're thinking about how we can increase disposable income. We choose not to focus on

I would have given up ages ago, because every time you go into a government department, they shoot you down and say 'you need this' and 'you need that'… they helped me with that and now I'm heaps more confident in those situations …

the negatives. There are people already in this space telling our people that, and it's not working …

Community and voluntary organisations' offer innovative solutions to social issues in both an everyday and structural manner. On a daily basis, the flexibility afforded to community organisation workers to identify and address problems at their own discretion, was viewed as an integral function of the sector. Furthermore, this flexibility combined with institutional and community knowledge means that community organisations can innovatively design programmes that are community-specific and address the larger needs and concerns of the community in question; that is, they can make structural changes which address needs and lead to long-term changes in communities.

A programme coordinator explained her innovative use of Māori language and concepts, which speak directly to participants of the programme and addresses the fact that more authoritative and standardised programmatic support was not benefiting the group:

> *With my facilitation they were introduced to 'Māori Concepts of Understanding', they responded well and were animated throughout the year long program. Usually they are given a set of rules that apply whenever we meet. I decided to frame these rules differently by using words like mana, awhi, tautoko, and manaaki. Again they responded well to this concept of mana-enhancing, rather than authoritative rule. With Mana they too were also respected.*

Innovative responses to social issues in the form of programmes which address problems within the community in highly personalised and community-specific ways also promote leadership and independence within the community. A community organisation worker spoke of an anger-management programme which extended its reach beyond the individual clients referred to the organisation by government agencies and other community organisations:

> *One thing we tried was asking the women to bring another person from the community – a neighbour or relative – with them whenever we had somebody coming to talk to the group about free services in the community. They made lots of excuses about why they couldn't do it, but they did it all the same. They all came with another woman –they were doing voluntary work themselves. They were now helping their whānau learn some things, giving something back. It wasn't just a case of being told what to do.*

Innovative responses such as this promote independence and even leadership in clients, and the knowledge gained through such programmes is shared with others and ultimately through the community.

> *You're in a situation where it grows. So there will be five people in your class-room who feel better about themselves, and those five people go back to their neighbourhood, into their community and it becomes 20 [people], because of the children and the family involved, and those 20 become 40, and then you're looking at a community of 50 people [who have shared in the knowledge provided through community programmes], just from a little course.*

instead of 'reducing poverty', we're talking about 'growing financial independence', instead of how we can reduce debt, we're thinking about how we can increase disposable income. We choose not to focus on the negatives. There are people already in this space telling our people that, and it's not working …

Manaakitanga

Manaakitanga permeates many aspects of the community and voluntary sector's organisational-specific capital, and relates to each organisation's values, mission and overall ethos. Manaakitanga as noted earlier is about how they care for their own wellbeing and that of others; showing respect, generosity, hospitality, and kindness, and is a part of the organisation-community, and staff-client dynamic and relationship.

I came here after I had my youngest. I was in the worst state I've ever been in; the lowest point in my life. I had nowhere else to go. [The organisation] helped me find myself, and coming here, I felt like I belonged somewhere … I met heaps of people and found somewhere where I didn't feel alienated, and like an outcast, with everything I was going through. Being around people who understand me, because they're going through the same things, without judgement, helped me move forward to where I am now.

Manaakitanga arises through the organisations kaupapa or values-base, but is also instilled in community members, volunteers and staff, and expressed at every level of the organisation. A community organisation worker spoke of the reciprocal trust promoted within her organisation, and the ways in which this trust, non-judgement, and manaakitanga, fostered an atmosphere of honesty in which clients felt supported and trusted, and were therefore more likely to benefit from the programme,

I also said that if they were not able to attend to be open and honest as to their reason so that I could identify what was happening for them at that time. Examples were some wāhine were pregnant and were very tired, sometimes that had relatives come down from up north, or they had problems with partners or children, appointments with agencies that they couldn't shift, other appointments and so on … They took responsibility for themselves and often talked about it the following week. They were given respect and understanding by me, and in turn they were able to be honest and trusted …

