Review of selected New Zealand government-funded community development programmes

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Executive Summary

1. This paper draws on the evaluations of some government-funded community development programmes undertaken in New Zealand in recent years to gain insights into the practices adopted by funders and community stakeholders, and the lessons learned.

2. This paper begins with an overview of community development practice in New Zealand – the historical context, and practice today. It analyses five recent government-funded programme evaluations from community development programmes in New Zealand (details of these are in Appendix 1). Two of the programmes were targeted specifically to whānau, hapū and iwi; and two involved the Department of Internal Affairs (the Department). In addition, a meta-analysis of ten government-funded community action projects delivered in New Zealand was reviewed.

3. The evaluations were reviewed on: the principles underpinning the approach, outcomes sought, key achievements, and factors that enabled or inhibited the success of the programme. The programmes achieved outcomes in a range of areas such as enhanced levels of social capital, strengthened relationships and leadership, improved access to services, and increased capacity in communities.

4. While the programmes reviewed achieved outcomes, some of which were programme specific, and others more generic in nature, significantly, the government did not provide baseline funding for any of the five programmes examined beyond the 'pilot' or 'trial' stage. The reasons for this are not explicit in the material reviewed. Several of the evaluations noted that at the end of the funding cycle it was evident that projects had no concrete plans for sustaining initiatives in the longer term.

5. A number of lessons were identified from the literature reviewed, relating to:
   - community engagement – a shared vision is an essential foundation for community development, and adequate time should be allowed for the vision to be developed
   - funder / community relationship – relationships based on principles of partnership facilitate effective community development, traditional approaches to contracting may need to be revised to support effective partnering
   - clear roles and responsibilities – clarity around roles is vital and needs to be established early; direct relationships between the funder and community group can assist with role clarity
   - planning and outcomes development – realistic goals need to be set, outcomes and goals need to be clearly defined and have sufficient flexibility to recognise that they may need to change over time
   - local leadership – successful initiatives are led and/or coordinated by skilled community development practitioners, and require strong local leadership and support
   - building community capacity – funders have a role in building the capacity of communities to meet project requirements, but this needs to be balanced to allow communities autonomy to lead their own development
   - effective collaboration – collaboration between government and non-government agencies aids community development projects, and effective collaboration occurs when key stakeholders have a shared interest in outcomes and accountabilities
critical reflection and learning – critical reflection can help to ensure that projects remain focused on their vision

Māori community development – effective practice builds on existing whānau structures, is grounded in tikanga and encompasses a collective approach; wide engagement of whānau together with a holistic approach to issues can contribute to the sustainability of initiatives.

6. The lessons learned presented issues for the Department to consider in the first principles review of Crown funded schemes. The Department needs to be clear about what outcomes it is seeking to achieve and how flexible it is prepared to be in the way funds are used. Community development also carries with it a risk of ‘failure’ – the development of alternative funding approaches needs to consider how much failure, and on what level, is acceptable. Ensuring communities have sufficient knowledge and expertise in community development practice is crucial.

Our Approach

7. This is one of the working papers prepared to inform a first principles review of the Crown funded schemes administered by the Department.1 This paper focuses solely on evaluations of some New Zealand government-funded community development programmes.

8. The paper begins by providing an overview of community development practice in New Zealand – the historical context; and the key principles underpinning community development practice today. This information is intended to provide a frame for the subsequent analysis of programme evaluations.

9. The analysis draws from five programme evaluations from community development programmes in New Zealand. The programmes were selected on the basis that:

- they were grounded in community development principles
- they were relatively recent
- the initiative was funded by a government agency.

10. Two of the five programmes were targeted specifically to whānau, hapū and iwi. Two were trials involving the Department. Details of the programmes are in Appendix 1.

11. It is important to note that the selection was limited by the availability of the evaluations. We have therefore supplemented this material with the findings of a meta-analysis of ten community action projects in New Zealand, published in 2004.2 While the focus of the meta-analysis is on community action projects, rather than community development, there are significant areas of overlap and the lessons are considered to be relevant to this work.3

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1 The Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector approved the scope of the first principles review of Crown funded schemes in 2009. The objective of the review was: “To maximise the potential contribution of Crown funding administered by the Department, to the development of strong, sustainable communities, whānau, hapū and iwi Māori.”


3 The authors of the meta-analysis note that community action projects seek to change behaviours, practices or policies through a participatory and educational process involving a range of stakeholders. Community development tends to focus on enabling the wider community to address a broad range of issues in a holistic
12. Most of the work on this paper was undertaken in 2010, using evaluations that were available until about September 2010.

13. The paper discusses the lessons learned from the review of this material and concludes with a commentary on what the findings mean in the context of the first principles review.

14. In addition, we made visits to a number of community development projects around New Zealand (listed in Appendix 2). Also contained in Appendix two are summaries of some other New Zealand programme evaluations that, while we did not include them in our reviewed sample of community development projects, nevertheless raised some similar issues for community development.

Overview of community development practice in New Zealand

The historical context

15. The framework for community development practice in New Zealand was established in the 1925 to 1970s period, beginning with the establishment of the welfare state by the first Labour government. The Physical Welfare and Recreation Act 1937 (administered by the Department) saw the establishment of the first community development programmes by government.4

16. In the 1970s community development units were set up in many local and regional authorities, as a result of a growing recognition of the need to find local solutions to local issues. The Local Government Act 1974 specified that local authorities should provide community development functions and these responsibilities were backed with central government funding.5

17. Chile (2006) suggests community development practice in New Zealand is best understood as three concurrent processes:

- (1) community development programmes undertaken by the state (through government departments and authorities)
- (2) processes of social change undertaken primarily through the collective action of individuals, groups and organisations to give voice to marginalised groups and communities
- (3) the forces of change within tangata whenua, Māori, working for tino rangatiratanga.6

18. He suggests that the dominance of the State as the provider sets the overall framework for community development practice through legislation that directs community development practice, provides funding, and devolves services to the community, voluntary and not-for-profit sector that the State would not provide directly.

way. While the two are inherently linked, community action is distinguished by its very specific focus (e.g. improving school suspensions rates, improving water quality).


5 ibid p. 415.

Māori community development

19. Māori community development has evolved out of hundreds of years of practice based on whānau, hapū and iwi. Prior to European colonisation Māori were engaged in the development of their own communities, whānau, hapū and iwi. Such development was a holistic process that did not divide body, mind and soul and the physical from the non-physical, the individual from the group.7

20. Throughout the twentieth century, successive governments put in place legislative frameworks designed (in part) to assist Māori community development (e.g. the Māori Economic and Social Advancement Act 1945 and the Māori Welfare Act 1962). However, disparities in the well-being of Māori and non-Māori continued throughout this time. Chile (2006) suggests that while such initiatives provided great potential for Māori community development, they were not adequately funded.8

21. Government programmes to address inequalities in the well-being of the Māori population relative to the rest of the population were also a feature of the early part of this century (e.g. ‘Closing the Gaps’ and the ‘Reducing Inequalities Strategy’).9 These initiatives resulted in a number of approaches to empowering Māori, hapū and iwi to address their own priorities being trialled – including capacity building and community development-type initiatives.

The current context

22. The Department’s work on the needs of communities in 5, 10 and 20 years time identified a number of opportunities and challenges for communities, whānau, hapū and iwi Māori. Communities in New Zealand are becoming increasingly diverse – different communities will face different issues, but all will need to be resilient and adaptable.

23. In the current economic climate, government needs to demonstrate the effectiveness and efficiency of funding models, but it is important for government to recognise that a ‘one size fits all’ approach is unlikely to be effective and to identify new ways of working with communities.

Community development practice in New Zealand today

24. Community development practice in New Zealand today draws on the following principles, derived from national and international literature.

| Social justice | Addressing power imbalances between individuals and between different groups in society. May place a particular emphasis on promoting the interests of disadvantaged segments of the community, and ideas of respecting and valuing diversity. The focus is collective, rather than based on a response to individual circumstance. |

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9 The Reducing Inequalities Strategy sought to: build the capacity of disadvantaged communities, beginning with Māori and Pacific communities; support local level solutions developed by community groups; and strengthen existing programmes delivered by government agencies.
Individual and collective human rights

Good community development practice observes and protects human rights and fundamental freedoms – allowing people to ‘claim their human rights’.

Equity

Opportunities and resources are allocated in an equitable manner to enhance the capacity of all sections of the community to attain their well-being.

Self determination and empowerment

Seeks to empower individuals, groups and communities to attain their well-being through collective action. Communities own and drive the process.

Participation/democracy

Individuals and communities are active participants, identifying their vision for the future and/or their needs, and the means of achieving/addressing these. All sections of the community are effectively engaged. Participative process and structures include and empower marginalised and excluded groups within society.

“Effective participation enables the community to articulate its vision, which enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of development outcomes.”

Cooperation/collective action

Community members work together to identify and undertake action, based on a shared respect for all contributions. Partnerships are fostered to achieve positive outcomes for all community members.

Action is based on solidarity with the interests of those experiencing social exclusion.

Sustainability (including, but not exclusively, environmental sustainability)

Balances and integrates social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects of community. A holistic approach that recognises the connections and interdependencies between different aspects of well-being and the components of communities. Recognises the needs of both current and future generations.

25. The extent to which these values translate into practice, and the relative emphasis placed on particular values, will vary according to context. For example, community development undertaken by a faith-based entity may be rooted in social justice. However, community development practice undertaken by government agencies is necessarily influenced by the political context in which such agencies operate, and may require a balancing of values with operational constraints such as funding models and policy and service delivery priorities.

Bicultural community development practice in New Zealand

26. In addition to the general community development principles set out above, community development practice in New Zealand must be responsive to the needs and aspirations of Māori communities, and whānau, hapū and iwi groups.

27. Munford and Walsh-Tapiata (2006) have identified the following key principles emerging from bicultural community development practice in New Zealand:

• **having a vision for the future and for what can be achieved** – attempt to identify the dreams for all the populations worked with.

• **understanding local contexts** – understand communities within their local contexts – different social structures and how these operate culturally within communities. Enable the use of local knowledge to address current challenges.

• **locating oneself within community** – need to have a clear understanding of oneself and one’s place in the world and how these influence our perspectives.

• **working within power relations** – need to articulate the nature of power relations and enable communities to redress past wrongs, in order to establish new structures and ways of operating. In New Zealand, this includes addressing indigenous rights and self-determination.

• **achieving self-determination** – having one’s voice heard and having opportunities for developing knowledge so that participation can be extended and strengthened.

• **working collectively** – mahi tahi – working together towards a common goal.

• **bringing about positive social change for all communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand** – this incorporates a commitment to overcome challenges that may be faced and requires communities to recognise their ability to effect change.

• **action and reflection** – reflection requires a review of practices and their impacts in order to learn and adapt. It is important that frameworks are openly debated.

### Programmes reviewed

28. Five government-funded community development programmes were reviewed. In each case, evaluations of the programmes were examined, with a focus on: understanding the principles underpinning the approach; the outcomes sought through the development and implementation of the programme; key achievements; and the factors that enabled or inhibited the success of the programme.

29. The evaluation techniques varied across the five programmes. No attempt has been made to critique or comment on the quality of the evaluations. Detailed notes on each of the programmes are attached as Appendix One.

