



Sustainability in Community Organisations

a literature review

Foreword

The Research and Evaluation Services Team of the Department of Internal Affairs conducted this literature review to inform and support its work with communities. The project looked at how we can better understand the dimensions of sustainability and how sustainability can be cultivated and supported within community organisations by public sector agencies.

Although the literature spanning the topic of sustainability is very large, this review focused on sustainability in the context of community development. The key purpose has been to inform the Department in its stated intention of building strong sustainable communities, hapū and iwi. This review has not been peer reviewed and it is not an exhaustive traverse of the literature. The Department believes it is a fair, but modest, coverage of the literature representing approximately forty articles.

Within its modest intentions and constraints, this review is published with the intent of contributing to a wider understanding of how to progress sustainable community development.

The views within this document belong to the cited authors and are not necessarily the policies or views of the Department of Internal Affairs.

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Introduction

This literature review was commissioned to explore:

- the definitions of sustainability in the context of the community & voluntary sector; and
- public sector interventions that may be more or less effective in supporting sustainability.

The review draws on literature from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United States and Great Britain. Approximately thirty articles were considered. Two areas not comprehensively addressed are: (1) the definition of resilience, and (2) the natural life cycle of community organisations. There is a significant volume of literature covering definitional issues and, due to the modest nature of this study, these raised questions about the value of canvassing the variety of definitions.

It is intended that this literature review will increase the Department of Internal Affairs (The Department) knowledge about how best to support community organisations to be self-reliant and resilient through interventions such as funding and advisory services. It is also expected that the Department's capacity to better meet the changing needs and interests of communities will be enhanced through a more in-depth understanding of what supports sustainability within community organisations.

Report structure

The review is organised into two separate parts. Part One cites the literature on the principles of sustainability, including the notion that there is a continuum of weak to strong forms of sustainability. Sustainability was then examined in the New Zealand context. Resilience is briefly defined and sustainability is defined in the context of the community and voluntary sector.

Part Two identifies interventions that are more effective at supporting and cultivating sustainability. International accords between government and the community and voluntary sector pay tribute to the growing recognition of the need for rules of engagement to regulate these relationships. Less effective government interventions are compared and evidence is provided of how these interventions impact on sustainable development. The research summarises common elements that make strong, resilient and self-reliant community organisations; and briefly examines the natural life cycle of community organisations before drawing conclusions.

Key findings

Sustainable community development is about enabling communities to develop their own solutions and to mobilise their resources in order to achieve their vision. A number of important themes emerged on how public sector agencies can best work with, and support, communities, including:

- being culturally competent,
- respecting the self-determination, values and diversity of communities,

- applying a holistic approach to development (including economic development),
- nurturing innovation,
- reducing barriers to access,
- bringing a bi-partisan approach,
- facilitating participation and empowerment, and
- working in an integrated way across government departments.

Ife (2002)¹ proposes that governments have a key role to play in supporting and cultivating sustainability, by focusing their interventions at the enabling end of the spectrum rather than the service delivery end. Under a community development model governments' role in enabling functions include setting minimum standards of output (for example in health, education and housing), disseminating information, facilitating networks and regulating human rights as distinct from delivering services.

On the other hand, Ife says government has a minimal role in service delivery, except where a local community is unable to provide services itself. The notion of sustainable community development also encompasses developing structures that do not have to grow to survive, but can maintain a steady state of equilibrium (small is beautiful).

Within the New Zealand context, interventions that support and cultivate sustainability include the Department of Internal Affairs' strategy Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū and the cross-government strategy Whānau Ora. These strategies encompass aspects identified as being effective in supporting and cultivating sustainability, such as those identified above.

¹ Ife, J (2002) *Community Development: Community-based Alternatives in an Age of Globalisation*, Longman, Australia

Part One: Sustainability

The definitions of sustainability in the context of the community and voluntary sector

1. <i>The dimensions of sustainability</i>
2. <i>The meaning of sustainability in the New Zealand context</i>
3. <i>Definitions of resilience</i>
4. <i>Defining sustainability in the context of the community and voluntary sector</i>

Key findings

1. *The dimensions of sustainability*

The word sustainability is derived from the Latin *sustinere* (*tenere*, to hold; *sus*, up). However, whilst there are popular understandings about what sustainability means, a single definition is elusive because it has many dimensions that mean different things to different people.

There is ample literature across various disciplines, such as economics, sociology and ecology, that deal with sustainability. As reflects their discipline, economists tend to treat sustainability in terms of ways to keep the production system more viable; environmentalists and ecologists tend to focus on the perpetuation of the environment and its subsystems; sociologists are more concerned with the impact on cultural and social systems. The literature reflects the various ways in which sustainability can be viewed.

Loomis (2002) argues that strong sustainable development recognises that the different types of capital are interdependent. Such capital might include social capital (networks, trust, access to information, reciprocity, and cooperation), human resources, cultural capital (world view, kaupapa, tikanga), economic/financial resources and natural capital (environmental resources, whenua), all of which are recognised as being interdependent. To maintain strong sustainable development and equilibrium among available capital stocks, careful and considered choices are needed about how each type of capital is used. It is not possible to maintain balance simply by substituting one kind of capital for another.²

Another view, known as 'weak sustainable development', maintains that it is possible to run down or substitute some capital stocks for others, as long as the overall sustainable balance of capital is maintained in the long run.³

² Loomis, T. (2002) *A Framework for Developing Sustainable Communities*, Discussion paper, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington. pp.7, 11, 33.

³ (Brekke (1997) cited in Ayres, R., van den Bergh, J. & Gowdy, J. (1999) *Viewpoint: Weak versus strong sustainability*. www.tinbergen.nl/discussionpapers/98103.pdf p.1)

Herton, S (2009) *Strong Sustainability for New Zealand: principles and scenarios*, Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand Inc. (SANZ), Nakedize Ltd pp.8-17 considers that the current dominant paradigm of development is unsustainable (on a continuum of more to less damaging in terms of human impact) while a threshold will need to be crossed before a new paradigm of strong sustainability may be achieved. He argues that to attain sustainability, humans must be connected to the earth and each other. Ife, J (2002) *Community Development: Community-*

If there is a consensus, it is that sustainability is now used to refer to *human* sustainability. The Brundtland Commission of the United Nations offers probably the most widely quoted definition in this regard.

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”⁴

The Brundtland Commission definition is relevant but poses the challenge of seeing sustainable development as an *operational* concept, interpreting different values about what is needed to achieve greater balance and accepting there is no end. The Brundtland Commission’s view has been criticised as ambiguous (Giddings et al 2002 p188, cited in Trotman, 2005, p5).

This literature review focussed on sustainability within the context of community development. In summary, the concept of sustainable development is value based and individuals and groups attribute meaning according to their underlying values, philosophies and assumptions.

New Zealand writer Hertnon (2009) asserts that the notion of sustainability is underpinned by ethics and values, such as that:

- humans need to live within the Earth’s limits;
- new equilibriums amongst people and amongst species is constantly sought;
- non-material sources of happiness are important;
- economic growth and material possessions do not equate with success;
- people are interdependent;
- there is value in reducing the consumption of carbon through local community and cooperation;
- “nature” has intrinsic value;
- nature is “revered”; and
- values of fairness and equity form a central foundation of sustainability⁵.

These ethics and values when applied to economic life in a community development context run counter to accepted notions of economic growth. Hertnon’s view accords with that of the Australian human rights academic Jim Ife (2002), who states that economic existence in a community development context means it:

- occurs within natural limits⁶;

based Alternatives in an Age of Globalisation, Longman Australia pp.42-43, 202-203 argues that it is a mistake to think that the social problems of unsustainable practices (such as depleting finite resources) can be addressed merely by increasing spending.

⁴ United Nations General Assembly (1987) [*Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*](#). Transmitted to the General Assembly as an Annex to document A/42/427 - Development and International Co-operation: Environment.

⁵ Hertnon, S (2009) *Strong Sustainability for New Zealand: principles and scenarios*, Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand Inc. (SANZ), Nakedize Ltd. p.12

Hertnon points to the association of sustainability with values of mutual respect, fairness, cooperation, gratitude, compassion, forgiveness, humility, courage, mutual aid, charity, confidence, trust, courtesy, integrity, loyalty and responsible use of resources.

- is secondary to community needs;
- uses resources only at a rate that they can be replenished;
- produces environmental outputs to levels that can be absorbed; and
- minimises consumption.

These dimensions of sustainability can be applied to other aspects of community development such as social relationships, housing, technology, urban planning and more. For example, under these dimensions Ife considers smaller-scale decentralised forms of economic activity, such as localised market economies, to be more compatible with sustainability.

Technological development, such as advances in medical, nuclear, transport or information technology, are not regarded as *intrinsically* worthwhile; but should be linked to socially and environmentally determined goals. Ife cites the American humanist and cultural critic Postman (1993), to contrast this proposition with the dominant assumption of the intrinsic worth of technological development. He questions this, asserting that social goals are often subordinate to economic goals and that the net social and environmental costs of technology often outweigh the benefits. Applying a sustainable approach to community development would mean examining every aspect, rather than a few economic or other indicators.