Throughout the whole year these wāhine became caring towards each other and were delighted to return every week with changes in their lives. They were more confident to identify what went wrong and how they changed through new ways and approaches.
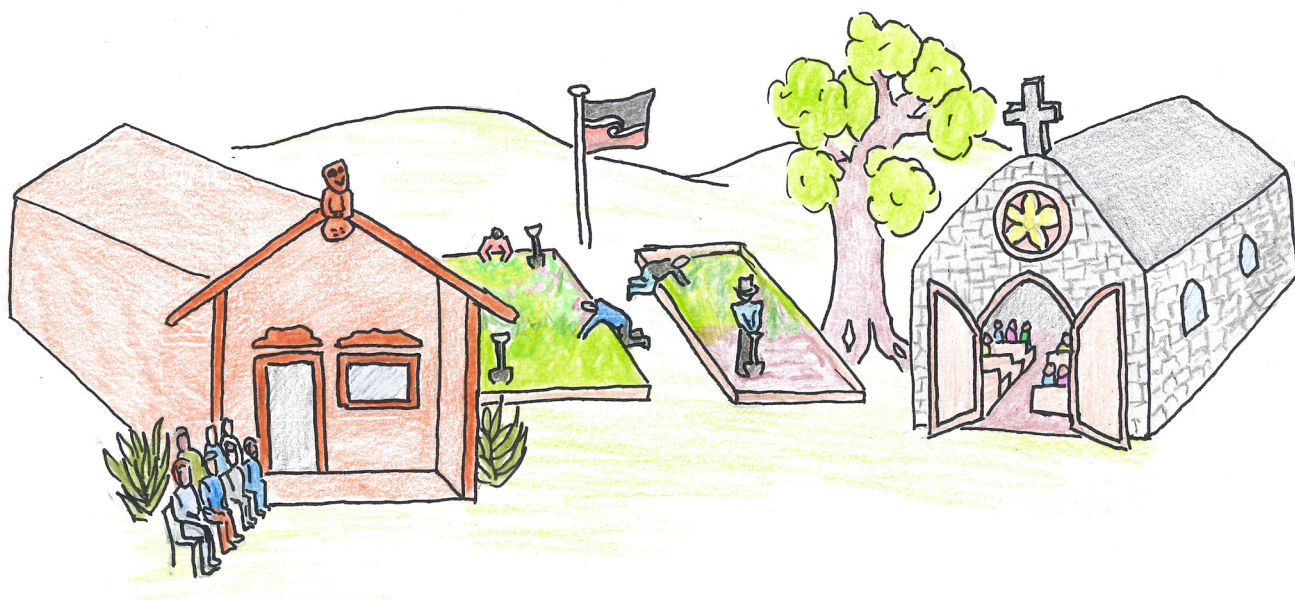
The attributes of organisational-specific capital outlined above – organisational mission, accessibility, the community-embedded nature of organisations, their knowledge, networking and collaboration, flexible use of time and long term vision, innovation, and manaakitanga – may be present, to varying extent, in the public and private sectors. However, it is the manner in which community and voluntary organisations *combine* and *prioritise* (Blake *et al* 2006, in Macmillan 2012) these elements that constitute the true comparative advantage as health and social service providers. What remains is to explore the 'community value' which results directly from this organisational-specific capital and leads to the promotion of well-being and sustainable change in the community.

Four aspects were identified across the nine organisations who participated in this research: social and cultural capital; social inclusion and cohesion; community development; and, empowerment. Each of these will be explored in turn.

there will be five people in your class-room who feel better about themselves, and those five people go back to their neighbourhood, into their community and it becomes 20 [people], because of the children and the family involved, and those 20 become 40, and then you're looking at a community of 50 people

3

The attributes that build community value

The concept of social value

The aspects of organisational-specific capital identified in this study lead to what is labelled in Third Sector literature from the UK as 'social value' – what we have called community value. Social value 'refers to the added and collective social benefits a service or organisation may generate. Social value is often the indirect impact of activities and includes the effect an activity has on communities, the environment and not solely on individual participants' (Arvidson & Kara 2013:8). The resulting value stems from the 'indirect outcomes in the sense that they occur as an effect of the nature of the organisation and the way a service is delivered, rather than being strictly related to intervention, per se' (Arvidson & Kara 2013:8).

Many of the 'indirect outcomes' referred to here as 'social value' relate to various forms of *social capital*. Putnam referred to 'social capital' as 'features of social organisations such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate co-ordination and cooperation for mutual benefit'. Putnam continues, 'social capital enhances the benefits of investment in physical and human capital' (1995:35). Tom Healy in his research into social capital and its policy and research implications in New Zealand preferred a more open-ended definition. He defined social capital as being those resources inherent in self-organised human networks based on reciprocal trust, values and identity (2004:7). Building on Healy, 'trust' in the context of community and voluntary organisations can be understood as 'expectations and obligations of support, engagement and delivery' both from the organisation itself, and through other community members. 'Values' refer to the 'communication of information, knowledge, norms and understandings'. Finally, 'identity' indicates a sense of belonging and for others a reconnection with aspects of their cultural heritage (Healy 2004:7).

The community has been so enriched. Everyone knows [the organisation]. There are mothers I've known my whole life, because I've lived [here] my whole life. Known them, seen them, but being on the course was the first time I had said hello to them. You get to know them, instead of just being a person walking past. You know their name now, you say hello. It's pretty cool.

In this sense, social capital and the collective social value is more in keeping with the mission statements and core principles of community and voluntary sector organisations, which look to long-term sustainable outcomes and personal empowerment that in turn can be appreciated by the community at large. While the idea of social value has also been used to focus on entire social systems, the term 'community value' will be used in this research to indicate the 'social value' that results from a particular group's unique characteristics and infrastructures (their organisational specific capital).

Building social and cultural capital

Social and cultural capital result from many aspects of a community and voluntary organisation's activities: from the knowledge shared with clients through various programmes and advocacy, knowledge shared between clients in an open environment of trust and learning, and through stories of personal development and empowerment which act as success stories within the community. This capital is then shared in the home, neighbourhood, and wider community and is vital for the development of leadership, sustainable community development, and social repair.