30. Three of the programmes – Whānau Development, Local Level Solutions and the Stronger Communities Action Fund – were strongly focused on grass-roots activity, with funding made available to communities to undertake a wide range of activities to further their own aspirations.

31. The Whānau Development Project and the Local Level Solutions Programme were targeted to Māori and were developed as part of the former government’s Reducing Inequalities Strategy. In each case the programmes were designed to build individual and community capacity as well as to reduce inequalities.

32. The Stronger Communities Action Fund, funded by the former Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, similarly sought to encourage communities to identify their needs, develop innovative responses, and increase social and community capital. The Fund had an overall objective of improving outcomes for children, young people and families in disadvantaged communities. While this programme operated in a number of communities, our review is based on an available evaluation of one community.
33. The remaining two programmes reviewed were smaller scale initiatives, designed (at least in part) to test the usefulness of the Framework for Developing Sustainable Communities (2002), developed by the Department of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Social Development, the former Department of Child, Youth and Family Services and the former Community Employment Group of the Department of Labour. The Framework describes an approach characterised by:

- seeking community-owned solutions and community-driven development
- facilitation of development and effective capacity building
- a diversity of responses and models, rather than ‘one size fits all’
- collaboration and partnership
- a shift from separate silos to an all-of-government approach
- achieving mutually agreed outcomes with communities.  

34. The Local Action Research Projects (LARPS) trialled by the Department, were based in Kaikohe and Raetihi. In each case a Community Development and Funding Advisor (an existing role within the Department) was able to dedicate a portion of their time to an expanded community broker role.

35. The community broker role was described as having four components: building capacity; fostering collaboration; promoting sustainability; and championing inclusiveness. The advisor based in Kaikohe was allocated 0.5 FTE to act in the community broker role; and an advisor based in Palmerston North was allocated 0.33 FTE to work in the role in Raetihi.

36. The advisors were required to assist the local community to establish a project coordinating group, comprised of local community people. These groups were charged with developing community outcomes; and planning and contributing to local projects aimed at achieving the outcomes. The pilots ran for a period of three years.

37. The final project, also focused on sustainable development, was a joint initiative by the Department and the Auckland Regional Council. The Sustainable Community Pilot Projects were established as part of the broader Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme – a joint central and local government initiative. The programme included a “Sustainable Communities“ work strand with a vision: “To achieve strong, liveable and prosperous communities in Auckland through a sustainable development approach”.

38. In this case, the two pilot projects leveraged off existing processes and initiatives to:

(1) examine how central, regional and local government collaboration could support community involvement in developing sustainable outcomes (Project Papakura); and

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12 Department of Internal Affairs (2002) A Framework for Developing Sustainable Communities: Discussion Paper. Developed by the Department of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Social Development, the former Department of Child, Youth and Family Services and the former Community Employment Group of the Department of Labour, p. 19

13 Action research is a cyclical process that involves action, observation, reflection and planning. It requires a continual focus on reviewing what is happening and why things work (or not). It allows interventions to be made to refine projects or approaches throughout the implementation process.
(2) to learn from Waitakere City’s Project Twin Streams\textsuperscript{14} approach to community engagement and local sustainable development, and to apply the lessons emerging in ways that could support other local sustainable development efforts (SC\textsuperscript{2} – \textit{Sustainable Communities Sustainable Catchment}).

Outcomes achieved

39. The programmes reviewed achieved outcomes in a range of areas, some of which were programme specific, and others were more generic in nature. Some examples are:

- enhanced levels of social capital
- the development of infrastructure for new organisations
- strengthened whānau relationships
- strengthening relationships (horizontally and vertically) across stakeholders
- developing leadership within communities
- building the capacity of community groups in areas such as financial and strategic planning, project monitoring and reporting
- improved access to local services
- improved educational and employment outcomes
- cultural development
- programme delivery focused on youth.

40. Significantly, however, the government did not provide baseline funding for any of the five programmes examined beyond the ‘pilot’ or ‘trial’ stage. The reasons for this are not explicit in the material reviewed. Several of the evaluations noted that at the end of the funding cycle it was evident that projects had no concrete plans for sustaining initiatives in the longer term.

Meta-analysis of community action projects in New Zealand

41. In addition to these programme-specific evaluations, consideration was given to a meta-analysis of ten government-funded community action projects delivered in New Zealand.\textsuperscript{15} The aim of the study was to identify commonalities in structures and processes that either enhanced or impeded the projects meeting their objectives of social change. The review identifies factors throughout three phases of project implementation, referred to as activation, consolidation and completion/transition of the projects.

42. Of the projects studied: three were coordinated by Pacific organisations specifically for Pacific people; two were coordinated by Māori organisations specifically for Māori; and the other five were coordinated by multi-cultural organisations.

\textsuperscript{14} Project Twin Streams began in 2003 and is a $45m, ten year project that has two broad aims: (1) to restore six streams and their surrounding areas in Waitakere City, largely by approaching storm water management differently; and (2) to creatively engage local communities in this, to support them to become kaitiaki or guardians of the streams long term, strengthen their local communities and live more sustainably.

\textsuperscript{15} A. Greenaway, et.al. (2004) \textit{A Meta-Analysis of Community Action Projects: Volumes One and Two}. Centre for Social and Health Outcomes Research and Evaluation and Te Rōpū Whāriki, Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand.
there was a geographical spread, with a mix of rural and urban; and there was a range of government agencies involved in funding.

The following table summarises the projects reviewed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>Initial focus</th>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moerewa Community Project</td>
<td>Alcohol and the community</td>
<td>Rural, Māori</td>
<td>Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waitomo Papakāinga Tracker Project</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>Rural, Māori, Youth</td>
<td>Social Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacifica Healthcare</td>
<td>Community garden</td>
<td>Urban, Pacific</td>
<td>Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful Waves / Matangi Male</td>
<td>Education for non-violence</td>
<td>Urban Pacific</td>
<td>Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whaingaroa Catchment Management Project</td>
<td>Integrated catchment management</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Rangihou New Day Project for Opotiki Safer Communities Council</td>
<td>Alcohol, drugs and young people</td>
<td>Rural, Māori, Youth</td>
<td>Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roughcut Youth Development Project</td>
<td>Employment training</td>
<td>Rural, Youth</td>
<td>Community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christchurch Youth Project</td>
<td>Young people and crime</td>
<td>Urban, Youth</td>
<td>Police and Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAIERI Trust River Catchment Project</td>
<td>Catchment and community health</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Environment and Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACIFICA</td>
<td>Governance and management</td>
<td>Nationwide, Pacific</td>
<td>Employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43. Community action projects, while inherently linked, are distinct from community development projects by the specific focus taken. Community action projects seek to change behaviours, practices or policies through a participatory and educational process involving a range of stakeholders. Community development focuses on enabling the wider community to address a broad range of issues in a holistic way.

44. The study aimed to identify the barriers and enhancers to achieving specific social and environmental objectives through community action research projects. The study found that to be effective, community action required:

- skilled leadership, and access to mentors
- access to adequate resourcing and enabling infrastructure development
- committed strategic support and advocacy from both government and community
- networking to build relationships, communication and knowledge
- skilled facilitation of people and processes
- effective coordination and planning
- making opportunities for critical reflection.

45. The table below discusses the study’s findings at different project stages. This also highlights the importance of identifying guiding principles at each phase of an initiative, using appropriate strategies and tools to support different phases, and funding resources may also need to be flexible to support different stages.
### Activation
This stage was hindered by a lack of clear purpose – projects struggled where the objectives of the project or the processes for working together had not been clarified for all stakeholders.

Useful tools at this stage are:
- stakeholder and needs analyses
- community profiling
- visioning
- strategic and action planning.

### Consolidation
This phase involved identifying skills and information required to make desired changes. Building a resource and knowledge base on matters pertinent to project objectives was critical in this phase. Projects were limited by short-term funding.

Useful tools at this stage are:
- shoulder tapping key influential people
- communication pathways
- forming subgroups or work streams
- clarifying tasks and roles
- involving local people to give the project a profile
- finding mentors.

### Completion / transition
None of the cases studied had a clear strategy for sustaining the project in the longer term. Projects that had planned multi-stakeholder collaboration had more opportunities for combined resourcing which sometimes opened up new pathways for sustaining the project.

Useful tools at this stage are:
- organising an event to commemorate the completion / transition
- ensuring stakeholders are aware of cessation / downsizing / review
- planning for completion / transition to manage community implications.

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46. Key principles fundamental to all community action projects:
- the importance of relationships – building relationships that are transformative, and enable new ways of working to be trialled and adopted
- having skilled people – projects are enhanced by people with knowledge of community development processes
- trusting relationships – respecting and acknowledging skills
- reflective practice – this contributed significantly to the development of projects
- Māori community development perspectives – Māori participants indicated that outcomes also need to be interpreted and defined by Māori.

### Site visits
47. In 2009, the department carried out visits to 12 community development projects around New Zealand to identify some of the critical success factors for community development in New Zealand. These are listed in Appendix 2.

48. The basis for selection of the projects was: geographic – to provide a regional spread around the country; nature of the community – to provide a snapshot of different communities including Māori; being successful; and size – from the very small to more substantial undertakings. Using the Department’s networks, we identified 12 projects, which were examples of effective community development. Not all had received funding from the Department.

### General findings
49. There were some common characteristics across all the projects visited. In general, the organisations adopted a community development approach to their work. They confirmed the importance of letting the community direct and drive initiatives, supporting them to identify their needs, strengths, opportunities and priorities – a sense of community ownership was seen as crucial for success. Accountability to the
community was also essential, with groups constantly checking back with the wider community to confirm that work was on the right track and that local support continued.

50. Those involved emphasised the importance of relationships, which can be more important than any particular project focus or objective as it is the relationships that endure. Project leaders recognised the importance of linkages and networks at the grass roots, working closely with other organisations in the community, (such as local government), other non profits and government agencies. The groups we visited frequently underlined the value of the connections made and noted that the learning from working together contributed greatly to strengthening the community. In each case there was a committed individual or individuals at the heart of the organisation, making it work.

51. A sense of trust often developed over time in communities through the work of these organisations, even in communities that were seriously deprived at the start of the work. A notable example was the Victory Community Health Centre in Nelson. Ten years ago, the Victory community was a depressed and often dangerous neighbourhood. Vandalism, poverty and sub-standard housing were common and it had Nelson’s highest crime rate. Around 2000, the community became concerned about council plans to extend the southern link highway through the community. At the same time, the Community Constable and the Principal at Victory Primary School were working to identify solutions to issues of community safety. The timing of these three coming together led to a realisation that the community needed a centre to meet its needs. When the school hall was built, arrangements were made to add on additional office and meeting spaces to house the centre, which now leases rooms to other groups that meet community needs.

52. Victory sees its grass roots nature as an essential component of its success: the centre is able to respond to the community’s needs and to determine the best mix of services and the way they are delivered. The Centre Manager said the different initiatives that came together created what is recognised as a remarkable transformation of a community. The Victory community was made New Zealand’s Community of the Year 2010 in the Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year awards. Its success has attracted international attention as an example for others to learn from.16

53. Ngāti Kuia Pride, also in the Nelson/Blenheim area, is an example of how the drive and determination of a community development worker can have a significant impact, for the benefit of the wider community. Ngāti Kuia is one of several iwi in the northern region of the South Island that had, for a range of historical reasons, experienced severe losses in terms of land, language, tikanga and knowledge of whakapapa.