Although the 1987 Brundtland Report⁷ did not challenge the notion that development is linked to growth, Ife proposes that a central tenet of sustainability is the concept of no-growth.⁸

*"[I]n a finite world, it is clearly ludicrous to assume that growth can continue indefinitely, and there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that the effective limits to growth are being reached."*⁹

Bradlow (2007) accords with Ife in writing that sustainable communities are empowered to manage their own development according to their collective values, priorities and vision.¹⁰

⁶ Herton (2009) and Ife, J. (2002) *Community Development: Community-based Alternatives in an Age of Globalisation*, Longman Australia.

Ife and Herton refer to these 'natural limits' as the biosphere which is defined as the part of the earth and the atmosphere which is capable of supporting life and within which all life upon the planet is sustained. No economic or social activity can exist outside of but must be recognised as occurring within this.

⁷ United Nations General Assembly (1987)

⁸ Ife (2002) pp.8-9, 42-43

⁹ Ife (2002) pp.9,28-29 (cites Suzuki & McConnell 1997; Meadows, Meadows & Randers 1992; Rifkin 1985)

¹⁰ Bradlow, K (2007), *The Role of Government in Community Development in Aotearoa New Zealand*, Masters Thesis, Development Studies Degree, Victoria University of Wellington p.13

Bradlow writes about four core principles underlying the concept of sustainability:

- holism – phenomenon may only be understood in reference to a larger system;
- sustainability – systems must be able to be maintained in the long term;
- diversity – there are many ways and plurality is a strength;
- equilibrium – the importance of maintaining balance and recognising relationships between systems.

What does this mean for community development? Ife claims that to achieve sustainability change is needed to the way development occurs. The relevant social systems and institutions need to be evaluated not only in terms of their immediate role and function, but also in terms of their long-term viability, their systemic impact, the energy they consume related to their output and their relationship with other parts of the social system and other institutions.¹¹ One obvious implication is that, under a sustainable approach to community development, a more systematic and comprehensive approach to planning and assessment is required.

Bhattacharyya (2004)¹² provides a similar vision of sustainable community development to Ife. Bhattacharyya claims that the purpose of community development is to help to create and sustain a satisfying life by pursuing the goals of solidarity (shared identity and norms) and agency (generating critical consciousness to address problems that affected people “own”, define and take active measures to solve).¹³

2. The meaning of sustainability in the New Zealand context

The Department of Internal Affairs’ strategy Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū was developed in 2003 to build strong relationships of trust and respect with whānau, hapū and iwi Māori, while reshaping the Department’s internal processes and practices to better respond to Māori needs. The strategy contributes to achieving the goal of “Strong, Sustainable Communities, Hapū and Iwi”, as described in the Department’s 2010-2013 Statement of Intent.¹⁴

Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū represents a way of working alongside Māori that supports them to achieve their development aspirations. It aligns with principles espoused by

¹¹ Ife (2002) pp.42-43, 202-203

¹² Bhattacharyya, J. (2004) *Theorizing Community Development*, Journal of the Community Development Society, Vol. 34, No 2, pp. 5, 11-14, 28

¹³ Bhattacharyya, J. (2004) pp. 5, 11-14, 28

The methods consistent in effecting these goals are self-help, felt needs and participation. The techniques or tools applied at the front-end of community development are such things as community asset building, social planning, community self-study, locality development, conflict however these models of community development are not ends in themselves. They must be consistent with the methods towards the goal of community development which is defined as creating and sustaining a satisfying life (through the acquisition of solidarity and agency).

¹⁴ Department of Internal Affairs (2010) Statement of Intent 2010–13 pp.15-16, 37
Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū Strategy is described as the way the department integrates te reo, tikanga and kaupapa into its systems. It is also an example of how the department will develop its capability to work with whānau, hapū and iwi.

Bhattacharyya and Ife, such as agency and self-determination, by embodying the concepts of self-reliance and economic independence.¹⁵ Its overarching goals are:

- Facilitating self-determination and self-sustainability for whānau, hapū and iwi Māori; and
- Promoting responsiveness to Māori in the Department's service delivery and policy development.¹⁶

The concept of sustainable community development, perhaps, influenced the strategy. Loomis' research informed the Department of Internal Affairs during the establishment phase of the Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū strategy.¹⁷ Loomis and Mahina (2003) assert that Māori development requires a holistic framework that involves wellbeing outcomes for the whole iwi. Members are empowered through being involved in the development process itself, and through that gain a strengthened sense of identity and self-worth. In their view, Māori community development requires that the values and principles guiding strategic decision-making be transparent. To be effective, broad consultation and consensus is paramount (although challenging to attain).¹⁸

Loomis and Mahina's concepts are in accord with Durie (2006), who asserts that an integrated approach to Māori development is essential for Māori initiatives to achieve their aspirations.

Sectoral development, in which economic, social, environmental and cultural policies are developed in parallel, rather than from a common starting point, is inconsistent with indigenous world views where integration and holistic perspectives outweigh piecemeal approaches¹⁹

¹⁵ Department of Internal Affairs (2010) *Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū, working beside whānau, hapū and iwi Māori 2010-2013*, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington pp.9-11

¹⁶ Department of Internal Affairs (2010) pp.9-11, 24-34, The strategy came into being in 2003 as a practical means of giving effect to the articles and principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Key features of the Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū strategy are that it:

- is grounded in tikanga Māori values and principles.
- uses an 'investment in strengths' approach, in which the strengths of whānau, hapū and iwi Māori are identified and then used as the starting point for development.
- allows and encourages the Department to consider developmental aspirations from a Māori perspective,
- ensures that policy advice and service delivery are aligned to the needs of whānau, hapū and iwi Māori.

Establishing trusting, respectful relationships with whānau, hapū and iwi Māori is a fundamental principle of the strategy. The recognition and application of Māori kaupapa and tikanga in the Department's engagements is central to building enduring relationships with Māori communities. (Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū Strategy pp.4, 20)

¹⁷ Terrence Loomis was a Community & Local Government Policy Advisor in the Department during the years 2002-2005

¹⁸ Loomis, T & J Mahima (2003) *Māori Community-based sustainable development: a research progress report*, Development in Practice, Vol. 13, No.4 pp.402-403

¹⁹ Durie, Mason (2006) *Measuring Māori Wellbeing*, New Zealand Treasury Guest Lecture Series, 1 August 2006, Wellington p.13

Eketone (2006) also agrees with Durie's writing, in that community development in Māori communities and situations needs to be based on, and use, those values that derive from a Māori world view. Durie asserts that self determination is the advancement of Māori people as Māori. Goals for Māori advancement in economic, social and cultural terms need to reflect Māori realities and aspirations.²⁰ In a Dunedin-based case study, Eketone explains how the intended education intervention had broader outcomes, such as greater adherence to tikanga, increased networks, redevelopment of a Māori community centre and uptake of waka-ama as a physical activity. He claims that when participating in specific, targeted interventions indigenous people often bring a broader holistic viewpoint.²¹

Hertnon asserts that enabling conditions for sustainability in New Zealand include:

- embedding an understanding of sustainability in New Zealand's governance, economic, legal and education systems;
- regenerating and growing natural and social capital to sustain the health and resilience of New Zealand;
- strengthening understandings about the impact of human activity on the earth;
- implementing strategies to make the most efficient use of resources possible including substituting non-renewable resources for renewable wherever feasible;
- trading goods only according to sustainable criteria (including refusing to benefit materially from unsustainable processes/practices off-shore).²²

In the New Zealand context, Moon (2006) cautions that values underlying the current neoclassical economics are at odds with principles of sustainability and destructive of indigenous peoples. Moon is concerned that Māori world-views and value systems are required to shift to fit into the predominant free-market ideologies underpinning current trade systems.²³

"A pervasive strand of development thinking overtly demands changes in indigenous cultures as a prerequisite for development to take place."²⁴

Moon maintains that economic development within iwi means that iwi must be vigilant to focus on improving their economic and social position relative to the predominant social/ethnic group in the country, whilst simultaneously retaining their cultural identity and

²⁰ Eketone, Anaru (2006) *Tapuwae: a vehicle for community change* Community Development Journal, Vol. 41, no 4, p.470 (cites Durie (1998) p.4)

²¹ Eketone (2006) The purpose of the *programme* was road safety and injury prevention, however the purpose of the *project* was Māori community development and Māori advancement.pp.477-478

²² Hertnon (2009) pp.8-17

²³ Hertnon (2009) pp.11, 17 based on utilitarian ethics and principles of property from Locke's theory of social contract where utilitarian ethics equates the attainment of individual material wealth as directly related to happiness, individual self interest is assumed, economic growth is seen as the only way to achieve more utility. Locke's theory of social contract premised the primacy of individual and organisational property ownership and the inviolability of contracts.