A programme coordinator spoke of the process of developing this social capital. In this example the creation of a highly personal and accessible programme results in the creation of social capital, as clients are empowered to help not only themselves, but one another:

The evaluations I would have back would be people saying how great it was to have everyone sitting down, talking in the same place. 'They came to my house' – so, mobility – a lot of people have to go somewhere, or even many places, but this is brought to them. And there's consistency with that. Part of that was that we sat down and had a cup of tea and we had a chance to not just talk about those hard things, but we also had just a good chat together. That's something that helped them, then after a while they found they could go away and manage themselves. We brought people together and they felt supported …

Similarly, a client from a different programme spoke of social capital in the form of being empowered to solve personal problems, and the ways in which this capital is then distributed to family and community:

We don't have those [negative] conversations anymore, it's 'how are your children?', or 'how are your classes going?' And if there's a problem you sort of work through it, and you come back to what you have learnt [from the organisation]. You start revising and you crack up, because you could have handled it 'that way', or 'this way', and you go home and fix the problem. And that doesn't happen in [the organisation], that happens out on the street …

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Building social inclusion and cohesion

Forrest and Kearns write, 'Social cohesion is about getting by and getting on at the more mundane level of everyday life' (2001:2127). For the purpose of this research, and with 'community value' in mind, it is important to note that it is in the community and local neighbourhoods that these mundane routines are likely to take place. Therefore, community embedded organisations can play a crucial role in promoting social inclusion and the cohesion that results, through on-going 'repair work' and 'normalisation' (Forrest & Kearns 2001:2127).

A programme coordinator explained the link between community development and social cohesion:

> [Our initiative] involves a lot of agencies, but also individuals wanting to build a cohesive neighbourhood, and that was generated by people living in the area and being there for a few generations. My grandparents and great-grandparents were from there so my knowledge goes back to how things were done back then, and people wanting to connect back to a time when you knew your butcher and your baker, and your neighbour, and you had people being involved in community events. It's that idea of knowing where you are and looking after each other, and connecting.

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Social inclusion and the resulting cohesion are vital to the support and empowerment of clients. Here, a sense of belonging and acceptance results from the organisational mission, manaakitanga, and accessibility, discussed in the previous section as being components of the crucial organisational-specific capital brought to social service provision by community and voluntary sector organisations. The level of involvement and commitment which arises from these elements was regarded as crucial to the delivery of the many services and programmes indicative of community and voluntary organisations.

Enabling community development
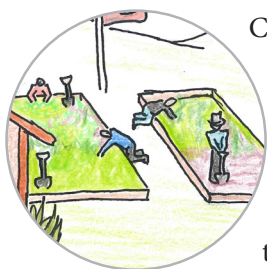
Community and voluntary organisations promote community development in a number of ways, through specific development programs, the promotion of health and wellbeing, the development of leaders, and the creation of an environment of inclusion and social cohesion. The purpose of community development is to help create and sustain a fulfilling life for the individual and the communities in which they live, through pursuing goals of solidarity and encouraging shared identity and norms, while also developing agency through building the capacity to identify and address issues within the community (Bhattacharyya 2004). As this capacity involves the community identifying and addressing their 'own' needs, change must therefore involve community, directly, and be for the advancement of goals set by the community engaged in the development (Bhattacharyya 2004). Effective community development is therefore a multifaceted endeavour, crucial to which is the importance of a thorough understanding of the community in question (Murphy & Cauchi 2002).

Community and voluntary organisations lay the foundation for effective and sustainable community development. Embedded in the communities they serve and

having built a relationship based on trust and understanding, such organisations are in an ideal position to work *with* communities in identifying local issues, developing leadership from local community members, and facilitating the beginnings of community development.

> *[In the community] a few years ago there were huge issues with gang shootings between rival gangs and issues between the school and the local gangs around the perception of the safety of children. So we got involved and essentially the project was about insulation and a whole heap of community-led things. Over the last couple of years it has kept the local gang families busy. Some of them took on meaningful employment. The women are working toward qualifications and small businesses. We've set up a community room there too … that particular work was around a voice, a community voice. It was around connection, education; so, how could the schools work together and with businesses to target youth wellness …*

Here is another area where the complexity of issues faced in the sector is again apparent. Crime, child safety, cold and damp housing, unemployment, truancy, are all addressed here through community development and the resulting social inclusion and cohesion.

Community development initiatives can be understood as both restorative and preventative.

> *When we first looked at community development, from a management point of view it was about trying to look at sourcing local volunteers, people that were really interested in their communities, to take some responsibility for their community. I mean, they want to anyway; there's good people out there, they want to do this sort of work. So from a management point of view, it's about how we reduce the number of people coming through the door here [requiring services], by people actually being more connected in their neighbourhood and accessing support from one another.*

By identifying community-specific needs in their local area, community and voluntary organisations also act as a conduit for the development of leadership in areas where potential may be high but individuals may be lacking the necessary means or expertise to foster the development of community without support. Community and voluntary organisations bring their expertise, knowledge, networks, resources, commitment and all elements of organisational-specific capital into communities to promote development and independence.

Empowering communities

Empowerment of the individual, whānau, and ultimately the community can be understood as resulting from any or all aspects of community value mentioned above. It is also important to note the ubiquity of 'empowerment' and related concepts in the mission and value statements of community and voluntary organisations.

Empowerment was a concept used for both defining purpose and gauging organisational impact from both management and clients. Those participating organisations offering a strengths-based approach to social service provision looked to promote empowerment, in the more abstract sense

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of the word, through focussing on both individual and whānau strengths identified with and by clients. For others, empowerment came from the confidence instilled in clients by completing certain programmes, meeting goals, cultural and spiritual empowerment through religion and tikanga Māori, and through feelings of inclusion and accomplishment.

For me personally, it built my confidence. I had my first child at 18, then I had another three after that, and I've been behind closed doors ever since with the kids. I didn't think there was anything else out there for me. Then I was approached [by the organisation] … I started getting to know the other ladies and sharing stories. Coming here empowered me, and that's [the organisation's] motto … it's a different outlook. And now I work for [them], I've done the courses and I'm here, I'm talking, so that says a lot right there. I feel confident with myself; I know the path I'm taking now.