54. Ngāti Kuia Pride was a project approved under the Department’s Community Development Scheme. It aimed to strengthen the Ngāti Kuia people, facilitate greater participation in Ngāti Kuia activities and build sustainable leadership within the iwi. The community development worker said the iwi has “been like a phoenix rising from the ashes”. In a relatively short time, and using a range of activities,17 the sense of belonging to the iwi, and its mana, has grown and the iwi has developed strong

16 The proposed link road did not go through as a result of community objection. Since our visit, an evaluation has been completed – see Appendix two for further information.
17 Such as Ngāti Kuia Day, having streets in Blenheim named after events in the iwi’s history, teaching iwi members about the significance of places and events.
relationships with the community and local and government organisations. It is now in a good position to move forward following its recent Treaty of Waitangi settlement.18

Governance

55. The case studies highlighted the importance of good governance structures that are ‘fit for purpose’. The form that governance takes will necessarily vary, depending on the needs of the organisation and its developmental stage. For example, a group will not automatically set itself up immediately as a charitable trust, but may do so when it is ready, and often after a period of development.

Funding

56. The organisations we visited operated on tight budgets and survived from year to year on small amounts of money from a diverse range of sources. We heard that the need to constantly seek and re-apply for funding is time-consuming and takes organisations away from their core business. It was suggested that streamlined application processes and reporting requirements would help lower compliance costs. Some organisations told us that funding tends to be too prescriptive and short-term and there is a need to take a longer-term view, to incorporate flexibility and to trust communities to do the right thing. We were constantly reminded that the community development process is necessarily a long one.

Tikanga Māori

57. We were given the strong message that Māori organisations adhere to kaupapa and tikanga Māori values and principles, and funding models need to be designed to accommodate this appropriately. Funding models that prescribe a certain way of doing things may not be compatible with a Māori way. For example, we were told of the importance for Māori of being able to make payments directly to contractors that work for them on projects. Having payments made by another agency on their behalf diminishes the relationship between the marae and the contractor and has an impact on the mana of the marae. This illustrates the importance of flexible funding models.

Lessons learned

58. The following lessons have been derived from the material examined.

Community engagement

59. A starting premise for effective community development is the need for individuals within the community to have a clear vision, or shared set of aspirations for their community. Developing a vision requires broad input and agreement across the community. This provides the basis for the subsequent identification of community priorities, goal setting, and planning.

60. The programmes reviewed approached this process in different ways, and with differing results. The Whānau Development, Local Level Solutions and Stronger Communities Action Fund programmes all involved government articulating a desire to support community development initiatives, and setting in place processes to identify communities that could take part. While the criteria used by the lead agencies to identify ‘suitable’ communities differed, they each had a focus (at least in part) on communities facing some disadvantage. In each case, the responsible government

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18 Settlement was signed on 11 February 2010 with eight Nelson and Marlborough iwi known collectively as Te Tau Ihu Māori for historic grievances, particularly the loss of land between 1840 and 1860.
agency was under pressure to identify communities within a set timeframe, in order to meet the funding requirements agreed by Cabinet.

61. This approach to the establishment of community development programmes appears to have been problematic on a number of fronts. Firstly, communities were required to identify a shared vision and/or priority projects within pre-defined timeframes. This was challenging – particularly for those communities that had not received funding from government in the past.

62. The evaluation of the Whānau Development Project concluded that “a common vision” was a success factor of the programme, with many communities reporting that the project had been a catalyst that helped them to do something that they had already been planning. However, in contrast, those communities that had not received government funding in the past found the timeframes challenging, and the evaluation noted that:

Communities without a common vision needed more time before they could benefit from the funding. Although, individually, most people were passionate about what they wanted to do, it was impossible to maintain an initiative without a common vision.

63. Secondly, it may be argued that the approach to identifying communities adopted by government runs counter to ‘pure’ community development theory, in which a community, or group within a community, is the catalyst for the community development process. For this to occur, the community must have some pre-existing level of social capital and/or community capability, which becomes the foundation for successful community initiatives. Attempting to implement a programme in a community that is not ‘ready’ for it runs a serious risk of failure and may fragment a community, rather than build community cohesion.

64. In the case of the Whānau Development Project, the evaluation noted that:

Some people remained uninterested in or opposed to the provider for the Whānau Development Project initiative in their community. Some expressed concern about the provider’s mandate to represent community interests, while others had concerns about the people in leadership positions. Some sites had to manage diverse hapū interests as well as historical differences.

65. In fact, funding was not released in one of the intended sites because the group was not able to develop an initiative within the timeframe, primarily as a result of longstanding conflicts impeding progress.

66. The funding structure for the Local Level Solutions Programme meant that proposals had to be developed upfront to form the basis of Budget bids for Cabinet approval. Te Puni Kōkiri’s regional staff had a key role in identifying and working with prospective communities to develop robust proposals, which accurately reflected the communities / whānau, hapū and iwi desires, as well as aligning the bids with government processes and priorities. Staff also assessed the capacity and capability of organisations to manage funding and deliver developmental activities.

67. The programme evaluation indicates that the timeframes allowed for these processes were challenging. In addition, groups and communities were not informed about the programme, including the process for selecting and approving groups for participation. This lack of communication limited the ability of the chosen communities to tailor their proposals appropriately from the outset, and precluded others from taking part.
68. These points highlight the importance of early and broad stakeholder engagement. Indeed, the meta-analysis of community action projects concluded that involving all key stakeholders at an early stage of a project led to higher levels of ongoing support.

69. Further, the Whānau Development Project evaluation noted that:

- there was generally more community involvement and ownership of projects where community consultation and needs assessment occurred
- higher levels of voluntary contribution to projects resulted in higher levels of community ownership
- community involvement was lower where the initiative was seen as being beneficial to some individuals, rather than the wider whānau or hapū.

70. Finally, the evaluation noted that:

The intense involvement of a smaller number of people in some sites meant that the rest of the community withdrew. There was a danger that the focus could go off-track if a community took ongoing progress for granted and left the project in the hands of a single person or small group.

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**Lessons learned (community engagement)**

- A shared vision is an essential foundation for effective community development
- Adequate time should be allowed for the vision to be developed (this may take one to two years in communities that have low levels of social cohesion or social capital, or where conflicts need to be resolved)
- A broad range of stakeholders should be drawn on to develop and build on the vision and to continue with the project implementation.

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**Funder / community relationship**

71. The relationship between the funder (or sponsoring) agency and the community engaged with has a significant bearing on the ‘look and feel’ of a programme. The programmes reviewed illustrate a range of approaches.

72. The Whānau Development Project piloted a devolved funding approach, which aimed to allow communities maximum control over the process and content of local initiatives. Each site was allocated $130,000 per year, for an initial period of three years. Overall management of the projects rested with a policy team in the Ministry of Social Development. However, an independent organisation with experience in developing Māori and Pacific community organisations (Kāhui Tautoko Ltd) was appointed to engage and build relationships with the communities over the life of the project; and to provide business and developmental support and mentoring as needed.

73. Contracts for service delivery were developed – driven by the communities and providers, rather than the Ministry. The evaluation notes that contracts were intended to serve two purposes:

- to form a robust, transparent basis for making Whānau Development Project funds available to communities; and
- to encourage communities to develop the necessary skills to manage these and subsequent contracts with the Ministry and other government agencies.
74. The contracts provided a way of ensuring that communities were accountable for the project funding and that they met minimum requirements of reporting and service delivery. The evaluation concluded that, in reality:

    .... it was difficult for communities that were new to contracting and trialling innovative approaches to whānau development to predict with any certainty the types of outcomes they would achieve in three years’ time. Contracts also reduced the “partnership” model of working with communities to one of compliance and accountability. The Ministry and communities had to balance accountability for funding with community flexibility.

75. The Ministry paid monthly instalments to providers on the basis of invoices, provided that they had met project reporting and monitoring requirements, and the Ministry had no concerns about service delivery. The evaluation notes that there were initial difficulties with the monitoring and reporting processes – in part due to a lack of guidance and feedback on reporting. It concludes that:

    Contracts may not have been the most appropriate tool for working with communities. The contract negotiation process took time, and it was difficult for communities to predict outcomes two or three years into the future when they were trialling innovative new ideas. Initiatives often changed and developed as time went by, and contracts became out of date.

76. The Local Level Solutions Programme also had a focus on a partnership approach, in which selected communities entered into a ‘Funding and Relationship Agreement’ with Te Puni Kōkiri. The evaluation notes that this approach reflected the desired relationship between the two parties – to be partners in development and growth. The agreements differed from standard service delivery contracts in that they: emphasised the importance of the partnership relationship; were negotiated with the groups to reflect flexibility; and set out principles that underpinned the relationship between the two parties. All agreements contained a Treaty of Waitangi clause.

77. The evaluation of the Local Level Solutions Programme noted that Te Puni Kōkiri had some difficulty balancing public accountability while meeting the programme objective to provide support to whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori to develop autonomously. The material suggests that a number of provider groups grasped this concept well and assumed primary responsibility for developing and delivering their initiatives. However, others had an underlying expectation that Te Puni Kōkiri would not allow them to fail and would step in if required.

78. The evaluation emphasises the importance of reaching a balance between managing accountability while recognising the autonomy of groups, and notes that this requires a relationship between parties based on trust and good faith. Further, relationships worked well where both partners were committed to achieving a common goal and implementing solutions that would contribute to improved outcomes for all.

79. The importance of trust is also highlighted in the meta-analysis of community action projects:

    To build and operate on a basis of trust was upheld as an ideal by numerous project stakeholders. For funding agencies this required trusting developmental processes, trusting the accountability mechanisms that community organisations had instigated, and respecting and acknowledging the skills and professionalism of community workers.

80. Importantly, trusting relationships allow for an element of flexibility in project delivery, facilitating improved responsiveness to new and changing needs as the community development process unfolds.
81. Finally, the evaluation of the Local Level Solutions Programme suggested that guiding principles for an effective partnership relationship require both parties to:

- commit to working as partners in development and growth
- act in good faith
- maintain the relationship from a proactive viewpoint
- have mutual respect and acknowledge the contributions each party brings
- involve and inform all key stakeholders, and clearly articulate roles and responsibilities.

82. These principles reflect a relational approach to contracting, which has been described as: moving towards commitment to common goals; recognising and respecting the roles and expertise each party has; agreed risk-sharing and mutual acknowledgement of the gains of the relationship; each party is well-informed of the other and maintains open communication; and each party is motivated to maintain credibility and reputation with the other.19

83. In addition, some lessons on partnering and partnership agreements are contained in the report, *Putting Pen to Paper: Profiles*, Department of Internal Affairs & Waitakere City Council, 2007. From 11 different agreements the authors developed 10 key lessons – including securing a mandate for an agreement; the importance of communications, and working with community, which takes time, and having a facilitator or ‘broker’.20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lessons learned (funder / community relationship)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships based on the principles of partnership can facilitate effective community development</td>
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<tr>
<td>To work well, partnerships need to be based on a clear understanding of expectations and operate on the basis of trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional approaches to contracting may need to be revised to support effective partnering. The “Putting pen to paper” report offers some practical lessons.</td>
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84. The need for clarity about the relative roles and responsibilities of government agencies as fund holders, and of community groups, was a strong theme in the literature reviewed.