²⁴ Moon, P (2000) *The Third Way: An Indigenous Approach to Maori Economic Development*, p.8

value system. Indigenous people must examine how their economies have accommodated the changes imposed by a colonising power, so that underdevelopment is understood in reference to the consequences of imperialism.²⁵

“Development and its corollary progress are generally associated with improvement. However, the idea of improvement is very much bound in cultural constructs. What may be seen as an improvement for one culture could equally be seen as a regressive step for another culture.”²⁶

Moon continues by stating that a sustainable approach to economic development in the context of Māori communities defines progress predominantly by the condition of its less economically developed members, rather than by the net increase in financial value of individuals. Thus, a collective group-centred focus is needed in monitoring economic development, rather than an individually-centred focus or emphasis. Economic plans must include ‘Māoriness’ as a principal component and foundation of development, rather than an economic plan separate from this core identity.²⁷

There are many views about the impact of neo liberalism upon Māori development. Rather than confronting it head on, authors such as Henry (2000), Lambert (2009) and Eketone argue that adaptation is key.

In some respects, the thinking of indigenous New Zealand writers such as Eketone, Mahima, Moon and Durie align with the Think Tank for Strong Sustainability in New Zealand.²⁸ Hertnon argues that a shift in societal ethics and values is key to New Zealanders being willing to adopt a path that leads to strong sustainability.

3. Definitions of resilience

Canadian academics Dale & Newman (2008) define resilience as a means of keeping community organisations safe and adaptable. They argue that community organisations require open, diverse networks that include enduring interrelationships among individuals and social capital links to outside resources, decision makers and authority figures.²⁹ Although this literature review did not uncover a lot of explicit reference to the definition of resilience in the articles reviewed, it is implicitly covered in the discussion about the

²⁵ Moon (2000) pp.4, 6-8

²⁶ Moon (2000) p. 6

²⁷ Moon (2000) p.23

²⁸ Hertnon (2009), The think tank brings together New Zealand academics in many fields of science and other disciplines including Dr Jane Adams, Assoc Prof Marjan van den Belt, Mr David Bent, Prof Klaus Bosselmann, Dr Wayne Cartwright (editor), Mr Gerry Coates, Mr Peter Davis, Dr Brian Henshall, Mr Simon Hertnon, Dr Robert Howell, Dr Helen Hughes, Prof Kate Kearins, Dr Maggie Lawton, Dr John Peet, Mr Jonathon Porritt, Ms Wendy Reid, Dr Jim Salinger, Mr Kevin Trerise, Mr Rex Verity, Mr Ian Whitehouse. A paper has been written by this New Zealand think tank entitled Strong Sustainability for New Zealand: Principles and Scenarios. It was published in book format by Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand in 2009 with the support of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO and the Tindall Foundation. It has been independently reviewed by academics in New Zealand, UK and Canada prior to publication.

²⁹ Dale, A & Newman L. (2008) *Social Capital: a necessary and sufficient condition for sustainable community development?* Community Development Journal, Vol. 45, no 1, p.9

definition of strong sustainable organisations in Part 2. (Refer to Page 28, Part 7. The success factors that make strong community organisations).

4. Defining sustainability in the context of the community and voluntary sector

Bhattacharyya defines the purpose of community development as creating and sustaining a satisfying life (through the acquisition of solidarity and agency).³⁰ In this context sustainability is considered as a means to promote change from unsustainable practices to benefit future generations. Ife proposes that community development has the responsibility to pilot local sustainability in practice, to demonstrate its viability at community level and be at the forefront of social change. According to him, such change can only be for the overall goals of advancement set by the community engaged in development. Loomis similarly characterises his concern for future generations when he writes that sustainable development seeks to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – in the same camp as the Brundtland Commission.³¹ This human-centred view contrasts with ecological views that focus on the endurance of natural systems.

Bradlow's view is that current processes and outcomes need to be enduring and self-maintaining, so that the capacity of the community's future is not compromised for the benefit of the present.³² Ife also asserts that sustainable community organisations should aim to minimise dependence on non-renewable resources, instead implementing new frameworks that are viable over the long-term so that choices and actions do not deplete well-being and resources over time. They should develop structures that do not have to grow to survive, instead embracing the philosophy and practice of "small is beautiful" that enables them to maintain a steady state of balance, harmony and equilibrium.³³

Canadian academics Connelly, et.al. (2007), who have looked at First Nations community development, say that it rests on the principles of balance, respect and accountability with a vision to protect future generations and transmit to them knowledge and values. Thus, development requires not just new services or infrastructure, but a foundation rooted in community empowerment that accords with Bradlow and several indigenous Māori authors including Eketone and Durie. According to this view, pursuing sustainability is not possible without changing the way that people relate to each other and the values underlying their interactions.³⁴

³⁰ Bhattacharyya (2004) p.28

³¹ Loomis (2002) p.7

³² Bradlow (2007) p.25

³³ Ife (2002) p.

³⁴ Connelly, S, M Roseland, S Markey et.al. (2007), *Working Paper #1: literature review summary; Strategic sustainability and community infrastructure*, SFU Centre for Sustainable Community Development/ICLEI/Centre for Indigenous Environmental resources, Infrastructure Canada, Canada, pp. 8, 17

Part Two: Interventions that support sustainability

Public sector interventions that may be more or less effective in supporting sustainability.

5.	<i>Effective interventions that support and cultivate sustainability</i>
6.	<i>Interventions that are less effective</i>
7.	<i>Success factors that make strong community organisations</i>
8.	<i>The natural life-cycle of a community organisation</i>

Key Findings

5. *Effective interventions that support and cultivate sustainability*

In 2003 improving the cultural competency of staff within the Department of Internal Affairs was a key issue driving the initiation of the strategy Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū.³⁵ In particular, it was identified that the skills and attributes of individual advisors are of primary importance in bringing about effective community development. Paulin (2007) asserts that the establishment of effective working relationships requires time, continuity of personnel within the public sector agency and succession planning where changes of key personnel are required.³⁶ According to evaluations by Oliver (2009) and Paulin, the strategy has increased the capability and confidence of the Department's staff to engage appropriately with Māori groups. Moreover, this has resulted in services becoming more accessible to whānau, hapū and iwi Māori.³⁷ Although not the same as claiming successful sustainable community development, these are necessary and logical steps towards sustainability.

According to Durie (2009), Whānau Ora is another recent policy initiative developed to assist government agencies to be more responsive and flexible in aligning with, and supporting, whānau, hapū and iwi Māori to achieve their aspirations.³⁸ This strategy aims to bring together the contributions from various sectors, such as community and social

³⁵ Department of Internal Affairs (2003) *Community Development Group's Strategy to assist Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū*, (Internal DMS document 671968DA – 26-06 11-26-38 28486DB – Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū final 26-06-2003) p. 6 Ensuring that community development group staff have the required capability to assist whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori to achieve their aspirations.

³⁶ Paulin, J (2007) *Sustainable Community Development Approaches: Views of Community Focus Group Participants*, commissioned by Department of Internal Affairs pp.31,32

³⁷ Department of Internal Affairs (2010) *Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū, working beside whānau, hapū and iwi Māori 2010-2013*, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, p.13, Oliver, P (2009) Report on an impacts evaluation of the Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū Strategy (Internal DMS document 03-12 15-25-07 1942326DA - Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū Strategy impacts evaluati#69A9A3.rtf), Paulin (2007)

³⁸ Ministry of Social Development (2009) *Whānau Ora: A whānau-centred approach to Māori wellbeing* A discussion paper by the Whānau Ora Taskforce. September 2009 (<http://www.nzdoctor.co.nz/media/109486/whanau-ora-discussion-document.doc>) pp. 1-4

development, justice, education, health and housing, to enable a coherent approach to whānau development.³⁹

Several authors, including Dale & Newman, Barraket, Eketone, Murphy & Cauchi, Moon, Trotman, Ife, Chile, Chile Munford & Shannon, Coney, Bradlow, Connelly, Loomis & Mahina, provide examples of current or past government interventions that have been identified as effective in supporting and cultivating sustainability. These include:

- integrated government approaches;
- recognition of and respect for diversity;
- policies and processes that facilitate participation, empowerment and resource sharing;
- commitment to partnership;
- structures that nurture innovation; and
- respect for community values.

Several of the principles underlying Whānau Ora align closely with these identified effective interventions. Where pertinent, they are referred to under the following headings.

An Integrated government approach

Applying an integrated government approach is seen as a government intervention that is effective in supporting and cultivating sustainability. Dale & Newman (2008) and Moon (2000) assert that the long-term viability of community organisations relies upon more than social capital (which is a necessary condition). To enable community organisations to achieve sustainability 'enlightened' government policy is needed at multiple entry points and levels.⁴⁰ They state that governments need to develop strategic integrated policy direction to be able to implement sustainable community development.⁴¹

According to Barraket (2006), having centrally coordinated government support for the sector that has legitimate status within government and is visible and accessible to the sector, is vital. Barraket concurs with Dale & Newman and Moon in stating that governments need to provide an appropriate regulatory environment that better targets regulation in proportion to the relative risks and administrative costs of the organisation (scaled to the size of the funding).