I think for me and a lot of the other mothers, it's about empowerment of ourselves. To empower ourselves, feel a little better about ourselves. Even though we're mothers on a benefit, we're still somebody.

Empowerment of the individual, whānau and community is also crucial in rebuilding the mana, strength and self-esteem of those who have had these personal attributes, integral to wellbeing, destroyed through often tragic circumstances.

For people who have been sexually abused, they have been put down and are highly volatile – there is much to do to restore their mana; to undo the silence – they don't want to talk. You need to unravel what stopped them from talking and participating and to get them to be who they really are and to ensure them that you really want to hear what they think. They must be listened to.

Here, components of community and voluntary organisation's organisational-specific capital – their mission, their commitment, knowledge and emotional accessibility – all come into play as community organisation workers develop appropriate, caring and effective programmes and forms of support for the most vulnerable in our society. Such an approach is often in stark contrast to clients' experiences with statutory agencies, where support can be perceived as uncaring, mechanical and authoritative.

You can't just impose a set of requirements you have to find out what's appropriate for them. The important aspect is to restore their mana, then they must protect each other's mana – you call it confidentiality. They have to be confident enough to say, 'I am not coming' rather than lie – that has to be okay. They have to be trusted. Change to them has always been more rules, less autonomy more intervention …

It [statutory programmes] has a mechanical and authoritative feel about it, rather than them being given choices and the ability to question whether any of these programs will suit them or are of an appropriate standard. They don't know whether the people taking these programs have sufficient understanding or knowledge of them and their situation.

Empowerment, in this sense, is more than simply generating confidence and trust, it is about trusting wholeheartedly the programmes and processes clients now find themselves in. Clients appreciate the open, understanding and reciprocally trusting environment of the community and voluntary organisations they are part of and this leads to change, personal development and empowerment.

This empowerment plays a crucial role in the development of leadership within communities, as one social worker expressed:

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Helping other whānau be able to benefit through the changes she's made in her life, changes that have proved positive for her and her children's lives. There is something inspirational when people walk in, and they're from the area and they hear this story. So I think part of it too is creating a space for people to talk about their success and achievement, to show how it can be done.

Increasingly community and voluntary organisations look toward more pragmatic means of empowering individuals and communities. This can take the form of personal improvement courses which focus on everything from arts and crafts, or financial literacy, to cooking classes.

I volunteer with [a cooking programme]. It's been really successful. It means buying $40 of food for a family of six and making five meals. That includes a vegetarian meal. It was awesome. We had a dietician from the DHB come in and have a look as well. They teach us budgeting too. We do it from home as well, which makes it more realistic.

Empowerment and the capacity for leadership are crucial within marginalised communities as community organisations look to promote a future of sustainable community and personal development.

4

Challenges faced by community and voluntary organisations

This research aimed to understand the contribution of the community and voluntary sector to social service provision and has argued that it is the very characteristics and infrastructures of the sector – it's organisational-specific capital – that generates their value to individuals, whānau, communities, and government. However, the very existence of this capacity to both meet government contract demands and help those in need, may be under direct threat from elements of the environment generated by government rules and processes. The challenges created by the environment are not unique to the participating organisations of this research, and there is a growing body of international and local literature which looks directly at the growing fragility of the sector, and the challenges posed by 'contract culture' and strong managerial requirements.

The increased focus on cost and quantifiable short-term outcomes promoted by the government's rationalisation of social service provision and the procurement/ purchasing process is often at odds with aspects of the community and voluntary sector's comparative advantage – the organisational- specific capital and resulting community value outlined in this research. Emerging in conflict with the identified themes of organisational-specific capital and community value are aspects of marketisation (Salamon 1997), rationalisation, and the emergence of a performance-focussed, evaluative culture (Power 1999; Clark *et al* 2000). Research suggests pressures related to this increased focus may result in narrowing work, limiting targets to those that can be achieved, discouraging voluntarism, inhibiting developmental or higher risk work and promoting competition over collaboration (Milbourne 2009). In this sense, characteristics of dominant managerial cultures, professionalisation

and marketisation, can have a negative impact on community social service delivery, silencing failures and discouraging the pursuit of innovative approaches. Ironically, many of the positive attributes of the organisational-specific capital, which create community value, are often the very reason to involve community organisations to begin with. This research outlines five challenges community and voluntary organisations face as a direct result of the contract environment: increased vulnerability, professionalisation, accountability and risk aversion, standardisation of services and competition.

The increased vulnerability of the community and voluntary sector

The organisations participating in this research varied significantly in both size and funding, with funding directly from government accounting for anywhere between 10–85% of an organisation's total income. It is important to note that community and voluntary organisations receive resources and funding through local and central government, philanthropic contributions, charity, fundraising, social enterprise, voluntarism and community donations of time, knowledge and resources. Whether a small or larger organisation, with government funding at 10% or 85%, a factor which was common to all participating organisations was the crucial role government funding played in the organisations' provision of services and general operations. Funded programmes create capacity to support other programmes and services, and also help to subsidise administrative requirements. This infrastructural capacity contributes to all operations within the organisation. Therefore, a loss of funding can be devastating for community and voluntary organisations feeling the vulnerability of operating under increasingly insecure funding arrangements.