85. In particular, the evaluations highlighted the importance of providing community groups with clear guidelines and/or other assistance to meet project reporting and accountability requirements. Funders of community development initiatives appeared to walk a fine line between a “hands off” approach intended to empower communities; and the provision of direct assistance to community groups to help them to build their capacity to meet project requirements.

86. This was particularly evident in the Local Level Solutions Programme, which, as noted, tested a partnership approach to programme delivery. The programme evaluation concluded that: greater clarity on the nature and the basis of the relationships between Te Puni Kōkiri staff and groups would have assisted the

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20 The paper notes that the role of a ‘strategic broker’ is increasingly acknowledged as a key success factor for interagency working (p. 11). See pages 8 to 13 for the 10 ‘lessons’.
programme, as would a stronger focus on ensuring that all stakeholders understood their responsibilities in terms of expected deliverables, reporting requirements and the timeframes for deliverables.

87. The Whānau Development Project took a different approach – as noted, the Ministry of Social Development contracted an organisation (Kāhui Tautoko Ltd) to assist in the management of the programme. While the Ministry’s intention was to allow communities as much control of their projects as possible, the evaluation indicated that communities would have preferred a direct relationship with the Ministry. The groups anticipated that this would have facilitated a better understanding of the programme intent and direct guidance on reporting requirements. The evaluation noted that:

While the Ministry’s ‘hands off’ approach allowed extensive community ownership, it had an unintended downside: communities struggled with administrative tasks, particularly monitoring and reporting, and looked for more guidance and support. … Communities reported that they were sometimes unsure about the roles of the Whānau Development Project policy staff, evaluation staff and consultants. People in some communities reported that they were unclear about the purpose of the Whānau Development Project and what the funding could and could not be used for.

88. Similarly the community broker model tested through the Local Action Research Projects appears to have suffered from a lack of shared understanding about the role of the brokers, resulting in unfulfilled expectations on the part of community stakeholders. The evaluation concluded that the role of the community broker needs to be better articulated and communicated to project coordinating groups in order to manage expectations.

Lessons learned (clear roles and responsibilities)

- Clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders is vital and should be established at the project outset
- A direct relationship between the project sponsor/funder and the community group appears to be valued by communities and can assist with role clarity

Planning and outcome development

89. The literature reviewed highlights the importance of community development projects identifying outcomes and goals to guide the project development. Importantly, these must be realistic and achievable within the timeframes allowed. It is evident that several of the programmes underestimated the amount of time it would take for communities to complete the project establishment phase, and move into project implementation. This led to an inability to achieve the outcomes agreed upon. Being realistic about what can be achieved was also one of the lessons from the Putting Pen to Paper report.

90. This point was highlighted several times in the material reviewed. For example, the evaluation of the Whānau Development Project noted that:

Having realistic expectations about what could be achieved with the available funding and timeframe helped communities to develop and deliver successful, sustainable community initiatives. Communities were more successful when they took small steps and collectively recognised each success as positive progress to be built upon. (Emphasis added)

91. It was also noted that communities themselves often had high expectations about what they could achieve with the time and funding available. In the evaluation of the
LARPS, the assigned community brokers appeared to have difficulty getting projects ‘off the ground,’ and the evaluation noted that the Department and communities needed to be realistic about what could be achieved in three years and outcomes phrased accordingly.

92. Further, it needs to be recognised that the outcomes or goals identified at the outset of a project may change as the project progresses. It is therefore important to build flexibility into programme guidelines and funding arrangements, allowing project leaders to remain responsive to the changing needs and aspirations of a community, while still delivering outcomes that are relevant to the programme funder. Some of the programmes reviewed did not allow for this, resulting in communities reporting against objectives that were no longer relevant.

93. The results from the meta-analysis of community action programmes also highlight the importance of different stages or phases of an initiative. The authors called these the “activation / consolidation / completion & transition” phases. Transition could include ‘sustainability’. The important lesson is that guiding principles, strategies and tools, and funding resources, may all need to be flexible and appropriate to support the different phases.

94. The Whānau Development Project required providers to specify the outcomes they would achieve at the outset of the process – these became part of the contractual agreement. However, groups found it difficult to predict with any certainty what outcomes they would achieve. As a result, the outcomes were broad and general.

95. Equally, funders need to be explicit about the outcomes they are seeking through community development initiatives – without becoming overly prescriptive. For example, the Stronger Communities Action Fund programme allowed communities significant flexibility in the development of projects, while still requiring them to demonstrate the contribution being made to improving outcomes for children, young people and families. This outcome provided some guidance to communities, and has been described as ‘glue’ that held the project together.21

96. Finally, the nature of community development work means that enhanced levels of social capital, social cohesion and/or community capability are themselves important outcomes (regardless of the activity undertaken).22 This was one of the theories underpinning the Stronger Communities Action Fund initiative and the adoption of a devolved decision-making model.

**Lessons learned (planning and outcome development)**

- Communities and funders must be realistic about what can be achieved within the funded timeframe and set realistic outcomes and goals accordingly
- Outcomes and goals need to be clearly defined in a way that all stakeholders understand; they need to match the different stages an initiative may be at
- There should be sufficient flexibility to recognise that outcomes and goals may change over time; small steps need to be recognised as successes and built on
- Programmes should recognise and value the importance of building social capital, community cohesion and community capability as outcomes in themselves, and plan

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22 The results from the CCI initiatives in the USA suggest that less tangible outcomes such as “social capital” still need to have intentional strategies to achieve them, rather than hoping they will be a by-product of other strategies. (See International review paper)
Local leadership

97. The material reviewed highlighted the importance of strong local leadership of projects. There were two aspects to this; successful programmes were: led by local people who had the backing of the wider community; and supported by the funding organisation at the local level.23

98. Local leadership was identified as one of the strengths of the Local Level Solutions Programme. The evaluation noted that the commitment of key individuals championing the establishment and implementation of locally developed solutions was significant and contributed directly to the Programmes’ success.

99. The importance of local leadership by sponsoring organisations was highlighted in the evaluation of the Local Action Research Projects, as one of the projects was supported by a Departmental advisor who was not located in the community. The evaluation noted that a locally based community broker was likely to be of more assistance than one from a distant location. In contrast, the Local Level Solutions projects were supported by relationship managers, employed by Te Puni Kōkiri at the local level. The evaluation noted that groups were generally positive about the interaction and support they received from their relationship managers.

100. Several evaluations also noted the importance of projects being led and/or coordinated by people who were skilled in community development practices. The meta-analysis of community action projects suggested that “…projects benefited from the support of people with community development expertise and the skills to foster a project environment in which [community development] practices are nurtured.” Importantly, it is noted that these skills were accessed from people in a variety of roles, including community development advisors, fund contract managers, project coordinators and trustees.

Lessons learned (local leadership)

- Effective community development requires strong local leadership and support
- Successful community development initiatives are led and/or coordinated by skilled community development practitioners

Building community capacity

101. The material suggests that sponsoring agencies need to be cognisant of the capacity of the community engaged with to meet project requirements and the roles and responsibilities assigned to them; and committed to ensuring that they receive adequate support. While a ‘pure’ community development approach might suggest that this could present a conflict, the reality is that communities are likely to need and welcome support. A lack of support may result in programme implementation failure.

102. The meta-analysis of community action projects concluded that:

Projects were greatly enhanced when there was a skilled project or contract manager in the fund-holding agency who had formed strong relationships and was able to

23 The Inspiring Communities report What we are learning (Dec 2010) also talks about the importance of local leadership, including: Look for leaders in a range of new places and actively support them to grow confidence in their own ability to both lead and work with others; create opportunities for new leaders at decision-making tables and support them to be there; proactively develop local community leadership strategies.
advocate for and advise the members of the project team … projects struggled when there was not ready access to skilled people. The presence of a skilled person in at least one of these roles enabled the transfer of knowledge between the funding organisation and the project members. It also enhanced networking and collegial support for the project.

103. The Whānau Development Project evaluation noted that at the beginning of the programme none of the communities had access to the full range of skills needed; and that all providers identified capability issues that hampered the achievement of desired outcomes (e.g. lack of experience in good governance and management, lack of qualified people to develop strategic plans). Projects that were most effective were those led by “high energy” committed leaders and project managers who were “respected, trusted and supported in their role”.

104. The Local Level Solutions Programme evaluation noted that the capacity and capability of Te Puni Kōkiri to support groups to achieve their solutions and improve outcomes in their communities was fundamental to their success.

Lessons learned (building community capacity)

- Project sponsors/funders may have a legitimate role in building the capacity of communities to meet project requirements
- This role needs to be balanced against the need to allow communities the autonomy to lead their own development

Effective collaboration

105. Working effectively with a broad range of stakeholders is a key tenet of good community development practice. Collaboration often centres around a shared interest in outcomes and, in the case of government, is likely to be strengthened by a government mandate to collaborate. This was the experience of the Sustainable Communities Programme, with the evaluation noting that the strong government mandate to collaborate through the project was one of the perceived strengths of the overall programme.

106. The evaluation of the Sustainable Communities Programme concluded that collaboration is most likely to be effective when:

- there are high levels of complexity, uncertainty and the issues are difficult to frame
- the issue has multiple inter-related root causes
- traditional or common approaches are not working
- the issue is long-term in nature
- there are multiple stakeholders and accountability is shared
- all parties have a vested interest and will clearly benefit from being involved
- there are processes to hold people and organisations to account.

107. While cross-agency collaboration was supposed to be a feature of the Whānau Development Project, the evaluation reported that this did not always happen, partly because the Ministry of Social Development did not have a local presence in all places, and was not proactive in identifying local support for each site.
108. Similarly, the Local Level Solutions Programme was designed with a cross-sectoral focus, recognising that local solutions tended to be holistic in nature. One of the roles of Te Puni Kōkiri’s relationship managers was to support groups by facilitating access to information, funding and advice across public sector groups. However, it was apparent that, in some instances, other government agencies were less likely to provide assistance to groups once they realised they had been funded through the Local Level Solutions Programme.

109. Strong support from sponsoring agencies is therefore important to encourage collaboration. This was also borne out in the meta-analysis of community action projects, which noted that:

This analysis strongly supports arguments that the development of community capacity requires changing the dynamics of relationships between and across governmental and non-governmental organisations. Where government agencies had strong and effective relationships and worked together on particular issues, major enhancement for the community action projects was evident.

110. In this case, the authors argue for fund-holding agencies acting as advocates for projects, actively working to build relationships and secure support.

111. One of the premises of the Sustainable Communities Pilot Projects was that building community capacity and collaboration by stakeholders (including local and central government) contributes to the sustainability of community initiatives. However, the projects were not successful in connecting with other government agencies and meaningful community involvement in the projects was limited. The evaluation concluded that relationship development and community involvement needed to be funded and that the adoption of partnering or relationship agreements were more likely to be successful than contracts.

Lessons learned (effective collaboration)

- Collaboration between government and non-government agencies aids community development projects
- Effective collaboration occurs when key stakeholders have a shared interest in outcomes and accountabilities (this could be government mandated)
- Sponsoring / funding agencies can assist collaboration by advocating on behalf of the project leaders
- Funding may be required to support non-government entities to collaborate effectively

Critical reflection and learning

112. The importance of critical reflection and learning is identified in a couple of the evaluations. In particular, critical reflection is a key part of the ‘action research’ process.