A number of compacts and accords have documented the commitment of governments and the community and voluntary sector to improve their relationship and to build their capacity to work together in partnership. Internationally there has been some movement towards this in the UK, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.⁴²

In 1998, the UK Home Office set up the *Compact on Relations Between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England*. This compact formed a framework for

³⁹ Ministry of Social Development (2009) pp. 1, 2

⁴⁰ Dale & Newman (2008) p.11

⁴¹ Dale & Newman (2008) p.19, Moon (2000) p.20

Barraket, J, Sector Sustainability Task Group (2006) *Community Sector Sustainability: Research Evidence and Public Policy Implications*, Victoria, Australia pp.4, 7-8, 16, 22

partnership and developed rules of engagement regulating government community relationships and recognising the independence of the sector.⁴³

The following year, the Canadian government developed an accord entitled *A Government of Canada/Voluntary Sector Joint Initiative Report of the Joint Tables*, which was formalised in 2001. This accord recognised the independence of the sector and shifted away from simply seeing the sector as an implementer of policy. Instead it recognised the need for the sector's contribution to policy design and evaluation.

In Australia, a federal level accord *The National Compact, Working Together* was signed in 2010.⁴⁴ Additionally, there have been a number of state-level partnership agreements. State protocols to regulate relationships have been documented with South Australia, Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania, New South Wales and Northern Territory. The main emphasis of these has been to encourage partnerships to recruit and develop leadership in the sector, to support retention of staff and to create workable development plans.⁴⁵

In 2001 the New Zealand Government signed the *Statement of Government Intentions for an Improved Community-Government Relationship* and, in 2003, the Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector was set up by the New Zealand Government as a streamlined point of contact to:

- address issues affecting the sector;
- raise the profile of the sector within government;
- build the capacity of government and the sector to work together;
- capture knowledge of the dimensions and contributions of the sector to social and economic well-being; and
- build sustainability, by ensuring social policy initiatives are efficiently coordinated and implemented.⁴⁶

In 2010, the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector established a steering group to oversee development of a relationship agreement to replace the 2001 agreement. The Kia Tutahi Relationship Accord focuses on the relationship between the Government and “communities” (which is a wider definition than the non-profit/third sector). This represents a shift away from the concept of an agreement between “parties”. The steering committee is currently reporting on its progress and recommending next steps.⁴⁷

Research on behalf of Te Puni Kokiri identified opportunities for progress to achieve better integration in the areas of collaboration in policy design, certainty and flexibility in resource

⁴³ Barraket (2006) pp.4, 7-8, 16, 22

⁴⁴ National Compact between the Australian Government and the Third Sector http://www.nationalcompact.gov.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Nat_compact.pdf

⁴⁵ Barraket (2006) pp.4, 7-8, 16, 22

⁴⁶ Barraket (2006) pp.4, 7-8, 16, 22, Government of New Zealand (2001) *Statement of Government Intentions for an Improved Community-Government Relationship* [online] available at <http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/documents/policies/government-intentions.pdf#search=%Statement%20of%20Government%20Intentions%20.nz%22>

Relationship Agreement between Communities of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Government of New Zealand [online] available at: <http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/work-programme/relationship-agreement/relat-agree-consultation.html>

allocation, capacity and capability building, evaluation and relationship building.⁴⁸ In FY 2009-10, the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector sought a new approach to services for Māori whānau to achieve better outcomes and get better value for the government's investment in the services they funded. One of the principles underlying Whānau Ora is the need for coherent service delivery; that is, the rationale for service intervention needs to consider wider whānau needs, rather than take an individual person's focus.⁴⁹

Recognition and respect for diversity

A recurrent theme in the literature is the need to recognise and respect the individual context of community organisations as uniquely located within their environmental, political and geographical circumstances. Consequently, many models are needed when implementing a sustainable community development approach. As Eketone explains of a project he studied:

“(it) could not be relocated ‘lock, stock and barrel’; it needed to be constructed using the resources available being mindful of the cultural and political climate. Groups may draw inspiration from others, but must construct their own reality and their own measure for evaluation.”⁵⁰

Murphy & Cauchi (2002) see effective community building as a complex pursuit requiring a thorough understanding of a particular community. As well as having a unique social, environmental and economic make-up, each community has a particular role and relationship with other communities within its region. Communities are also unique in how they relate to different levels of government. They have local politics, local protocols for decision-making (formal and informal), various personalities and their individual agendas. Thus, community organisations and public sector agencies need to take all these factors into consideration, rather than look for a “one size fits all” model.⁵¹

Moon emphasises the need to address issues within Māori communities, rather than attempting to stamp a uniform ‘solution’ on all Māori - as if the notion of ‘Māoridom’ were monolithic.⁵² When considering how to evaluate sustainable development, Trotman (2005) asserts that a holistic approach is needed as a goal for local place-based projects to identify what sustainability looks like in a particular place or community, and how to get

⁴⁸ International Research Institute for Māori & Indigenous Education, (2002) *Iwi and Māori Provider Success, A Research Report of Interviews with Successful Iwi and Māori Providers and Government Agencies*, Wellington, Te Puni Kokori, pp.iv-v Key opportunities were identified where the public sector and community organisations identified common issues.

⁴⁹ Ministry of Social Development (2009) *Whānau Ora: A whānau-centred approach to Māori wellbeing* pp.1-4

⁵⁰ Eketone (2006) pp.478-479 “The Tapuwae project in Dunedin has an almost identical public health message to the ‘Waka Taua’ project in the Waikato tribal area, but any attempt to replicate it identically would have been disastrous.”

⁵¹ Murphy, J & Cauchi J (2002) *What's Wrong with Community Building*, Local Government Community Services Association of Western Australia, Community Development Conference, Australia. p.11

⁵² Moon (2000) p.20

there. In her words, this involves participatory processes that explicitly acknowledge the interconnectedness of life.⁵³

Within the Auckland Sustainable Cities programme one example of a public sector agency response to support diversity was a case study of a programme to settle new migrants and refugees. The programme was a cross agency strategy that aimed at addressing barriers to accessing services and identifying ways to improve services for new migrants and refugees. An identified outcome of the programme was that it contributed to social cohesion in the region.⁵⁴

A number of authors, including Moon (2000), Ife (2003), Murphy (2001) and Eketone (2006), emphasise that public policy frameworks that support diversity, rather than prescribe approaches to generating income, enable communities to be free to innovate, to evolve, adapt and grow.⁵⁵

Participation, empowerment and resource sharing

Interventions effective in supporting and cultivating sustainability include policies and processes that facilitate participation, empowerment and resource sharing. Ife (2002) contends that governments need to ensure central and local government policy development is empowering of community organisations and transfers authority and resources to neighbourhoods.⁵⁶

Chile (2004) suggests that good practice from Government agencies includes the regularly review of their policies and practices to identify and challenge discriminatory practices. They should also evaluate, redress and monitor power and resource imbalances within their stakeholder communities.⁵⁷ In practice, this means developing regulatory settings that enable economic viability including adequate funding and working conditions to support the recruitment and retention of skilled staff in community organisations. Other key factors that facilitate participation and empowerment are:

- ensuring that processes by which community groups apply for, and obtain, funding are simple and accessible;
- reducing and minimising reporting compliance costs to the community sector (such as a standard chart of accounts to enable streamlined financial procedures); and

⁵³ Trotman (2005) pp.5-6

⁵⁴ Auckland Sustainable City Programme (2006) *Success in sustainability: Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme, a regional partnership with the NZ Sustainable Development Programme of Action*, Manukau City Council, pp.3-18

⁵⁵ Ife, J (2003) *PPP2 Conference – Keynote Address Strengthening Communities Conference, “People, Place, Partnerships”*, Sydney, April 28-29, Centre for Human Rights Education, Curtin University of Technology, Australia, Murphy, J (2001) *Communities Have the Answers So Don’t Forget Neighborhood Groups*, The Corporate Citizen, The Corporate Citizenship Research Unit, Deakin University, Melbourne, Eketone (2006)

⁵⁶ Ife (2002) p.4

⁵⁷ Chile, L, (2004) *Good Community Development Practice: An instrument for Building Community and Developing Society* NZCSS Conference Hamilton paper p.11

- committing to improved communication with the sector, such as providing constructive feedback on applications (for instance, giving information to groups as to why funding is or is not approved).