This vulnerability means many organisations are in the position of constantly seeking new resource streams, as they must contend with both an increase in operational and infrastructural costs, increased demand for services, and identified areas of need in the community. The pursuit of funds in a competitive contract environment becomes increasingly problematic as resources are redirected away from service provision and the development of new initiatives to address needs identified in the community, and toward acquiring funding and increasing the capacity to do so.

> [The organisation's pursuit of funds is] very passive and we're now realising we have to learn and start to develop some resourcing around the whole fundraising activity. So this team … is tasked with growing our profile to nurture, grow and develop face-to-face relationships and get some bequests in. So, we're very reliant on government funding and we view that as a risk. The risk is that since 2008 [the funding] has been capped. There's been no increase.

Management and staff spoke of the impact a loss in funding has, or may potentially have on an organisation, with one manager explaining how the loss of a single contract, in their case, would result in the organisation's capacity reducing by half. Those less reliant on government contracts spoke of the importance of the government funding they did have in terms of the continuity of service provision, and administrative and infrastructural capacity.

Several times over the last few years, and possibly this year, we're looking at going to the wall, because a lot of that core funding has disappeared. The thought of this place not being able to function is astounding in terms of the resource that it is, but we need the money to survive.

As one manager explained tendering for contracts can also be an extremely stressful and resource intensive process, when resources are already stretched and the organisation and staff are aware of the benefits a successful tender will provide for the community,

The prospect of going back to tendering can be horrifying. It's a huge obstacle, but we went for it because we had practitioners that lived and breathed that work, and I had a commitment to them and the results they were getting. I never thought of not doing it again, but it was very resource intensive. Thankfully we haven't had to do that for our other projects …

The impact of professionalisation

Hwang and Powell (2009:268) write: 'expanded professionalism in the non-profit world involves not only paid, full-time careers and credentialed expertise but also the integration of professional ideals into the everyday world of charitable work.' This was reflected in the interviews and focus groups conducted for this research. As one participant noted:

In the early days [the organisation] was mostly run by volunteers, but the nature of volunteering has changed over the last 40 years. There is now very few people available in the community with the skills we need. So over the years, as contracts have grown and funding has grown, we've moved to a much more professionalised workforce, and there are pros and cons about that.

There were a number of positives within the sector which result from an increase in professionalism. Professionalism saw a shift in the community and voluntary sector from addressing the symptoms of social issues through a charity model, to working with families, whānau and communities to empower people, and change those causes. Life-time learning has also become common-place in many fields and organisations; something encouraged by community and voluntary sector management, and welcomed by staff. The knowledge tertiary educated and professionally associated staff bring to the sector, was also appreciated by all participants.

However, an increasing body of literature suggests professionalisation, whether through increasing credentialism or a reliance on paid staff, often leads to significant changes in community and voluntary organisations' mission and structure (Minkoff & Powell 2006, cited in Hwang & Powell 2009). Community and voluntary workers spoke of organisational restructuring and the increasing allocation of resources toward managerial requirements as signs of this shift.

Accountability and risk aversion

Another recent trend has been the growth of external accountability measures imposed upon the community and voluntary organisations working with government contracts. Again, this development was welcomed across those organisations taking part in this research, particularly as it relates to the increasingly professional standards across the sector and a commitment to better service provision. However, compliance was cited as an increasing cost for participating organisations. This is a particular concern for smaller organisations:

> *In a big organisation you have departments, or teams to focus on specific issues. In a smaller organisation you still have to do everything, but you don't have those people to make life simpler … That's not the same for what I would call a 'voluntary organisation'. We've had to downscale considerably over the last four to five years, but we still deliver the same services and still have to follow the same compliance with less resources.*

This ever-expanding mandatory accountability has resulted in increasing workload and capacity-building in an environment where government funding may be cut, or as was the case for the majority of organisations participating in this research, not increased over a seven-year period. This has resulted in resources being redirected away from service provision and towards compliance measures in a time of ever-growing demand for services and increasingly unstable funding streams. Accountability therefore shifts from community and voluntary organisations being held accountable by community to continue to provide service and development in the best interests of community, to accountability and compliance of measures determined by government. Of the auditing process, one manager remarked:

> *Where does the community and the recipient of the service have a say about the impact a provider is making? As opposed to someone who is working for government, who may not be as familiar with the issue.*

Similarly, as efforts and resources are directed toward these increasing measures, knowledge of community and the utility of institutional knowledge, may be replaced by knowledge of regulatory regimes and business-like procedures.

Accountability and the increased cost of compliance also undermine the capacity and opportunity for innovation, as organisations juggle costs and tightly prescribed contracts.

> *I feel very constrained in terms of this. What we're funded to do, what we have to do in terms of compliance … but the capacity to explore and develop other initiatives doesn't exist.*

The growth of risk management and risk aversion has a significant impact on assessment and the provision of services. According to Valentinov (2012), the main implication of this rise in risk governance is best understood through the concept of 'risk colonisation'. Rothstein *et al* outline risk colonisation as being 'the tendency of risk to increasingly define the object, methods and rationale of regulation' (2006:93, cited in Valentinov 2012). In this sense, risk colonisation arises in response to rationalisation and rising accountability requirements, and can result in the management of institutional risks, or organisational requirements, being increasingly prioritised over the societal risks or issues community and voluntary groups exist to

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address (Valentinov 2012). One manager spoke of the frustration of being constrained by the cost and inhibiting nature of increasing compliance measures:

> *The only thing we do that's not funded is the food bank and there's so much potential to develop and grow that as an intervention where you don't just give food, but you put a whole package around it of life skills, but we're so busy chasing our tail to do all the compliance and assessments. It's very tough.*

Providing services as specified not only limits perceived risk but demonstrates 'accountability' to the funder. However, the consequences are often delays in service provision and providing services to meet specifications rather than what is needed. This sees a transferring of risk from funder to service provider, where community and voluntary organisations are put in the position of meeting defined targets and outcomes which may be counter to the organisation, or staff member's knowledge of the client, community or social circumstances.