113. The meta-analysis of community action projects noted that the projects examined used reflective practice effectively in day-to-day problem solving, planning, and gathering of information for decision-making and reviewing and documenting work. Some of this occurred through formal processes (e.g. formative evaluations) while others used informal means such as review meetings. The practice of critical reflection helped ensure that projects remained clear about their purpose and intent, and also contributed to building the knowledge of key stakeholders.
114. Importantly, the analysis noted:

For the Māori-specific projects, reflective practice was driven by a holistic worldview consistent with concepts of connection between the past, present and future...The Māori-based projects in the study consistently reflected on dealing with the effects of colonisation on a culture and people, the results of powerlessness, and general alienation from inherent cultural strengths.

**Lessons learned (critical reflection and learning)**

- Critical reflection, whether formal or informal, can help to ensure that projects remain focused on their vision and contribute to building the knowledge base

**Māori community development**

115. Only the Whānau Development Project evaluation and the meta-analysis of community action projects made specific comments on Māori community development/community action. The evaluation of the Local Level Solutions Programme did not comment on practice in a Māori context, although all the projects worked with Māori communities. However, the appendices include a short literature review, which attempts to place key aspects of community development within a Māori context.

116. The meta-analysis work included two Māori-specific community action projects. The analysis concluded that while many aspects of the issues faced by the Māori-specific projects were similar to those experienced by others, there were differences in processes and approaches that appeared to be unique to Māori.

117. The following points were highlighted:

- Outcomes were interpreted and defined by Māori – reflecting a Māori world view.
- The approach to community change reflected a collective orientation and collective decision-making.
- The development of “for Māori by Māori” strategies attempted to build on existing community strengths and aspirations in a sustainable way.
- Increasing participation was a catalyst for the ongoing development of the projects. At times this was a slow process of actively engaging with and involving those who had been labelled as a problem, or would not normally become involved.
- As the projects gained strength, they increasingly based their practice around the richness of their culture and their familiarity with Māori processes. Strategies adopted drew on the local context, experiences, cultural values and tikanga in order to reinforce identity and provide a strong and consistent sense of purpose.
- Tikanga is about protocol and process and is paramount in a Māori approach to community development. Working from a tikanga base takes time; sometimes more than the actual perceived content of a planned activity.
- Cultural practice underpinned all aspects of how the projects were conceptualised and implemented, and this was not regarded as a separate dimension of the projects (e.g. use of existing skills and knowledge in implementing whānau structures for collective decision-making, rather than struggling with unfamiliar or imposed models).
- Visionary leadership, which grasped not only the focus of the project, but more importantly the continued reflection of Māori solutions as defined by Māori,
ensured that decisions were based on tikanga and positive development. These elements appear to have made the projects more acceptable to the community and contributed to their sustainability.

- Whakapapa links were viewed as a strength in community-based projects. They contribute to the ownership of projects and community issues, and provide project workers with access to, and buy-in from, sectors of the community that are not usually involved. Hand in hand with whakapapa connections are whānau responsibilities, and it was noted that this may become a burden when small community initiatives are relied upon to fix problems.

- The groups expressed the importance of factoring social, economic and cultural components into community action projects in order to achieve sustainable community change. These three components were seen as inextricably linked and are regarded as essential components of Māori development.

118. Importantly, the analysis suggested that:

Expressions of Māori knowledge have often been regarded at the policy level as anecdotal and have not been recognised as legitimate knowledge. The Māori projects all emphasised the importance of intangible outcomes and the difficulty of showing validity where stakeholders do not understand the significance of these outcomes, which are regarded as too difficult to measure. The project groups were keen to challenge such ideas within their practice as they promote the development of Māori from a Māori perspective.

119. The Whānau Development Project evaluation reinforced the importance of allowing whānau to define whānau development in their own way, and working from a tikanga base. The use of a third party facilitator with Māori tikanga and development experience was appreciated by the communities worked with (although, as noted, they would have also liked to have had a direct relationship with the funder – the Ministry of Social Development).

120. Cultural development initiatives were undertaken by most of the communities funded through the Whānau Development Project. These included the development of enhanced whānau and hapū knowledge of te reo and tikanga Māori, history and traditional skills, including weaving and karanga. These initiatives were considered to have reinforced cultural identity and self-esteem amongst whānau.

### Lessons learned (Māori community development)

- Māori community development practice is grounded in tikanga and encompasses a collective approach – these processes take time and may be resource intensive
- Effective practices build on existing whānau structures (rather than impose new ones)
- The wide engagement of whānau, together with a holistic approach to issues, can contribute to the sustainability of initiatives
- Care needs to be taken not to overburden whānau with community initiatives that are resource and time intensive
- Outcomes sought by Māori may be regarded as ‘intangible’ by funders and others – this requires flexible thinking about measuring and reporting on outcomes
Summary of lessons learned

Community engagement

- A shared vision is an essential foundation for effective community development.
- Adequate time should be allowed for the vision to be developed (this may take one to two years in communities that have low levels of social cohesion or social capital, or where conflicts need to be resolved).
- A broad range of stakeholders should be drawn on to develop and build on the vision and to continue with the project implementation.

Funder / community relationship

- Relationships based on the principles of partnership can facilitate effective community development.
- To work well, partnerships need to be based on a clear understanding of expectations and operate on the basis of trust.
- Traditional approaches to contracting may need to be revised to support effective partnering. The “Putting pen to paper” report offers some practical lessons.

Clear roles and responsibilities

- Clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders is vital and should be established at the project outset.
- A direct relationship between the project sponsor/funder and the community group appears to be valued by communities and can assist with role clarity.

Planning and outcome development

- Communities and funders must be realistic about what can be achieved within the funded timeframe and set realistic outcomes and goals accordingly.
- Outcomes and goals need to be clearly defined in a way that all stakeholders understand; they need to match the different stages a community may be at.
- There should be sufficient flexibility to recognise that outcomes and goals may change over time; small steps need to be recognised as successes and built on.
- Programmes should recognise and value the importance of building social capital, community cohesion and community capability as outcomes in themselves and plan strategies to achieve them.

Local leadership

- Effective community development requires strong local leadership and support.
- Successful community development initiatives are led and/or coordinated by skilled community development practitioners.

Building community capacity

- Project sponsors/funders may have a legitimate role in building the capacity of communities to meet project requirements.
- This role needs to be balanced against the need to allow communities the autonomy to lead their own development.

Effective collaboration

- Collaboration between government and non-government agencies aids community development projects
Effective collaboration occurs when key stakeholders have a shared interest in outcomes and accountabilities (this could be government mandated).

Sponsoring / funding agencies can assist collaboration by advocating on behalf of the project leaders.

Funding may be required to support non-government entities to collaborate effectively.

Critical reflection and learning

Critical reflection, whether formal or informal, can help to ensure that projects remain focused on their vision and contribute to building the knowledge base.

Māori community development

Māori community development practice is grounded in tikanga and encompasses a collective approach – these processes take time and may be resource intensive.

Effective practices build on existing whānau structures (rather than impose new ones).

The wide engagement of whānau, together with a holistic approach to issues, can contribute to the sustainability of initiatives.

Care needs to be taken not to overburden whānau with community initiatives that are resource and time intensive.

Outcomes sought by Māori may be regarded as ‘intangible’ by funders and others – this requires flexible thinking about measuring and reporting on outcomes.

What do the lessons imply for the first principles work?

121. Reflecting on the above analysis, the following issues have been identified for consideration in the first principles review of the Crown funded schemes:

- It is important to be realistic about what can be achieved through community development initiatives. Community development takes time, and attempts to rush processes (such as community visioning), may undermine the programme.

- Greater results are likely to be achieved by working with communities that already have a ‘base-level’ of social capital and capability. This does not mean the Department should ignore communities with fewer resources, but rather that financial resources should be directed to those with the capability to work with them. Different resources may be needed by communities with differing levels of capability and at different stages of an initiative.

- The Department should be clear about what outcomes it is seeking to achieve through resourcing community development, and how flexible it is prepared to be in the way that funds are used. For example, would building a community swimming pool be ‘accepted’ as contributing to the high-level outcome of ‘strong, sustainable communities’? Answers to such a question will influence the design of alternative funding models (e.g. the use of devolved decision-making mechanisms).

- Community development also carries with it a risk of ‘failure’. The development of alternative funding approaches needs to give consideration to how much failure, and on what scale, the Department (and government) is prepared to accept?

- There may be opportunities to leverage off the programmes and processes established by other government agencies (and potentially local government and
the philanthropic sector) to maximise the potential of community development initiatives. The Department may be able to direct resources in a way that is complementary to other programmes, and build on the community capacities already developed (e.g. by Whānau Ora and the Community Response Model). But it must be noted that at least in one of the programmes reviewed, other state sector agencies were reluctant to provide funding and support once they knew a community was already receiving funding from another agency.

- Relational contracting may provide a useful model for the administration of funds. However, it is important to recognise that there needs to be sufficient flexibility within contracts (or grant-making practices) to accommodate the evolving needs and aspirations of communities.

- Serious consideration needs to be given to the skill set required to effectively support communities throughout the community development process. If the Department were to adopt a greater focus on community development initiatives, it must have sufficient internal capacity to support these.

- Ensuring that communities have sufficient knowledge and expertise in community development practice is also crucial. One way of addressing this may be to make the employment of a (non-departmental) community-based development worker part of any new initiative (c.f. the Community Development Scheme).

- The issue of how to ensure the sustainability of initiatives is a vexed one. Actively working to engage other stakeholders (particularly those with funding capability) is one option, which may result in longer-term funding (and other) support.
Appendix One: Description of Programmes Reviewed

A. Whānau Development Project (Ministry of Social Development 2000–2004)

1. The Whānau Development Project piloted a devolved funding approach which involved the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) providing funding and support for whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities to assess their own needs and develop and deliver local initiatives to meet those needs. The Project was part of the government’s “reducing inequalities” programme that started in 2000.

2. The objective of the Whānau Development Project was “to pilot a mechanism for identifying and supporting programmes that will provide support to and develop families and whānau, in order to pre-empt a need for remedial social services”. The Project aimed to allow communities as much control over the process and content of local initiatives as possible.

3. Fourteen communities in six regions around New Zealand participated in the Whānau Development Project. The regions were selected to ensure a spread of funding across the country; a mix of urban, semi-rural and rural communities; and the inclusion of communities with high social and economic needs. Each region was allocated $130,000 (excluding GST) each year for an initial three-year period.

4. The communities and providers participating in the Whānau Development Project can be grouped into two types: new providers and existing providers. New providers were established in response to the Whānau Development Project. Existing providers used the Whānau Development Project funding to extend or develop their existing services.

5. The model gave communities autonomy to make their own decisions about what was appropriate to the needs of their whānau, and initiatives could be based around any approach that would help to strengthen whānau. The Ministry had no formal expectations about what communities would identify as either whānau development or capability needs or their responses to those needs.

6. The way the funding was used reflected a range of variables, including community histories, populations, skill sets, experiences and aspirations. Communities that were new to receiving funding from government initially used Whānau Development Project funding to establish an office, including renovating basic facilities if necessary, and purchasing office or project equipment.