Two actions identified by Barraket are: improving governance within the voluntary sector by providing training and development; and disseminating data back to the sector to build community organisation's knowledge of their own performance.⁵⁸ However, Eketone and several other New Zealand authors (Durie, Loomis & Mahima, Moon, Chile) depart from Barraket's view of the validity of government or external interpretations of performance. These authors recognise

*"...that indigenous people often have a broader holistic viewpoint, not narrowly focused on the priorities of governments or social service agencies. Even when participating in specific, targeted interventions, it needs to be realised that people may get involved to meet their own agenda of advancement and development... These different agenda may also mean a different measure of 'success'."*⁵⁹

The Whānau Ora strategy embodies this aspect of effective interventions in empowering recipients to have some input into and control over the services they receive. A key principle underpinning Whānau Ora is the need for effective allocation of resources to attain the best results and intervention plans, including indicators to measure outcomes.⁶⁰

Public service commitment to partnership

Despite evidence of commitment from governments and the community and voluntary sector to work in partnership, Ife argues that community development represents a direct challenge to the conventional wisdom of modern societies that accept top-down structures and practices as a matter of course.⁶¹ Tension arises from governments' responsibility to ensure taxpayer funds are expended according to the accepted mores and values of their elector base, yet community development can sometimes require investment in ideas that entail risk and innovation. Ife implies that governments' traditionally conservative and restrained approaches have favoured government controlled programmes that, while safe and accountable, may not render an effective solution.

To successfully support and cultivate sustainable community development Ife maintains that governments need to adopt a more facilitative role, rather than assuming leadership and control. They need to develop a bipartisan approach to community problem solving. Sustainable community development work can become a genuine dialogue about power, knowledge, wisdom and change. Effective interventions work to empower local community members to validate and use their own experience, knowledge, expertise and skills to work towards change.⁶²

⁵⁸ Barraket (2006) pp.17-20

⁵⁹ Eketone (2006) p.478

⁶⁰ Ministry of Social Development (2009) pp.1-4

⁶¹ Ife (2002) p.117

⁶² Ife (2002) p.118

Dale (2008) points to projects and programmes with extended networks and relationships, both with local communities and across government agencies, as evidence of sustainable development. This highlights a key point that it is not possible for community organisations to operate sustainably in isolation.

“No one community has the capacity to implement sustainable community development in isolation from other communities, as communities are a nested system of embedded community networks at increasingly larger scales.”⁶³

Dale also states that in an increasingly global economy, community development is interdependent.⁶⁴ Confronted with dynamic political policy settings, the role public sector agencies may usefully play is to assist the sector to develop the capacity to respond to changing government requirements.⁶⁵

When seeking to redress inequalities, public sector agencies need to apply a broad analysis to considering why certain communities are disadvantaged. An essential part of this is for communities to define their own needs.⁶⁶ Whānau Ora is an example of a holistic policy intervention for Māori that embeds this principle in practice, because it recognises that current approaches to the delivery of government-funded services and initiatives to whānau create barriers to achieving the best possible results.

The strategy recognises that while government funded services and initiatives are important, whānau, hapū and iwi also have critical and distinct roles to play in facilitating whānau ora. These roles, relationships and responsibilities are based on whakapapa and Māori connectivity and lie outside government.”⁶⁷

Chile, Munford & Shannon (2006) and Coney (2004) contend that the voice of those with lived experience provides specialist knowledge and expertise. They state that public sector commitment to partnership requires advocacy to create space for those with lived experience to integrate their local knowledge and expertise to enhance the design and delivery of services and programmes.⁶⁸ True partnership, in their view, requires involvement of stakeholders who are service recipients when resources are being allocated and services developed. According to Coney and Chile involvement of service recipients in the prioritising of decisions will lead to more legitimate allocation, including shifting

⁶³ Dale & Newman (2008) p.9

⁶⁴ Dale & Newman (2008) p.9

⁶⁵ Barraket (2006) pp. 17-20

⁶⁶ Ife (2003) p.4, Moon (2000), Eketone (2006), Bradlow (2007)

⁶⁷ Ministry of Social Development (2009) pp. 1, 2

⁶⁸ Chile, L, Munford R & Shannon P. (2006) *Editorial: Community Development Practice in a Bicultural Context: Aotearoa New Zealand*, Community Development Journal, Vol. 41, No 4, p.404, Coney S. (2004) *Effective Consumer Voice and Participation for New Zealand, A Systematic Review of the Evidence* Discussion Document, Auckland: New Zealand Guidelines Group pp. 27-34, Ife (2002) p.5

resources to those with the poorest well-being and the least access. This bi-partisan approach leads to improved quality of services, better policy and decisions.⁶⁹ The New Zealand Government has recognised that it has an obligation to accord with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and build long-term sustainable relationships with the tangata whenua predicated on transparency, trust and good conduct.⁷⁰ Both Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū and Whānau Ora are strategies developed to redress inequalities within New Zealand in accord with the framework for Māori development identified by Durie.⁷¹ Within this framework, Durie identified the aims of Māori development as being to facilitate Māori access to New Zealand society and the economy, and to enhance Māori lives, society and knowledge.

Structures that nurture innovation

The need for innovative solutions has come about with growing recognition of the inadequacy of traditional measures to address pressing problems within communities. Ife refers to the need for a paradigm shift.⁷² Acceptance of a paradigm is normally a matter of unstated and often unconscious consensus. Ife argues that the current paradigm is inadequate in addressing the complex problems facing communities. According to him, a new way of thinking about the world, how it works and the place of humanity within it, is needed.⁷³

Interventions that are effective in supporting and cultivating sustainability need to look “outside the box” for solutions.⁷⁴ Public sector agencies need to ensure a sufficiently flexible environment to support innovation. In contrast to Ife, Connelly (2007) proposes a less radical approach, advising public sector agencies to incorporate the beliefs and values of local stakeholders into policy and regulatory frameworks, learning from and building on incremental successes.⁷⁵

Research on behalf of Te Puni Kokiri has found that overarching facilitators of success for community organisations include policy that provides a stable yet flexible funding environment and collaborative relationships with other organisations and agencies to ensure that providers are not competing with one another within competitive funding and policy regimes. This research supports initiatives that foster greater collaboration and

⁶⁹ Coney (2004) pp.27-34

⁷⁰ Government of New Zealand (2001), IRI (2002) p.v

⁷¹ Durie, Mason (2000) *Contemporary Māori Development: Issues and Broad Direction*, Working Paper No 7/2000, Development Studies University of Waikato

⁷² Ife (2002) pp.35-37 A paradigm means the world view, the set of assumptions, ideas, understandings and values (usually unstated) within which theory, practice, knowledge and action are conceptualised. The current dominant paradigm emphasises objective scientific rationality while undervaluing subjective experience, intuition and other forms of knowledge to address pressing problems within communities. Within the social sciences, the critique of positivism and empiricism has shown them to be logically inconsistent and inadequate in dealing with the complex interaction of social phenomena.

⁷³ Ife (2002) pp.35-37

⁷⁴ Murphy (2001)

⁷⁵ Connelly (2007) pp.8,17

coordination in policy development processes, and supports opportunities that place primacy on Māori driven development priorities.⁷⁶

Whānau Ora is an example of a strategy that supports and nurtures innovation. A principle underpinning Whānau Ora is that skilled practitioners are needed who are able to go beyond crisis intervention and build competent and innovative strategies that will contribute to whānau empowerment.⁷⁷

Where the process of sustainable community development leads to 'failure', it needs to be recognised that development has occurred and valuable learning may be gleaned. As bankruptcy and liquidation help protect entrepreneurial activity from the full consequences of failure, so too the community and voluntary sector needs tools to enable innovative solutions to be tried without the consequences of failure being entirely destructive.

Respect for community values

Another key aspect of effective interventions that support and nurture sustainable community development is that community values are respected and upheld. Ife maintains that communities know their own issues and through the course of community development processes will, hopefully, be able to resolve their own problems. He cautions that public sector agencies often pass over local skills and grounded local knowledge in favour of outside expertise. Likewise, the temptation exists for public sector agencies to attempt to impose on communities' processes that had been successfully used in different contexts.

Taking a process approach respects the community's ability to find their own solutions. Ife cautions that by being outcomes-focused, many programmes of community development are condemned to irrelevance or failure. Instead, for interventions to be effective in supporting and cultivating sustainability, public sector agencies need to listen to communities and value the knowledge, wisdom and expertise of local people. They also need to trust that the community knows what it wants, and trust the process rather than the outcome.⁷⁸ The case studies reviewed across the literature suggest that a process-focus does not diminish the attainment of outcomes, but rather creates an open and flexible environment to enhance the outcomes achieved. When analysing the Tapuwae project, Eketone explains:

"...that the 'processes' of a Māori community action project may indeed be just as important as the 'project outputs'. Outputs suit funders, government departments and academics because they are measurable and bring about finality, conclusions and results. Life however is not like that; death is. Life is about living: it is about journeys, it is about experiences, and most importantly, from a human point of view, it is about relationships. So too with communities; they inform [a projects] processes and enable its outcomes."⁷⁹

⁷⁶ IRI (2002) pp.ii-iv

⁷⁷ Ministry of Social Development (2009) pp.1-4

⁷⁸ Ife (2002) pp.4, 102-108

⁷⁹ Eketone (2006) p.479

Several authors promote a process approach; and yet have been able to demonstrate outcomes for sustainable development projects they have researched. For example, Eketone is able to pinpoint broad outcomes, such as a significant impact on attitudes, adherence to tikanga, bringing together a broader section of the Māori community, strengthened social networks, redevelopment of a disused community centre and increased uptake of a traditional Māori physical activity (waka ama).⁸⁰ Loomis & Mahina identify meaningful outcomes for iwi involved in a Māori sustainable development project, including facilitating iwi planning development, identifying resources available and needed, involving wider iwi members on the development journey and building understandings of sustainable development that incorporate indigenous perspectives.⁸¹