Standardisation of services

Faced with the increasing complexity of issues within the communities they work alongside the standardisation of services prescribed by government contracts were understood by participants of this study as often being unrealistic when the level of need of clients was considered. Participants spoke of people being 'not just another box to tick'. Standardisation, adherence to contractual terms and government-approved and standardised 'best practice', inhibit the innovation which is considered a hallmark of the community and voluntary sector. As increasingly prescribed services begin to dominate the sector, organisational capacity for tailored community response and innovative solutions to community-specific problems diminishes. Non-profits may move from an 'expressive' to an 'instrumental' orientation (Frumkin 2002), with community organisations playing defined roles and providing tightly prescribed services in a 'one size fits all' manner, as opposed to their traditionally expressive role in demonstrating a commitment to social ends and values. This shift from expressive to instrumental orientation may see a decrease in variance, and an increase in standardisation, as opposed to experimentation and innovation (Hwang & Powell 2009).

Standardised service goes against the community and voluntary sector's latent philosophy of treating people as individuals and providing a highly personalised service, while also contributing to a reduction in service. Another issue for the community and voluntary sector participants in this research was that prescribed, standardised services are 'box ticking exercises', which do not acknowledge, identify or address a client's full circumstances.

> *So it's working with the crisis as they walk in the door, a lot of the time, rather than having the time to go into the background of why this is happening, why this is repeating, the grass roots of it, rather than can we actually deal with it.*

A programme coordinator also spoke of the perception of standardised support, as it relates to programmes associated with statutory agencies and the barriers to change and support it poses on clients:

Standardisation, adherence to contractual terms and government-approved and standardised 'best practice', inhibit the innovation which is considered a hallmark of the community and voluntary sector

It has a mechanical and authoritative feel about it, rather than them being given choices and the ability to question whether any of these programmes will suit them or are of appropriate standard. They don't know whether the people taking these programs have sufficient understanding or knowledge of them and their situation.

Community and voluntary organisations, embedded in the community and with their knowledge, networks, emotional accessibility and propensity for innovation, offer services and programmes tailored to community and individual needs, however, this is increasingly threatened by the contractually-required standardisation of services.

Standardisation also acts counter-productively to the social and political change the sector must respond to. Here, participants spoke of a lack of acknowledgement of need for capacity to accurately measure social change, relating to the implications of any given contract. In terms of policy, several organisations spoke of the vulnerability they operate under, with regards to their operations and their susceptibility to changes in policy:

We've had two restructures in the last three years. In the last four or five years our income has dropped considerably, which is an immediate result of changes in government policy, practice and referral. A large portion of funding is dependent on government policy; who they refer, how they refer. So, if there's a government policy or practice change that suddenly diverts or stops income being received by the organisation without notice or warning, it creates a tremendous impact in terms of restructure. The disruption it causes is huge. It takes a long time for the organisation to re-stabilise, at least six months, and there is a lot of cost incurred. It creates lots of changes in employment also, with some losing their jobs and others leaving …

While standardisation of services is understood by government as driving efficiency and accountability, for community organisations there are considerably more factors at play. Efficiency and rationalisation does not, therefore, ensure the continuity of service provision, and the retention of valued employees who take their extensive expertise and community and institutional knowledge with them with every restructure.

Competition

Milbourne (2009) argues recent local commissioning arrangements in the United Kingdom, supported by competitive contracts, national planning initiatives and an increase in generic evaluative frameworks, are damaging to collaborative work, while fostering mistrust toward government strategies and inhibiting innovative work. Studies indicate factors which inhibit collaborative and inter-agency work, including; differentials in power and trust, the often inflexible nature of statutory agencies, the prominence of quantifiable performance measures, diminished government funding, and notably, the resulting competitive bidding for funds (Eikenberry & Kluver 2004; Kimberlee 2002; Milbourne *et al* 2003; Upton & Fonow 1984). Community and voluntary organisations, under competitive pressures are now restructuring and spending more time, money and resources on tendering and seeking new funding. As one manager explained,

It has a mechanical and authoritative feel about it, rather than them being given choices and the ability to question whether any of these programmes will suit them or are of appropriate standard.

if there's a government policy or practice change that suddenly diverts or stops income being received by the organisation without notice or warning, it creates a tremendous impact in terms of restructure.

We instituted an organisational review and looked at having a smaller, tighter business team and a new community relationships team which would really ratchet up our whole capacity to look for other sources of money.

Faced with new arrangements which have community and voluntary organisation not only competing with private enterprise, but increasingly against each other; the contract environment only further contributes to the tenuous existence community organisations face, particularly smaller organisations that often lack the resources to compete for much needed, yet highly contested funding.

The competitive funding model doesn't allow for collaborative working. So, each time a new iteration comes out, the social sector trials being a classic example of that, and they've tried to direct everyone together, I think it's probably put up more barriers to working together, because [community and voluntary organisations] already had a way of working together and they were told they had to do it a different way. So the competitive funding is a recipe for disaster in this work.