7. After initial set-up, new providers, like existing providers, generally used the funding for salary or wages for one or two project managers or co-ordinators, office running costs, such as telephones, power and vehicle running costs, and the design and delivery of services and initiatives. In these cases, the funding provided paid employment for project workers for the duration of the project.

Outcomes

8. Outcomes of the Whānau development Project were:

   • development of infrastructure e.g. whānau development office or base, and most established a legal entity and organisational systems and procedures

24 Cabinet Committee on Closing the Gaps GAP (00) M 18/4
skills development – business and strategic planning, including setting a shared vision for the community, financial planning and management, and reporting

building relationships – strengthen relationships among whānau and hapū and strong relationships with the wider community, including other service providers, schools and government agencies

cultural development – enhanced whānau and hapū knowledge of te reo and tikanga Māori, history and traditional skills including weaving and karanga. These initiatives reinforced cultural identity and self-esteem among whānau

youth development – five sites focused on rangatahi and youth development. Providers reported increases in youth self-esteem, confidence, respect for authority figures, positive decision-making and participation in education

educational and employment outcomes – a number of participants gained skills and educational qualifications through their involvement in marae-based wānanga and other Whānau Development Project initiatives (e.g. diplomas in marae studies, certificates in youth work and driver licences)

service delivery – most providers developed and delivered services to whānau, and some enhanced access to existing social services in the community and improved the responsiveness of services to Māori.

Strengths of the model

9. The Whānau Development Project model let communities define whānau development in their own way. They were free to explore interventions ranging from financial support for whānau activities, to events designed to strengthen whakawhānaungatanga and pride in being Māori, to structured training programmes and personal skill development.

10. The model gave communities an opportunity to think about issues facing their whānau. Many communities saw Whānau Development Project funding as a way of putting into effect whānau development activities they had already planned or wanted to carry out.

11. The funding was flexible and could be used for capital purchases such as vans, office equipment or building renovations that were important for whānau development. Communities find it difficult to secure funding for these items because they fall outside the scope of most contracts for service.

12. Whānau relationships were strengthened in most of the communities, as were relationships between community members, and between Māori and local service providers.

13. The initiatives resulting from the Whānau Development Project had a range of positive outcomes for whānau and communities, including development of new provider organisations, development of skills, youth development, cultural development, education and employment outcomes.

Weaknesses of the model

14. Communities had to devote time and resources to discussing and agreeing on an initiative, establishing a legal entity and developing administrative procedures. The Ministry appeared to be under pressure to sign contracts at the beginning of the process. The model needed to allow time for these processes to occur. In at least
one case, the community was not ready for this approach to funding and the money got in the way of a vision for whānau development.

15. Sites reported they would have liked more support, especially with project management, planning and reporting. The Whānau Development Project was characterised by a “hands off” approach, which encouraged communities to make their own decisions. The aim of restoring trust in government was initially reduced by using a third party for contracting and monitoring. All communities reported wanting earlier and more frequent contact with the Ministry.

16. The Ministry needed to commit enough time, money and staff to the project to achieve the good relationship it was seeking.

17. Contracts may not have been the most appropriate tool for working with communities. The contract negotiation process took time, and it was difficult for communities to predict outcomes two or three years into the future when they were trialling innovative new ideas. Initiatives often changed and developed as time went by, and contracts became out of date.

18. All providers had to deal with the sometimes conflicting demands of implementing a government contract while trying to meet grassroots needs. Contracted objectives were vague and difficult to monitor; providers needed more help in establishing useful indicators and preparing monitoring reports.

19. Most sites had difficulty securing funding for a whānau development co-ordinator position, office running costs and ongoing service delivery once the Whānau Development Project funding ended.

B. Local Level Solutions (Te Puni Kōkiri 2000–2004)

20. The Local Level Solutions (LLS) programme was administered by Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK) from 2000 to 2004, with funding allocated through Budget 2000. The aim of the programme was to reduce inequalities, while simultaneously developing Māori communities.

21. The programme aimed to support the government’s commitment to continue to contribute to the sustainable development of whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori. The programme provided for community groups to enter into partnership agreements with government to progress their development initiatives on behalf of their communities.

22. Fifteen LLS initiatives were approved by Cabinet over three financial years from 2000/01 to 2002/03, for which TPK had lead responsibility for six (one in 2000/01, four in 2001/02, and one in 2002/03).

**Partnership in practice**

23. The contractual agreement between TPK and the LLS groups was referred to as a ‘Funding and Relationship Agreement’. This approach reflected the desired relationship between the two parties – to be partners in development and growth.

24. These agreements differed from standard service delivery contracts in that they: emphasised the importance of the partnership relationship; were negotiated with the groups to reflect flexibility; and set out principles that underpinned the relationship between the two parties. All agreements contained a Treaty of Waitangi clause.
25. The relationship approach – being partners in development and growth – assumed mutual acknowledgement and respect of each party’s contribution. For TPK this meant having to balance public accountability while meeting the programme’s objective to provide support to whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori to develop their initiatives.

26. A number of LLS groups grasped this concept well and assumed primary responsibility for developing and delivering their initiatives. However there was an underlying expectation among some groups that TPK would ‘not allow them to fail’ and saw TPK as having a pivotal role in this.

27. The principle of partnership appeared to be the most difficult aspect to balance. Some groups reported they felt they had been told what to do, while others reported that agencies had tried very hard not to exert too much control.

Outcomes

28. The outcomes of the LLS initiatives were:

- increased ability to access resources and services from state sector agencies including weekly visits from agencies to isolated rural communities
- improved circumstances of community residents, including accessing driving lessons to secure employment
- repairs to community houses
- implementation of a community developed response to a community problem
- increased skills and knowledge of community individuals in relation to business operations, budgets, project management and effective leadership style
- increased knowledge and understanding of public accountability
- groups had to review their current status before stepping into the LLS programme including identifying the current and available social capital, reconfirm their vision and develop appropriate plans.

What worked?

29. The following aspects of the LLS Programme worked well:

- Partnership relationships – The level of commitment each partner contributes to establishing and maintaining the relationship is crucial to its effectiveness and success.
- Organisational capacity and capability – The capacity and capability of the funding agency to support groups achieve their solutions and improve outcomes in their communities is fundamental to successful programmes. Some LLS groups were in early stages of service delivery, therefore activities that supported their establishment were as important as the implementation of their initiatives.
- Whole of Government response – Targeting a cross-sectoral response to community needs was a unique and clearly successful dimension to the LLS programme. The initiatives sought to facilitate access to resources and services from other state sector agencies.
- Leadership – Commitment of key individuals championing the establishment and implementation of locally developed solutions was significant to the LLS programme. Some individuals had dedicated significant time to the initiatives and did not want them to fail.
What could have been done better?

30. The evaluation identified some factors that may have limited the programme's ability to realise the outcomes it sought to achieve:

- groups and communities were not adequately informed about the LLS programme, including processes for selection and approval (long delays of up to 12 months, as Cabinet took decisions, caused frustration for some groups)
- the principles and expectations underpinning the relationship needed to be clearly understood and agreed by both parties
- greater clarity was needed on the respective roles of head office and regional office staff in the administration of the programme
- there was a perception that other state sector agencies were reluctant to provide funding and support to groups once they had been accepted into the LLS programme.

31. Developing benchmarks identifying the socio-economic status of communities involved in the programme would have, to some extent, provided a baseline to measure changes in communities and successes against. For example, if TPK had the capacity it could have had a role in producing LLS community profiles.

32. The LLS programme was developed and implemented quickly; this meant it had no theoretical framework and logic underpinning it. An important issue in respect of the LLS programme was managing accountability while recognising the autonomy of the participant groups. Clear systems, processes and practices are needed to provide that balance. Some groups had sufficient capacity and capability to move into implementation, while others were requiring support to establish and build capacity.

C. Stronger Communities Action Fund (former Department of Child, Youth and Family Services – 2001 to 2005)

33. The Department of Child, Youth and Family Services initiated the Stronger Communities Action Fund (SCAF) project in seven communities in 2001 (a further two were added in 2002). The high level objective was to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in disadvantaged communities.

34. The goals of the pilots were to:
- test models of devolved decision making across a range of communities
- encourage communities to identify their own social service needs
- support the development and funding of innovative, community-based responses to local needs
- develop capacity in the communities involved
- contribute to increasing the stock of social capital in those same communities.

35. A funding pool of $1.6 million was established in Child, Youth and Family in early 2001 for “devolved funding pilots”. Funding was initially provided to seven communities (two more were added in 2002) for three years, some were extended to four years.

36. The pilots tested a devolved funding model, which was a three-way partnership between a fund-holding organisation, the community and Child, Youth and Family. The role of the fund-holder was to act as the “banker” and release funds on the
direction of a community decision-making body, and to ensure accountability was maintained. The role of the community was to develop a representative decision-making process, to assess local needs and priorities, and to make decisions on the allocation of the fund. Child, Youth and Family’s role was to provide funding, be available for advice and support, and to evaluate the impact of the fund.

**Outcomes**

37. An evaluation of the Glen Innes SCAF pilot was completed. A range of projects were funded under the pilot, which included:

- a community directory and map
- various celebratory events
- preparation of multi-lingual resources
- a Whānau Development Programme
- an upgrade of Ruapotaka Marae
- the development of a community governance model.

38. The SCAF pilot was one of four strands of the wider Ka Mau Te Wero strategy for Glen Innes. The integration of projects was an example of a local initiative in partnership with the Territorial Local Authority (rather than a whole of government approach).

**Key lessons**

39. The key lessons from Glen Innes about the use of devolved funding through the SCAF pilot was that the process:

- was slow to get started – in part through novelty and a new programme being set up in an established environment
- was the source of some initial conflict followed by unprecedented collaboration
- ensured that funding decisions were informed by local understandings, information and networks
- generated local participation, energy and pride
- highlighted contradictions between devolved funding and centrally managed programmes.

**Success**

40. Success comes from the combination of a number of initiatives that succeed in their own right.
emerged from the New Zealand Sustainable Development Programme of Action (2003).25

42. The Sustainable Communities vision was: “To achieve strong, liveable and prosperous communities in Auckland through a sustainable development approach”.

43. The Sustainable Communities vision and objectives were delivered primarily through two demonstration projects: Progress Papakura; and SC² – Sustainable Communities Sustainable Catchment (which built on Waitakere City’s project Twin Streams).

44. The Sustainable Communities programme had three layers of objectives.

1. Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme objectives: demonstrating a contribution to sustainable outcomes on the ground, building community capacity and buy-in to this, and central and local government collaboration.

2. Sustainable Communities Work strand objectives:
   - A shared perspective across each community about basic concepts of sustainable development and sustainable communities.
   - Informed and connected communities leading their own sustainable development in partnership with central government agencies and other stakeholders.
   - Implementation of practical sustainable development initiatives in each demonstration project that contribute to community well-being outcomes.
   - Increased central and local government effectiveness in coordinating strategies, services and resources around community outcomes through a collaborative, learning approach.

3. Objectives for each of the demonstration projects.

45. The Department of Internal Affairs (the Department) wanted to use the two demonstration projects to test the principles for sustainable community development contained in the discussion paper: A Framework for Developing Sustainable Communities (November 2002), in particular the “enablers.” 26

Description of projects

46. The Sustainable Communities initiative was facilitated by a working group made up of representatives from the project co-leaders: the Department and the Auckland Regional Council. The group met regularly to guide the project and reflect on key lessons.