Evaluation findings of regional case studies within the Department of Internal Affairs where staff practice the principles incorporated in Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū confirm that the strategy validates unique ways of working with Māori communities.⁸² The advantage of this approach is that it focuses upon uniquely Māori needs. Because of this cultural focus it has been able to highlight and seek to address gaps in the department's community development.⁸³

Whānau Ora principles recognise interventions as being most successful when a whole of whānau approach is taken. This means the success of interventions needs to be measured by the enhanced well-being of the whole whānau, not only by the well-being of individual members. Another principle of effective interventions is that whānau integrity is respected. In effect, this means that interventions of worth seek out positive whānau attributes and use those to address and lift whānau morale and capabilities.⁸⁴

6. Interventions that are less effective

A number of public sector interventions were identified in the literature as ineffective and even counter to sustainability. Characteristics of these types of interventions include:

- rhetoric about empowerment in the face of imposed external agendas;
- limited focus on communities' aspirations and processes;
- economic models that fail to value human, natural, social and cultural capital;
- criterion that act as barriers to access.

⁸⁰ Loomis & Mahina (2003) pp.399, 407, Eketone (2006) pp.476-478

⁸¹ Loomis & Mahina (2003) p. 407

⁸² Department of Internal Affairs (2006) p.10

⁸³ Department of Internal Affairs (2006) p.10

⁸⁴ Ministry of Social Development (2009) pp.1-4

Rhetoric about empowerment/imposed external agendas

A recurrent theme throughout the literature is the claim that public sector agencies talk about empowerment, but then impose priorities, policies and processes on communities rather than giving communities power to control their own decisions.

“... governments seem to believe that power is a flexible commodity that they can give and then remove as the situation suits. For example, while governments through their community-building policies maintain that they aim to empower our communities, they remind us regularly about how powerless we really are when they either ignore or dismiss our opinions on local issues.”⁸⁵

The disempowerment of communities can also take the form of tight government funding frameworks and timeframes that do not take into account the timeframe that might be appropriate for the community. Paulin’s research found that many organisations face unrealistic expectations regarding timeframes. She elaborates that public sector agencies and communities “need to be realistic about what community projects can be expected to achieve in three years”⁸⁶ and with community brokers employed in part-time positions.

“Such relationships take time to establish, and community brokers and project coordinating groups alike require good communication and negotiation skills to make these relationships effective.”⁸⁷

Paulin identified the importance of the relationship and articulation of the role of government community workers with community groups leading projects. Expectations of community groups in particular need to be gauged appropriately by government officials.⁸⁸

Inadequate communication and unrealistic expectations, particularly around timeframes, can portray a lack of understanding about the essence and motivation of small community groups.⁸⁹ Murphy (2001) also notes that the imposition of an ‘outside expert’ who does not understand local issues and problems and is not motivated by a passion for the community can make public sector intervention ineffectual.⁹⁰ Where a community lacks the capacity to undertake development work, intervention could be targeted at building capacity.

Limited focus on communities’ aspirations and processes

Ife criticises public service agencies’ pursuit of their own objectives and outcomes when, to community members, development can be more about the process and the achievement of their community’s aspirations. He asserts that the pursuit of sustainability is about a journey of discovery rather than a planned arrival.

⁸⁵ Murphy & Cauchi (2002) p.3

⁸⁶ Paulin (2007) p.16

⁸⁷ Paulin (2007) p.16

⁸⁸ Paulin (2007) p.16

⁸⁹ Murphy & Cauchi (2002) pp.5-6,11

⁹⁰ Murphy (2001)

“In this sense, community development is a more chaotic, unpredictable and post-modern activity than most planners or managers would like, and does not fit neatly, if at all, into conventional bureaucratic accountability guidelines.”⁹¹

Ife counters arguments about accountability for public sector money by arguing that a process approach will lead to the most efficient and effective outcomes that will be owned by, and optimal for, the community.⁹²

Narrow economic models

Another ineffectual and potentially counterproductive characteristic of public sector intervention is the over-application of a neo-classical economic approach⁹³. This can become a mismatch with cultures that do not share the same historical condition that gave rise to ‘mainstream’ economics. The presumption that what is valued in mainstream economics for example, is also valued amongst indigenous peoples can be confronting and patronising.⁹⁴ The neo-liberal economic paradigm tends to put aside social and historical conditions of local communities that have influenced their socio-economic positioning.⁹⁵

For example, Connelly believes requiring organisations to make efficiency gains by using modern technology can be ineffectual and unhelpful. Technological innovation does not necessarily mean that community organisations will be more sustainable, and does not challenge the status-quo and existing power relationships. While easier to implement than some other innovations, Connelly notes that technological innovations may not necessarily address individual consumption patterns that are at the core of unsustainable communities.⁹⁶ Although technological development brings benefits, Ife argues that costs can outweigh these.⁹⁷

Bradlow cites Chile (2006) who identifies the implementation of community development programmes by the State (such as the Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme) and is critical of the negative impact on effective government intervention of inconsistent approaches that lack clarity.⁹⁸ Bradlow goes on to say that:

⁹¹ Ife (2002) p.2

⁹² Ife (2002) pp.119-123

⁹³ Refer to a more detailed discussion of paradigms under *Structures That Nurture Innovation* on page 22

⁹⁴ Moon (2000) pp. 13-18 He claims that Māori have yet to emerge from such a dependent subordinate position within the Pakeha economy.

⁹⁵ Moon (2000) pp.13-18

⁹⁶ Connelly (2007) p.13, Ife (2002) p.28

⁹⁷ Ife (2002) p.28

⁹⁸ Bradlow (2007) pp.27-28

*Shifts in government approaches, particularly in relation to financial investment in Community Development processes, has not, in the past, been able to provide a sustainable source of support.*⁹⁹

Interventions that stimulate community groups to form business partnerships to 'chase policy dollars' are less effective and can undermine the diversity of the sector over time by privileging large organisations. Whilst government might be looking for efficiency in the way it interacts (including contracting with) community organisations, Murphy & Cauchi (2002) point out that larger institutions tend to be more successful in stimulating entrepreneurial activity outside their 'core business' as alternative income strategies in the face of under-funding. Evidence points to concentrated advantage in larger organisations and metropolitan areas suggesting the need for caution in privileging such types of activity to the exclusion of others.¹⁰⁰ Instead, proactive measures to value the significant contribution of smaller institutions are needed to maintain the diversity of the sector.

*Sometimes there are no realistic alternatives to government funding for good community projects, especially those involving larger amounts of money. It does not make sense for governments to reject potentially good community projects or to discontinue supporting very successful ones after the end of a limited period of funding if the community group has been unable to locate an alternative source of financial support... small community groups and their projects should not be seen as inadequate and ineligible for government support because of their inability to fundraise.*¹⁰¹

Criterion that act as barriers to access

Constricting criteria such as confusing language and unnecessarily complicated funding applications can exclude grassroots organisations that have less familiarity and confidence with government processes. Some funding practices impose too high a burden especially on smaller community organisations that do not have infrastructure, people resources or time to manage the complexity of proving eligibility for funding.¹⁰²

Murphy & Cauchi (2002) and Barraket (2006) warn that adopting a competitive funding model and an absence of full-cost funding of services can especially disadvantage smaller community organisations. Making community groups compete against each other does damage to community spirit and erodes trust between groups in the community.¹⁰³ The focus by government agencies away from full-cost funding has led to inadequate funding for infrastructure. Reallocation of core funding has resulted in a reduction in systemic advocacy activities and collaboration within the community sector.¹⁰⁴ One of the core stated commitments of the UK Compact 1998 was that government would honour the full

⁹⁹ Bradlow (2007) pp.27-28

¹⁰⁰ Barraket pp.18

¹⁰¹ Murphy & Cauchi (2002) p.11

¹⁰² Murphy & Cauchi (2002) pp.5-6, 11

¹⁰³ Murphy & Cauchi (2002) p.6

¹⁰⁴ Barraket (2006) p. 17(Rawsthorne 2005 research)

costs of public services delivered by the community sector. However, this was a notable area of non-compliance in a 2005 review of the Compact.¹⁰⁵

Another issue resulting from the shift away from full-cost funding is that of workforce casualisation. Insecure funding jeopardises the retention of a sustainable paid workforce in the face of limited income security and career progression.