5
Conclusion

Current government processes for buying social and health services are having a serious impact on community and voluntary sector organisations and on the communities they are embedded in. The role such organisations play in society has undergone rigorous examination, with academic and governmental literature the world over highlighting the sector's unique ability and capacity to address pervading social problems, to promote community development, citizen engagement, social inclusion and the creation of social capital. In recent theoretical and policy debates concerning social cohesion, community has re-emerged as an important setting for many of the processes which are said to shape social identity, improve life chances, empower communities, and improve overall well-being. Community and voluntary organisations are at the forefront of this renewed interest on community. Through their organisational-specific capital – defined in this study as comprising of organisational mission, accessibility, their community-embedded nature, institutional and community knowledge, networking and collaboration, time management, innovation and manaakitanga – community organisations create community value. This community value leads to grassroots change through the creation of social capital, social inclusion and cohesion, empowerment, and highly personalised and professional care and support. However, in New Zealand and other jurisdictions, government processes for purchasing social and health services are highly focussed on the potentially overwhelming aspects of marketisation. Eikenberry contends:

> A normative ideology surrounding market-based solutions and business-like models has become pervasive in the thinking and management of non-profit and voluntary organisations. They are increasingly adopting the language of business, including emphasising efficiency, customer and profit (2009:586).

While profit did not appear as a driving factor for any organisations in our study (all were non-profit groups committed to investing surplus back into the community), business-like models are encroaching on the community and voluntary sector as organisations contend with increasing marketisation and rationalisation pervading the sector. This focus redirects resources and attention toward a compliance-oriented, competitive culture which stifles the attributes this research has identified as crucial for meeting both the demands of government and the needs of communities. What the government processes for buying services instil, is the standardisation of services over innovation, risk aversion and inhibiting accountability measures over trust, and short-term quantifiable outcomes over long-term sustainable change and community development.

In the provision and purchasing of social and health services, holistic consideration must be made of the many roles community organisations play in society. Government must consider the sector's quantifiable and qualitative advantages, as well as the services they provide in the community. While much of the community and

voluntary sector's value is quantifiable, more still is purely qualitative and intangible, accumulated over time as an integral part of being embedded in community. This unique organisational-specific capital cannot be manufactured, and should not be commodified. It speaks to the sector's long history – each provider's enduring place in the community, and sense of social responsibility. The organisational-specific capital set out in detail in this report is what makes the sector unique, and what instils in each community organisation their commitment and passion, but also their irreplaceable knowledge, experience and expertise.

Research published by the UK's *Locality* stated:

> By jeopardising the comparative advantages of TSOs [community and voluntary organisations], cutting their capacity for innovation, limiting the scope for developing intelligent partnerships, reducing their scope in service provision, driving some out of business and demoralising TSO personnel, scale thinking in general, and commissioning in particular, has the effect of undermining the very qualities of intensely local connections and commitment which both attracted knowledgeable local volunteers and made TSOs appealing as complimentary partners to public-sector agencies in the first place. (*Locality* 2014:25)

The evidence presented by those working on the ground in community and voluntary sector social service provision leads us to argue that a value for money procurement system must take into account not only the delivery of the outcome but also the wider 'community value' also delivered by organisations. In order to account for these, two considerations must be made. First, the value of community and voluntary organisations and the sector as a whole must be considered, not merely in terms of achieving a defined outcome or result from the service delivery, but also in terms of the wider benefits delivered by the service provider, for the many communities in which they work. In this research report we have demonstrated that the components of organisational-specific capital inherent in the community and voluntary sector are *embedded* attributes, built up over time, which come part-and-parcel with contracted service provision. In effect, this capital constitutes the sector's added value. Secondly, consideration must be made of the impact on communities and the individuals, whānau and families that are their constituents, when the community and voluntary sector organisations are undermined by a too narrowly focussed social services procurement systems.

Government processes for buying social and health services must take into account both the community and voluntary sector's increasing professional efficiency *and* those more intangible qualities that result from their organisational specific capital, or risk stretching the resources and capacity of community and voluntary organisations to the point of collapse. As it stands, community and voluntary organisations must negotiate through an environment with high demands and expectations coming from within their own communities, government, and the wider New Zealand public. What this research makes clear is that the organisational-specific capital inherent in the community and voluntary sector are accumulated attributes, which are built up over time, and are embedded in their kaupapa and mission. In effect, this capital, and the resulting community value constitute the sector's added value. It is the creation of social capital, inclusion, social cohesion and empowerment which are necessary for wider social repair. With consideration and appreciation taken of the wider role of the community and voluntary sector in society, the unique place community organisations occupy in society can be maintained, and better purchasing, which takes into account all factors contributing to social wellbeing can be assured.

At a local level, I think the work we do is valued, but if we're talking to funders about how they think about the work NGOs do, I think they need to be talking about the value of that work and that we go above and beyond, and that that work is underfunded, and an organisation that was concerned with profit just wouldn't be going there. So much of it is underfunded, so it's about funding NGOs to do this much needed work that we do really well.