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25 Information has been taken directly from publications on the Sustainable Communities website, including: R. Trotman, Progress Papakura/ Sustainable Communities Summative Evaluation (October 2004 – June 2007); R. Trotman, Sustainable Communities – Sustainable Catchment (SC2) Summative Evaluation (October 2004 – June 2007); R. Trotman, Sustainable Communities Workstrand Summative Evaluation (October 2004 – June 2007). All published by Department of Internal Affairs and Auckland Regional Council (2007).

26 Enablers of sustainable community development include (i) community identity, pride, participation and self-determination (ii) skilled leaders and capable organisations (iii) access by communities and community groups to resources, including funding, skills, services and technology (iv) access by communities and community groups to information about innovative approaches developed within their own and other communities (v) the capacity to build partnerships and develop linkages both within their own community and with other communities (vi) access by all parties to advice, information and research (vii) an appropriate regulatory environment and a sustainable approach to development (viii) necessary local administrative infrastructure. (Sustainable Community Development Framework p21.)
47. The work strand was supported by a project manager based in DIA, and was guided by an annual project plan focused on meeting reporting commitments, evaluation and supporting the demonstration projects.

Progress Papakura

48. Progress Papakura aimed to explore how central, regional and local government collaboration could support community involvement in developing sustainable outcomes in Papakura. The vehicles for doing this were the Community Outcomes Planning process and the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) process – at the time all local authorities were required by the Local Government Act 2002 to undertake this process. Progress Papakura placed a strong focus on government collaborating to consult the Papakura community as to the outcomes it sought for the District. Once the community outcomes were identified, the aim was then to undertake joint projects to further priority outcomes.

49. The project began in September 2004 and received $80,000 annually to 30 June 2007.

Key activities

50. The key activities of the project from July 2006 to June 2007 are summarised below.

- A Youth Leadership Programme – a programme of workshops with young people on youth development, civic understanding and participation.
- Rangatahi Project – a demographic profile of young people in Papakura, to feed into a Papakura Youth Strategy.
- Resourcing of meetings of Whaitiaki throughout the year.
- Funding for a hui for iwi to discuss and mandate proposals emerging through Whaitiaki and the Council’s Annual Plan.
- Funding for Whaitiaki members to present to a central and local government forum in Wellington. The title of the presentation was “Collaborative Solutions with Māori: Whaitiaki links with Papakura District Council”.
- Production of the Māori Outcomes Plan and funding for its launch.
- Funding research to tell the Ngati Tamaoho history in the area.
- Participation in a Sustainable Communities Learning Forum in March 2007, to share lessons from the project with a wide audience, which included community participants.

51. The greatest expenditure related to the development, production and launch of the Māori Outcomes Plan.

52. A number of planned projects did not occur, these included capturing stories across the four ‘well-beings’ – the cultural story of Papakura Marae, the environmental story of Pahurehure Inlet and the economic story of a local business. Also, planned discussions within the local community on key sustainable development issues for Papakura did not eventuate.

SC² – Sustainable Communities Sustainable Catchment (Project Twin Streams)

53. Project Twin Streams began in 2003 and is a $45m, ten year project that has two broad aims:

- To restore six streams and their surrounding areas in Waitakere City, largely by approaching storm water management differently
To creatively engage local communities in this, to support them to become kaitiaki or guardians of the streams long term, strengthen their local communities and live more sustainably.

54. The premise underpinning Project Twin Streams is that it is not possible to restore natural waterways without working with the people and communities who are part of the local catchment. This means looking beyond stream restoration to a sustainable community development approach that promotes the interconnectedness of economic, social, cultural, spiritual and environmental aspects of life.

55. The key aim of SC² was to support and learn from Project Twin Streams’ approach to community engagement and local sustainable development, and to apply the lessons emerging in ways that support other local sustainable development efforts.

56. The core of this approach lies in contracting community organisations in five areas to engage people in Project Twin Streams in locally appropriate ways. Overall, SC² presented an opportunity to enrich the sustainable community development approach evolving through Project Twin Streams, and to capture the lessons emerging in ways that inform other local sustainable development efforts.

57. SC² was driven by a working group which included representatives from Project Twin Streams, the Department and the Auckland Regional Council. SC² began in November 2004 and was funded to June 2007 by Sustainable Communities with an annual budget of $80,000.

Key activities

58. For the community organisations contracted to Project Twin Streams, SC² has been about seeding activity and adding value to what is going on at the community level. SC² also seeded an Arts Coordinator, which is perceived to have shown the power of creativity to connect and engage people in Project Twin Streams and sustainable action. The evaluation notes that a key lesson from SC² is the importance and potential of using creative methods to engage communities in local sustainable development. It needs to be noted that these results relate to only one part of a larger project.

59. Key achievements of the project to 30 June 2006 were:

- The major initiative was the development of an Economic Development Action Plan to identify local economic development opportunities via Project Twin Streams for local iwi and Maori, the wider community and through ‘green’ technologies.
- Discussions between Te Ukaipo/Sisters of Mercy and SC² stakeholders on the spiritual aspects of Project Twin Streams (PTS). Out of this came the idea for a ‘Stirring Stories’ Project, to identify community-based stories emerging through PTS.
- Funding a one day hui between members of local iwi Te Kawerau a Maki and Te Piataata Trust, which resulted in a joint Strategic Plan for working together to promote Maori well-being.
- A stakeholder workshop to explore sustainable community development concepts for SC² and what these mean in practice.
- Support for a workshop with PTS-contracted community organisations on the evaluation of PTS and how to talk about sustainable development in local communities.

60. Activities during July 2006 to June 2007 included:

- A “Stirring Stories” DVD that captures community stories of people’s involvement with Project Twin Streams
• Funding for a position to further the Project Twin Streams Economic Development Action Plan, which was funded by SC² in 2006
• A Pa Harakeke garden to grow flax for weaving alongside the Opanuku Stream.
• Funding for Community Waitakere to develop key organisational documents based on partnering principles (for example an employment agreement)
• Part-funding a contract position to broker a relationship agreement between the ARC and Project Twin Streams and to explore long term community governance of Project Twin Streams
• Participation in a Sustainable Communities Learning Forum.

**Strengths and weaknesses of the Sustainable Communities Programme**

61. Perceived strengths of the Sustainable Communities Programme overall were:

- The strong government mandate to collaborate through this project
- Levels of government working together to support local communities, in part by building on existing projects and local strengths
- Strong relationships built, and a well documented project that will produce ongoing connections and activity
- Exploration of the connections between people and places via both demonstration projects.

62. The weaknesses of the Sustainable Communities Programme were:

- That the Programme was a big ask, with high expectations and limited resources.
- That the objectives were unrealistic and predetermined, instead of being adapted over time as the projects changed.
- The Department “Enabler Framework” was resisted and eventually ignored by both projects.
- The Sustainable Communities Programme had a weak relationship with the Auckland Sustainable Cities Programme overall, and opportunities were lost by a lack of integration across its strands.
- Respondents felt that this initiative was marked by lots of process and planning and not enough action.
- The demonstration projects had limited success connecting with other government agencies outside of the two lead agencies, the Auckland Regional Council and the Department.
- Success was minimal in raising wider community awareness and understanding of sustainable development. Project Papakura also struggled to articulate what sustainable development meant for the project.
- While local communities benefited from both projects, meaningful community involvement in them was limited, although this was considered appropriate given that both focused on government collaboration.

63. To support local sustainable development, collaborative approaches were felt to be needed rather than competition, relationship development and community involvement need to be funded, and partnering or relationship agreements are more appropriate than contracts.

64. Sustainable Communities is considered to have had significant local impact in both localities, reasonable regional impact, and little national impact.
65. SC² scored highly against the ten Bellagio principles for local sustainable development; Papakura low to medium. The Department “enablers” had a weak relationship with both projects.

66. Sustainable Communities supported Papakura to develop a better Community Plan, and Project Twin Streams to entrench its sustainable community development approach, and make progress across its social, cultural and economic aspects.

**Lessons learned from the Sustainable Communities Programme**

67. The lessons learned were:

- Government collaboration around community outcomes is likely to be most effective in consulting jointly to identify desired community outcomes, and undertaking joint projects to respond to specific priority outcomes.

- SC²/Project Twin Streams has articulated its sustainable community development approach, which is built on community development principles, resourcing communities to take responsibility and connecting and taking action across all aspects of well-being, from human to environmental. There is no one recipe for sustainable development or collaboration, and a key lesson is to be discerning as to when to collaborate and for what purpose.

- Collaboration is likely to be useful and effective when:
  - There are high levels of complexity, uncertainty and the issues are difficult to frame
  - An issue has multiple, interrelated root causes
  - Traditional or common approaches aren’t working
  - The issue is long term in nature
  - There are multiple stakeholders and accountability is shared
  - All parties have a vested interest and will clearly benefit from being involved
  - There are processes to hold people and organisations to account.
  - Collaboration is less likely to be effective when:
    - There is limited time and scarce staff resource, or lack of capacity to put in the time and energy required
    - There is no passion or clear commitment to work together (“knock three times then walk away”).

68. Both demonstration projects highlighted the potential of resourcing tangata whenua to lead local and national conversations around sustainable development in Aotearoa/New Zealand. SC² experience also suggests that a toolkit be developed to support communities to lead sustainable development action; that creative engagement workers be funded; and that communities working in environmental and sustainable action nationally link together.

69. The evaluations note that while involvement in these projects was hard work for everyone involved, respondents felt that they had benefitted personally and professionally, and that benefits for local communities had been gained.

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27 The Bellagio principles were developed in response to the need to find better ways of assessing sustainable development. Principles include: taking a holistic approach; being practical; communicating effectively, and undertaking ongoing, reflexive assessment.
E. Local Action Research Projects (Department of Internal Affairs 2003–2006)

Introduction

70. In 2003 the Department set out to test the usefulness of the Framework for Developing Sustainable Communities and the potential of the community broker role within local action research projects (LARPS). The community broker role was tested in two sites – Kaikohe and Raetihi.

71. In early 2007, focus groups were convened with members of community groups in Kaikohe and Raetihi, as well as with community members from five other sites, in which the Department had contributed to community development projects through the conventional community development advisory and funding roles.

72. In all cases, focus group participants were asked about the goals of their projects and how they were set; what worked well and not so well in the projects and related goals; and their experiences with the Department on tasks and projects. Groups were also asked how they would define sustainable community development.

Description of the approach

73. The Department selected two communities in which a community development and funding advisor could dedicate a portion of their time to an expanded community broker role. The community broker role was described as having four components: building capacity; fostering collaboration; promoting sustainability; and championing inclusiveness.

74. The advisor based in Kaikohe was allocated 0.5 FTE to act in the community broker role; an advisor based in Palmerston North was allocated 0.33 FTE to work in the role in Raetihi.

75. Project coordinating groups comprised of local community people were established to develop community outcomes and to plan and contribute to local projects aimed at achieving the outcomes. The advisors began by working closely with community organisations and project coordinating groups in each area, to develop shared local community outcomes. They continued to work over a three-year period to support the project coordinating groups to:

- identify and achieve six-month outcomes (such as establish a community committee that reflected the community)
- carry out outcome-related project activities and initiatives (such as establish committee policies and procedures)
- identify enablers or mechanisms the communities could use to develop in a sustainable way (such as skilled leadership)
- carry out enabler initiatives (such as help locate examples of best practice in terms of committee policies and procedures).