“Often governments have been too hasty to abandon community programmes when they fail to achieve expected outcomes within unreasonably short timeframes.”¹⁰⁶

Connelly et al believe that the shift to project driven rather than systemic approaches to decision-making can result in weak linkages between sustainable community development and community infrastructure investments.¹⁰⁷ They attribute this not to a lack of research, but to a lack of congruence in political will to implement sustainable community development.¹⁰⁸

Barraket also states that where community organisations face multiple agencies funding them for projects, they have had to deal with growing complexity and attendant costs in the regulatory relationship. Often government agencies require different and inconsistent reporting and accountability requirements. Frequent changes in funding regimes associated with changes in government or short-term outcomes place heavy compliance costs upon community organisations.¹⁰⁹ Another barrier is procurement processes that lack transparency and lead naïve newcomers to the community and voluntary sector to underbid for contracts.¹¹⁰

7. Success factors that make strong community organisations

The literature review revealed a number of elements that make strong resilient and self-reliant community organisations. These success factors include:

- cultures that sustain robust relationships;
- cultures that employ innovative and strengths based approaches;
- cultures that embrace and value diversity;
- cultures that nurture critical engagement; and
- cultures that embrace self determination.

¹⁰⁵ Barraket (2006) p.17 (Home Office (1998) Compact on Relations Between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England [online] available at http://www.thecompact.org.uk/module_images/COMPACT%20command%20paper.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Murphy & Cauchi (2002) p.10

¹⁰⁷ Connelly et.al. (2007) p.4 Project driven approaches often tend to treat infrastructure development and renewal in isolation. Although infrastructure planning requires medium to long-term planning horizons, access to funding is often incremental and piecemeal. According to the authors, infrastructure decisions and sustainable community development are crucially linked.

¹⁰⁸ Connelly et.al. (2007) pp.8-9

¹⁰⁹ Barraket (2006) pp.17-20, Murphy & Cauchi (2002) p.10

¹¹⁰ Barraket (2006) pp.17-20

The following paragraphs elaborate upon each of these aspects and where appropriate draw upon examples from the literature that demonstrate these features.

Robust relationships

Ife (2003) claims that strong and resilient community organisations are clear in their purpose and have transparent philosophical values and a collective approach across the community.¹¹¹ Bryant (2006) says that because of the strength of their relationships the ‘associational life’ of the community is valued as important. Relationships are built through participation and a philosophy of working ‘with’ rather than ‘for’ community members.¹¹² Dale notes that strong community organisations include people with social capital ties to outside resources, to decision makers and to authority figures.¹¹³ The ability to communicate externally about their organisation with diverse stakeholders and sectors beyond the community itself is another key success factor.

An example that demonstrates the importance of relationships is the Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme. Key to the success of this programme is that it involves a partnership with local councils, regional councils and government agencies to contribute to the Auckland region’s sustainable development programme of action. Findings from case studies within this programme are that agencies need to plan and act with the benefit of local knowledge (key local people on board).

Resourcing ‘soft’ infrastructure is important, strong networks and trusting relationships are key collaboration ingredients. Another finding is that sustainable development becomes meaningful to people as expressed and experienced in their own place, their own community and their own lifestyle. Additionally, partners each bring their own agenda to the table and these need to be managed along with the ‘joint agenda’ if the collaboration is to succeed.¹¹⁴

The Project Twin Streams: Waitakere project provided a meaningful way to explore issues of sustainability at a community level through strengthening people’s relationship to their environment and their sense of participation, belonging and ownership.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Ife (2003) p.5

¹¹² Bryant, S L, (2006) *Community Foundations The Asset-based Development of an Australian Community Organisation as a Foundational Source for Sustainable Community Development*, A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, School of Management, RMIT University, pp. 34-35,37, 54

Associational life refers to the culture nurtured within strengths-based community organisations that empowers people who are members of that community to take control of their own lives, taking responsibility for their own needs and manage their own welfare, resources and direction.

¹¹³ Dale & Newman (2008) p.9

¹¹⁴ ASCP (2006) p.18

¹¹⁵ ASCP (2006) pp.3-18, This project sought to reinstate healthy streams at the heart of the Waitakere community through community planting and restoration activities that increased people’s connection to their waterways.

Innovative strengths-based approaches

Another element that makes community organisations strong, resilient and self-reliant is their ability to innovate around a strengths-based approach to community development work. Bryant notes that features of this are where organisations build from what exists in the community, and educate and empower members to build from their strengths to become their own agents of change.¹¹⁶ These organisations are successful in developing effective local collaborations that governance authority may be devolved to.

Connelly states that another aspect of successful innovative strengths-based communities is that they have people who are key community stakeholders who lead by example in setting a sustainable agenda. These organisations are often pragmatic rather than 'ideologically 'purist' applying the 'pretty good solution' and using their knowledge to link community problems with sustainable solutions.¹¹⁷ This pragmatic approach extends to the strategic use of educational, research and technical information.

Dale & Newman state that sustainable community organisations apply a multi-faceted community development approach including all elements of capital (economic, social, cultural, environmental, human). Thus, where opportunities arise such as a progressive policy development environment, they are able to take advantage. For example, councils or governments who view the need for infrastructure maintenance or rebuilding as an opportunity to invest in sustainable development.¹¹⁸ Such opportunities were exemplified in the Waitakere Twin Streams project and may also arise in central and local government responses to the rebuilding of Christchurch city after the 2010 and 2011 Christchurch earthquakes.

Wylter (2008) elaborates on innovative strengths-based approaches within the UK in terms of advancing assets for communities through trusts. Wylter provides examples within the UK of a fast growing movement of 450 community-led organisations that use self-help, social enterprise, and community ownership to bring about long-term social, economic and environmental renewal, and transform their communities for good. The Development Trusts Association has enabled community ownership of empty and derelict buildings, transforming them into busy workspaces, training rooms, conference centres, community run shops, restaurants, affordable housing, parks, community woodlands, farms and allotments.¹¹⁹

Valuing diversity

Successful innovative strengths-based communities foster and nurture diversity. They function to express the life of their communities in ways that reflect their local cultural, economic, social and political position. For this reason, according to Ife, formulated

¹¹⁶ Bryant, (2006) Pp 34-35,37, 54

¹¹⁷ Connelly, S, M Roseland, S Markey et.al. (2008) *Strategic Sustainability: Seizing the Opportunities of Canada's Infrastructure Deficit*, SFU Centre for Sustainable Community Development/ICLEI/Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources, Infrastructure Canada, Canada, pp.9-10

¹¹⁸ Dale & Newman (2008) pp.8-11

¹¹⁹ Wylter, S (2008) *A history of community asset ownership*, Development Trusts Association, UK pp.1, 59-60

prescriptions are unhelpful and tend to be irrelevant and underpinned by assumptions of superiority traceable to colonialism.¹²⁰

Ife puts forward the idea that validating diversity contributes to the health, richness and dynamism within the community. Communities that are able to find their own local solutions and take a pluralistic approach are more resilient in the face of adversity.¹²¹

Self determination

Community development hinges on the principle of self-reliance and the notion that people should be able to determine their own future. To achieve this, community groups need to explore and value the availability of local knowledge, culture and resources. Key aspects of this are valuing local skills and local processes. Research commissioned for Te Puni Kokiri found that within the New Zealand context iwi and Māori community organisations have dreams, visions and goals revolving around tino rangatiratanga and mana motuhake (self-determination). Key aspects of success include being able to determine one's own future and being guided by the vision handed down by ancestors. "today we are in a position to reclaim our own mana motuhake, it is about tino rangatiratanga, having a say, having control over our own affairs."¹²² Moon emphasises that:

- Māori economic development must entail recognition of te Reo and tikanga as non-negotiable foundations;
- development goals must be defined by those for whom it is intended; and
- whānau and hapū must become the lead agencies with government involvement in a supporting role.¹²³

Moon is less optimistic that public sector agencies have been supportive in enabling Māori to achieve sustainability.

Connelly et.al. (2008) state that self-determination entails structures and processes that develop organically from the community itself, rather than in response to prescriptive policy frameworks. Resilient and strong organisations facilitate the collective ownership of ideas and reflective action so that the local power of community members is enhanced and they retain informed ownership. While owning the initiatives, they also manage the risks, to bridge the divide between planning and implementation.¹²⁴

According to Bryant, organisations that nurture self-determination acknowledge the power imbalance created between "expert" and "client"¹²⁵ The Craik Sustainable Living Project, Canada, (2000) is one example in the literature cited by Connelly et.al. of a community driven self-reliant initiative to provide energy efficient employment opportunities whilst working towards community transformation.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Ife (2002) pp.200-216

¹²¹ Ife (2002)

¹²² IRI (2002) pp.40-41

¹²³ Moon (2000) p.23

¹²⁴ Connelly (2008) pp.4-5

¹²⁵ Bryant, (2006) Pp 34-35,37, 54

¹²⁶ Connelly 2008 pp.3-5

The Whānau Ora principle ngā kaupapa tuku iho recognises that whānau are part of a wider Māori system and that for Maori health and well-being is contingent upon the opportunity to participate fully in society and te ao Māori.¹²⁷ This strategy supports and cultivates community organisations that foster and nurture self-determination.