Literature review

Beginning in the 1970s and prompted by a desire to reduce public spending and the expansion of statutory services, many governments have shifted their funding of third sector organisations to more prescribed contracts, with increasingly competitive tendering and considerable regulatory capacity. There is extensive academic works and increasing research on the role of the community and voluntary sector in society (Evers & Laville 2004), public service change (Le Grand 2003), and what Salamon (1997) calls the 'marketisation' of the third sector. Literature which looks to explore this change in environment has focussed on the negative impact it has had on democracy and citizenship (Box 1999; Box *et al* 2001: King & Stivers 1998; Terry 1998) and the role non-profits play in the enhancement of civil society (Kramer 1981; Salamon 1997). While some research does indicate non-profit organisations can benefit from marketisation trends (Aspen Institute 2001, cited in Milbourne 2009), such benefits are increasingly achieved at the expense of the community and voluntary sector's role in not only the provision of service, but also in advocacy and the promotion of community development (Eikenberry & Kluver 2004). Jeavons (1992) argues non-profit organisations 'come into being and exist primarily to give expression to the social, philosophical, moral, or religious values of their founders and supporters' (403–404). It is these qualities, coupled with the more traditional role of service provider and advocate that constitute the 'inherent value' of non-profit organisations; a position increasingly viewed as being challenged by the adoption of market tools and principles.

Despite this growing literature, there is still limited work on how recent changes to government procurement processes are affecting community organisations outside of the adoption of this more business-like approach, in their capacity to contribute to positive change in their communities and pursue their 'mission' or organisational philosophy. Milbourne (2009) questions whether policy driven arrangements for planning services and selecting providers are undermining the need for creating better, more responsive local services and improved local collaboration and concludes that such changes create significant barriers to community collaboration and locally designed provision; provision born from local knowledge and aimed toward community development and empowerment. Evers and Laville (2004) see this propensity for locally designed solutions to issues identified within communities as resulting from the sector's ability to generate innovative solutions to public problems in partnership and with support from appropriate institutional agencies. In this capacity, such organisations are crucial in providing often under-resourced but essential safety nets in deprived neighbourhoods (Salamon 2002; Sobeck *et al* 2007; Glennerster 2003), while also providing community members the necessary skills and empowerment required to promote positive change within the their community.

The concern in New Zealand over the implications of this contracting environment for the community and voluntary sector are not new. Nowland-Foreman (1997) explored purchase-of-service contracting with community and voluntary organisations in the New Zealand context, in relation to international trends, and suggests a crucial issue for such organisations is an appreciation of what constitutes those groups which comprise the sector, and an evaluation of specific

organisational missions and values particular to different groups. This research concludes pressures associated with the market model of service provision are likely to result in the dissolution of differentiation between community and commercial organisations. The following year, Nowland-Foreman (1998) questioned contract culture and the purchasing of services from the community and voluntary sector, and its impact on civil society. This paper questions whether the tightening control of community organisations through government funding contracts, runs the risk of jeopardising attributes of the sectors, such as their ability to mobilise community resources, to deliver appropriate and accessible services, and provide a means for citizen participation and engagement.

Munford & Sanders (2001) discuss contract-based purchasing of social and health services and its impact on the delivery of such services to families in New Zealand. Looking specifically at a family support service, through Barnados NZ, this study is concerned with two key issues; the identification of interventions that contribute to positive change, and organisational factors that provide an environment in which effective support for families can take place. Munford and Sanders suggest a need for community and voluntary groups to use a strengths-based approach and engage clients with long-term, flexible support; focussing on their strengths and those personal resources present within the individual necessary for positive change. They also stress change is a journey, and takes time. Therefore, community groups must remain available to clients, in ways that the requirements of a funding contract may not foresee. The study contends these approaches are increasingly difficult to promote, however, when four issues raised by the development of contracting social services are considered. These issues relate to the difficulties in defining what is to be purchased, accountability, and the specificity/fragmentation and partial funding of contracted services.

Cribb (2005) looks specifically at accountability mechanisms of government contracts, the accountability relationships community and voluntary organisations perceive themselves to be a part of, and the implications of these perceptions. With accountability mechanisms understood as a means of ensuring community and voluntary organisations deliver what government requires of them; such mechanisms, and their unintended impact on the many positive attributes of the sector are questioned when it becomes clear both government and the community and voluntary sector both share a desire to provide high quality and effective services and outcomes for clients. When both parties have the best interests of clients and communities in mind, the trade-offs required by the competing demands posed by accountability measures create unnecessary tension, and may affect performance.

Crack *et al* (2005), in their micro-level analysis of seven community and voluntary organisations and drop-in centres in the Dunedin area, document the differences between the two in terms of funding, clientele and the adjustments made to service provision to accommodate the increasing number of clients and nature of demand. The paper explored the emergence of 'contract culture' and its impact on various defining factors attributed to the community and voluntary sector, including; a philosophy of care, or ethos centred around a concern for social justice, social responsibility and meeting the needs of clients; promoting independence by providing clients with the necessary tools to improve their personal circumstances, a better understanding of the specific issues underlying clients' need of assistance through individual case and broad-cause advocacy; and the promotion of both 'abstract' and 'pragmatic' personal empowerment. Crack *et al* concludes those organisations operating before the welfare reforms of the 1980s and 1990s have had to drastically revise the services they provided and the manner in which they are organised, in order to accommodate the increasing number of clients, and diversity of needs in the community, but also to

meet the government's demand that operations conform with a prescribed 'contract culture'.

More recently, Grey and Sedgwick (2013) explored community and voluntary organisations in relation to democracy in New Zealand and the voice of the community and voluntary sector in political debate. The research concludes the democratic voice of the community and voluntary sector has been silenced by successive governments, through funded contracts with strong managerial requirements.

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