28 Department of Internal Affairs (2002) A Framework for Developing Sustainable Communities: Discussion Paper. Developed by the Department of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Social Development, the former Child, Youth and Family and the former Community Employment Group of the Department of Labour.


30 See earlier footnote for the list of ‘enablers’ in the Department’s Sustainability Framework.
76. The Local Action Research Project model shared accountability for the achievement of outcomes and related activities between the community, the project coordinating group, and the community broker.

**Achievements**

77. The Kaikohe coordinating group – established as the Kaikohe Action Group (KAG) – set a three-year outcome goal: To develop economic and other opportunities while retaining the unique characteristics of the Kaikohe community.

78. Feedback from the Kaikohe focus group indicated that:
- the projects and activities identified had aims similar to those of the Local Action Research Project and were consistent with an action research approach having been taken (although they could not be directly and causally linked to the actions of the KAG and the community broker)
- particular achievements related to a project focused on an integrated approach to the well-being of people in the district; projects related to youth in the education domain; and crime prevention activities to keep older people safe at ATMs.

79. The Raetihi coordinating group – established as the Raetihi Forum – set a three-year outcome goal: Raetihi will be a safe, empowered community, respectful of diversity, working for well-being and unity.

80. Feedback from the Raetihi focus group indicated that:
- some projects and activities had been successful and had contributed to identified outcome goals, while others had been less successful
- successful projects included: the use of slots on community radio to raise awareness of Raetihi issues; an oral history project being undertaken with a number of other groups; and the establishment of a Trust for the purposes of making applications to funding bodies
- two examples provided of projects that had been less successful had not been initiated by the Forum – rather they had been led by the Department community broker, and a third example related to a project initiated by a volunteer, who did not have the capacity to complete the work (construction of a website) in a timely way, resulting in a loss of momentum for other initiatives.

81. The research concluded that:

The three year ‘outcomes’ for the LARPS in Kaikohe and Raetihi were worded more as inspirational goals rather than as measurable outcomes. Had the outcomes been phrased more specifically, realistically, and with time bounds, the project coordinating groups might have had a better chance of reporting on modest but tangible outcomes for their communities. (p.30)

**Views on the community broker role**

82. Feedback from both focus groups suggested that the trial of the community broker role was hampered in a number of ways:
- participants felt that the part-time nature of the role meant that Departmental advisors were not able to support them in ways that they would have liked – e.g. administrative support to coordinating group (they also felt they had not necessarily received the amount of time that had been allocated)
the parameters of the Departmental community broker role were not clear (e.g. was it to lead or to support LARP activity?). This resulted in unmet community expectations about the support provided to the coordinating groups; the degree to which brokers could help to identify and address barriers to projects; and the extent to which brokers could be expected to take an enabling approach such as accessing and providing relevant information to groups.

83. One of the roles of the community broker was to broker relationships between key stakeholders. Once introduced, the parties were expected to keep the relationships going, if desired. However, project coordinating group members noted difficulties in maintaining the relationships, particularly with local authorities.

**Lessons learned from the Local Action Research Projects**

84. The project coordinating groups identified the following lessons for themselves and for the Department:

- It takes time to get community projects such as LARPS off the ground. The department and the communities need to be realistic about what can be achieved in three years. Outcomes need to be phrased accordingly.
- The expectations about what a part-time community broker can facilitate for community groups also need to be realistic.
- A locally-based community broker is likely to be of more assistance than one from a distant location.
- The role of the community broker needs to be better articulated and communicated to project coordinating groups in order to manage expectations.
- Changes in community broker personnel are likely to adversely impact on groups’ ability to keep the momentum going on community projects.
- Project coordinating groups are likely to require significant assistance if they are to maintain relationships with some key stakeholders such as local authorities.
- Community brokers could provide better support to projects through sharing information about ‘what works’.
- Volunteers are essential for sustainable community development; however, they need to be sufficiently skilled to do the work expected of them.
- The accountability for the achievement of outcomes and outcome-related activities between the community, the project coordinating group and the community broker needs to be made more explicit.

85. The research concluded that:

> The perceptions and experiences of focus group participants within each of the seven community groups involved in this research were all quite different. Achievement of outcomes and projects relating to outcomes varied across the community groups in ways which could not be clearly linked with variations in community development approaches taken by the Department.

> In reality, there appeared to be very little difference between the community broker approach and the usual approach taken by Departmental community development and funding advisors, making it impossible to judge whether either approach was any more effective than the other. (Emphasis added)

86. Additional lessons from the research project were:
• The skills and the attributes of the individual advisor (Department or Department funded) appeared to be more important than the approach.

• It may be that Crown-funded community-development workers with their single project focus and on-site availability can achieve comparatively more (than Departmental workers) in the same amount of time.

• Sustainability of membership of community groups is important for the sustainability of community projects.
Appendix Two – Other NZ case studies

1. Department site visits – summary
We carried out visits to 12 community development projects around New Zealand to identify some of the critical success factors for community development in New Zealand. The sites visited were:

**Project sites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Nature of Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIPPY South Kaipara</td>
<td>South Kaipara</td>
<td>A home-based intervention programme, which supports parents to become actively involved in their four and five year old children’s learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ka Mau Te Wero Charitable Trust</td>
<td>Glen Innes</td>
<td>Provides a community voice for the people of Glenn Innes, and facilitates partnerships for the benefit of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLaren Park Henderson South Community Initiative</td>
<td>Waitakere</td>
<td>An integrated community development programme with a range of projects designed to meet community needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men and Family Centre</td>
<td>South Kaipara</td>
<td>Assists men of all ages who are underachieving and struggling to take up responsibilities in their families and the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patea Youth Trust</td>
<td>Patea</td>
<td>Provides after school activities and a place to go for youth in Patea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whakaahurangi Marae</td>
<td>Stratford</td>
<td>An urban marae for taurahere in Stratford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titoki Native Plant Nursery</td>
<td>Kāpiti</td>
<td>Provides training and work for people with mental health issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Shed</td>
<td>Naenae</td>
<td>Provides companionship and skilled work for retired and unemployed men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngati Kuia Pride</td>
<td>Blenheim/Nelson</td>
<td>Aims to strengthen the unique identity of the Ngāti Kuia people, facilitate greater participation in Ngāti Kuia activities and build sustainable leadership within the iwi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victory Community Centre</td>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>Coordinates a range of social, cultural and recreational activities and provides free (or low cost) health and social services to the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linwood Resource Centre</td>
<td>Christchurch</td>
<td>Acts as a community hub and provides a range of activities for individuals and groups in the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashburton Immigrants and Newcomers Research Project</td>
<td>Ashburton</td>
<td>Provides services for migrants and newcomers in Ashburton to support their integration into the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Community Renewal Projects – Housing NZ Corporation

The Community Renewal programme seeks to promote change to the economic, social and physical environment in areas with a high deprivation index ranking and where the Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC) has a high concentration of properties. Community Renewal is designed to operate as a partnership between HNZC, local and
central government agencies and the people living in renewal areas to promote safe, healthy, confident communities.

There are currently a total of six Community Renewal projects that make up the programme: Aranui, Clendon, Eastern Porirua, Fordlands, Northcote and Talbot Park. The projects vary in scale and in scope, reflecting the unique features and needs and aspirations of the particular project area.

The outcomes against which Community Renewal is measured in this evaluation are:

- joined up responses and solutions
- implementation of community led solutions
- achievement of community participation and ownership
- delivery of needs based tenancy and property management services
- improved safety and reduced crime
- the building of social networks
- encouragement of employment and business growth
- improvements to the physical environment, amenities and services
- increased capital value of the asset base
- healthy communities
- respecting and valuing community diversity
- improved outside perceptions.

The evaluation concluded that Community Renewal is moving towards the achievement of all 12 outcomes evaluated. The extent to which progress is being made on each outcome varies greatly between projects. In terms of community development, the evaluation identified a number of challenges, centred on tensions between different objectives and timeframes.

For example the goals, principles, objectives, and outcomes for Community Renewal place a strong emphasis on operating in accordance with community development principles, working in ways that strengthen and empower local communities. The importance of adopting this manner of working is reflected in outcomes such as community-led solutions, community ownership, joined-up responses and building social networks. However, other outcomes, such as making improvements to the physical environment and local services and increasing the capital value of the asset base, reflect the importance of delivering tangible, visible changes within a short space of time.

Given the time constraint on each project and the need to demonstrate results, it is inevitable that there will be tension between these two overarching outcomes – making physical improvements and empowering the local community. The former can be achieved in a short time, dependent only on resource constraints. Community development on the other hand is more difficult to demonstrate, is dependent on a variety of factors which cannot be controlled by HNZC and is a long-term, on-going process.

Implementation of community-led solutions
All of the projects had attempted to engage their local communities in the project planning process. Greater emphasis on building capacity and leadership in the local communities will be required before these communities can begin to take on the role envisaged under Community Renewal. Community Renewal staff emphasised the need for the National Office to give explicit recognition to the time required for community development and community engagement in decision-making.

3. Victory Village

This was one of our site visits, but since then an evaluation has been completed – David Stuart, *Paths of Victory: Victory Village – a Case Study*, Families Commission, 2010. The following information is from the evaluation.

Victory Primary School developed its vision and practices in a family-centred direction in the early 2000s. In the mid-1990s, the school was struggling to provide a strong learning environment, and the school and community were not well connected. An early catalyst for change was frustration about the perceived lack of social services support for high-needs families in the area.

In 2005 the current community centre manager picked up the threads of this earlier work and, through a Ministry of Social Development Community Initiatives Fund grant, embarked on a community consultation to develop a more effective system of services for residents, and build community social capital. Out of this environment the decision to combine the development of a school hall and an integrated community health centre was taken.

Families received support that addressed needs, but was adaptable and evolving as families’ circumstances, needs and capacities changed. Reciprocity was strongly evident – as people were helped, so they became helpers. There was a community centredness to the work and a clear understanding about how child, family and community outcomes were interconnected. Relationships were a strong element of the underlying principles.

The school and community centre were the junction point of a network of activities to enhance family and community well-being and this was a conscious aspiration. At the centre there were three strands: one-to-one services for families; community centre programmes including physical activity, social and educational programmes; and community events.

The case study method did not allow a causal link to be drawn between Victory Village activities and outcomes. However, such a relationship was strongly asserted in interview data.

For students, attendance and achievement in literacy and numeracy have improved significantly since 2000. The roll also stabilised from over 60 percent of the roll turning over in 1999, to 9 percent turning over in 2008. Students were reported as being motivated, engaged with strong self-efficacy and having positive relationships with teachers.

Families were reported as experiencing better access to services and enhanced health and well-being. Families were more confident and this confidence had an impact on the frequency and quality of engagements with teachers and their capacity to be positively involved in their children’s learning generally.

Outcomes reported at the community level included stronger connections between families, and an energised and engaged community that was transforming its reputation. The school was benefiting from these outcomes: better links to parents and other professionals was assisting teachers to be more effective for all students. The Victory Village developments took the school to the next level of effectiveness for families and students – by having an infrastructure that matched their commitment to family-centred practice.