Findings from Bryant suggest that community organisations with an asset-base provide strong support for sustainable community development. These organisations possess, or can purchase, the tools and resources they need to sustain their ongoing development. Such organisations develop a “climate of hope” that all have something to contribute, that change is possible, that participating will create opportunities and that ongoing involvement is necessary.¹²⁸

Critical engagement

Strong resilient organisations nurture a culture that addresses social, personal, cultural and structural constraints to people’s growth and liberation.¹²⁹ These organisations use demonstration projects to raise awareness, build capacity and engage broad participation. One aspect of how they do this is by engaging non-traditional partners and promoting and motivating participation - engagement and awareness raising. Such organisations develop consensus, shared values, and are characterised by being able to engage broad support including regional cooperation.

For example, the Auckland Sustainable Cities project, Progress Papakura, sought to enhance community engagement and involvement in the council’s long term planning process.¹³⁰ This project looked to engage young people through a demonstration project based in Northcote. Successful outcomes of the project have been the development of strong leadership skills within young people, engagement in decision-making processes and collaborations to improve services for children and young people within the community.¹³¹

In summary, sustainable community organisations use knowledge to link their evolution from loose ad hoc networks to successful not-for-profit social enterprises dependent upon key external resources at critical points. They may obtain access to financial capital or credit as seed money to build local capacity or to meet objectives such as building strategic alliances external to the community. They may obtain assistance such as a waiver from government agencies in paying rent or salaries in the initial years of establishment. Some may develop in-kind support from quasi government agencies such as universities.¹³² Key features of their success are their widely networked and robust relationships, their openness to diversity, their innovative and strengths-based approach, their self-determination and their ability to engage their members in critically aware participation.

¹²⁷ Ministry of Social Development (2009) pp.1-4

¹²⁸ Bryant (2006) pp 34-35,37, 54

¹²⁹ Bryant, (2006) pp 34-35,37, 54

¹³⁰ ASCP (2006) pp.3-18

¹³¹ ASCP (2006) pp.3-18

¹³² Dale & Newman (2008) pp.15-16

8. The natural life-cycle of a community organisation

A challenge posed by the question of what defines the natural life cycle of a community organisation is how it fits with two of the defining purposes of sustainable community development; namely fostering diversity and agency.¹³³ Community organisations are diverse and defined by their complex location within a particular community.

A Canadian organisation (the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurial Leadership) has published a guide to the stages of the community life cycle. They depict the Community Life Cycle as a matrix in four stages:

Pre-Community or Chaos Phase

The community is undeveloped, there is limited sharing of resources or recognition of the value of a community.

Emergence Phase

The community exists but in an unfocused stage. It has significant problems, making anything but survival and fulfilling short-term needs impossible.

Vision Phase

The community recognises the importance of vision and long-term planning and is able to move in this direction.

Actualisation Phase

The community is highly developed and encourages learning and innovation while respecting history and culture. The community shares resources with others and regularly monitors itself, continuing to enhance its capacity.¹³⁴

The guide proposes that community organisations are not static but pass through stages and phases of the cycle in incremental moves with progress being uneven and, importantly, non-linear.

Allowing structures and processes to evolve organically from within the community, and enabling communities to determine and lead their own development are commonly discussed examples of how public sector agencies may support sustainable community development.

There is no simple definable 'natural life cycle' for community organisations. Community organisations must define their own 'natural' life cycle that will reflect the diversity and individuality of each within the sector. Murphy argues that the informality and spontaneity of small neighbourhood groups are significant strengths because they encourage ordinary community people to become interested and involved.¹³⁵

¹³³ Bhattacharyya (2004) pp.12-13, Bhattacharyya defines agency as the creation and promotion of people's choices and capabilities through the generation of critical consciousness to own and define their own problems and take active measures to solve them.

¹³⁴ Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurial Leadership, *Community Life Cycle Matrix* (V.1.2), www.bankofideas.com.au/Newsletter/Downloads/Community_Life_Cycle_Matrix.pdf sourced 14/2/11

¹³⁵ Murphy (2001) pp.3-4

Conclusion

This literature review explored the definition of sustainability in the context of the community and voluntary sector and public sector interventions that may be effective in supporting and cultivating sustainability. The review findings show sustainability to be a value-laden concept encompassing the ideas of:

- holism;
- interdependence;
- diversity;
- natural limits;
- responsible use of resources;
- non-material sources of happiness;
- equilibrium and balance;
- respect for self and others;
- equity;
- self-sustainability; and
- self-determination.

Problematically, each of these ideas can take on different meanings, some more so than others.

According to Bhattacharyya the purpose of community development is to create and sustain a satisfying life. For Loomis, Ife, Bhattacharyya, Bradlow and others sustainability is the means to an end of promoting change from unsustainable practices to benefit present and future generations. Connelly et al emphasise First Nations community development as being rooted in empowerment rather than merely new services or infrastructure.

There are some gaps in the literature review. For example, Bullen (2007) discusses community development models and ideas but does not provide any information about concepts of sustainability and how those in the community and voluntary sector might achieve this. He defines how different models of community development might operate at the intersect between the community and government sectors but with no analysis of the ways that different models might best serve either sector. Murphy & Cauchi (2002) focus on what is preventing groups from being sustainable rather than what makes them sustainable.¹³⁶

Neighbourhood organisations are involved in addressing a wide range of social, environmental and economic issues in their communities. They play a vital role in developing and maintaining community well-being because by bringing people together they create community spirit and optimism about what can be accomplished through working co-operatively. These groups are able to generate a significant degree of energy, enthusiasm, creativity and commitment among local people.

¹³⁶ Bullen, P. (2007) *Community Development Models and Language*, Draft paper, downloaded from <http://www.mapl.com.au/ideas/blog2.htm>,

Murphy, J and Cauchi J (2002) *What's Wrong with Community Building*, Local Government Community Services Association of Western Australia, Community Development Conference, Australia

In the New Zealand context, Durie asserts that sustainable community development for Māori must be based on values derived from te ao Māori (the Māori world). Other authors such as Moon, Eketone, Loomis and Mahima support this position.

The review findings identified a number of effective public sector interventions that support and cultivate sustainability. Key examples include: an integrated government approach; recognition of and respect for diversity; policies and processes that facilitate participation, empowerment and resource sharing; a public service commitment to partnership; structures that nurture innovation; and respect for community values.

Both Te Whakamotuhaketanga Hapū and Whānau Ora are strategies that incorporate many aspects of effective public sector interventions within their policy frameworks. For example, they incorporate approaches that seek to provide integrated responses; respect diversity and community values; facilitate participation, empowerment and resource sharing; and work in a bipartisan and innovative ways.

Connelly et al (2007) provide a useful summary of the strategies needed to support sustainable community development. These include:

- embracing and reinforcing the culture and unique identity of the community;
- building the capacity of decision-makers and stakeholders to engage in integrated decision-making; and
- providing financial support to targeted stakeholders to address inequities in opportunity and to enable participation in infrastructure process training.

A number of important themes emerged on how public sector agencies can best work with and support communities, including:

- being culturally competent;
- respecting the self-determination, values and diversity of communities;
- applying a holistic approach to development (including economic development);
- nurturing innovation;
- reducing barriers to access;
- bringing a bi-partisan approach;
- facilitating participation and empowerment; and
- working in an integrated way across government departments.

Public sector agencies need to understand and manage the complexity of stakeholder relationships and to incorporate underlying local beliefs and assumptions into policy and regulatory frameworks and tools. It will be necessary to learn from and build upon incremental successes.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Connelly (2007) p.8, 17

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Appendix 1: Methodology

The search terms entered to find relevant articles included sustainability, sustainability in community organisation, interventions to support sustainability, community development, Māori community development, sustainable community development and sustainable Māori community development.

Information Sources

The articles reviewed came from the following sources:

- a number of online databases including the Department's subscription research databases, the A to Z of Journal Titles, Index New Zealand – National Library of New Zealand, Australia/New Zealand Reference Centre and even Google Scholar.
- the websites of the Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector, Association of Non Governmental Organisations of Aotearoa and Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand.
- references provided by the North/West Team, Service Delivery and Operations and the Strategic Analysis and Information Team, Policy Regulatory and Ethnic Affairs
- the Department of Internal Affairs Document Management System

The searches yielded a broad array of articles spanning a wide range of topics under the generic heading of sustainability (topics included health and social issues such as mental health, sexual abuse and domestic violence, agriculture and food production including third world countries.)

This literature review focuses upon sustainability in the context of the community and voluntary sector. Articles were selected according to their relevance to the terms of reference of the project. Key criteria for selection were a focus upon community development – where possible with specific application to New Zealand. Broader or peripheral issues were excluded. The selection criteria were confined to the most current literature dated from 2000 onwards. The review encompassed thirty articles and additional relevant documentation such as government strategies, compacts, reports and evaluations. The resources to undertake this review were limited, therefore, rather than invest in an exhaustive review the quality and match of the literature with the terms of reference were limited to those considered most appropriate. Further research could be undertaken if warranted. The timeframe for the review was from November 2010 to March 2011.