

Creating Leaderful Communities Workshop Report

**Friday August 28th 2009
Ruapotaka Marae, Glen Innes**



Setting the Scene: Perspectives on Leadership

Close to 100 people from communities across Auckland came to hear, think and talk about how local communities can increasingly be full of leaders at the Ruapotaka Marae, Glen Innes, on 28 August 2009.

"Each one - teach one" was a catchy phrase that emerged about spreading leadership in neighbourhoods and local communities.

Pat Snedden, chair of the Auckland District Health Board, the Housing NZ Board and the Tamaki Transformation Board, and a longstanding economic adviser to the Ngati Whatua o Orakei Maori Trust Board, shared insights on leadership from his years of experience.

Pat talked about leadership being full of risk; the importance of lifting our sights above the trivia of small patch protection; and certain important characteristics of leadership, including:

- Serial humility
- The capacity to engage and participate
- The willingness to take risk in pursuit of what is right
- Integrity
- Commitment to honour all parties involved - we will honour you as you honour us

- And with these, the possibility for co-design.

According to Pat one of the most significant leaderful moments in Tamaki Transformation so far was the welcoming of the Prime Minister to Ruapotaka Marae. He talked about the importance of the leader of the state coming to the Rangatiratanga of the place, the community, and being welcomed. "This creates new possibilities. We are with them and they are with us."

Pat also spoke strongly about public servants being in "service of communities" – not 'for or to' communities. To read more about Pat's thoughts on servant leadership and transformation see <http://www.archivesearch.co.nz/default.aspx?webid=MGT&articleid=47238>

Bones and Mark, inspiring leaders and change makers from the Auckland Notorious Chapter of the Mongrel Mob, shared the story of the Chapter completely re-orienting their lives.

Motivated by wanting a better life for their children, Bones described the challenge of leading from the position of being "the ostracised of the ostracised". It is a hard place but the determination is total and there are some strongly positive results.



The transformational change for them is to take a whanau ora approach to everything they do. Bones talked about the process of "the feeler, the shaker, and the insider" in the analogy of the box, and how the insider who knows best what's inside the box is often not the determiner of change. He advocated for the importance of including the insiders of our communities taking the lead with the support of the shakers and feelers, people are on the outside of our communities but willing to help and support.

Forming the Rent a Bro business has allowed them to be more self determining and provide employment for their own members as well as teaching basic life skills to their own rangatahi. [Read more here.](#)

Soana Pamaka, Principal of Tamaki College - New Zealand's first Tongan School Principal - and local community leader, talked about 'gutsy humility' as a vital leadership ingredient and the high emotional cost that working with community carries. She described herself as a 'walking alongside leader' - not in front, not behind, but beside staff - yet always willing to front for decisions and crucial issues. This approach automatically leads to really connecting with children and their parents, seeing the school as an inherent part of the community, not just as a school. She sees herself very much as "a servant in disguise". Her relationships with people are paramount. Tamaki College is turning a corner, Soana said, with kids achieving better results and more going on to university, other tertiary institutes or jobs when they leave school.



Soana reminded us that when Tamaki College gets it right – the Glen Innes and Pamure communities will get it right, reinforcing the notion that schools and communities can't be thought of in isolation from each other, success is intertwined.

Key Themes From Workshop Discussions

In world café style leadership conversation, forum participants discussed three questions.

1. What kind of leadership do we need to inspire community growth?

Some broad concepts

- Ⓢ Leadership isn't taken or assumed, it's affirmed by others
- Ⓢ About taking turns, moving leadership around, no room for 'gate keepers'
- Ⓢ Not a standard corporate model of leadership
- Ⓢ Visible changes/results to keep people there and others joining in – a true sense of community being in charge of own destiny

Summary of points made:

- Not one but range of leadership styles needed, diversity is good
 - Leadership in many different places eg. leadership in institutions, leadership in communities, leadership from different cultures, ages, gender, life experience etc
 - Different styles at different times
 - Local styles that reflect individual communities and their contexts/needs/strengths
 - No one leader will have it all
- Cultural contexts to leadership need to be acknowledged
 - Different expectations/norms sit behind eg. whanaunatanga
 - Constraints/hierarchies in terms of 'who' is allowed to lead
 - Growing 'leaderful' may need to evolve in different ways
- Servant leadership
 - Leadership from behind
 - Nurturing others to stand in front
 - Encourages others' stories to be told
 - About the community, not the individual: honesty not ego led
 - Strong communicator, broker and connector
- Builds from and celebrate strengths of others
 - Ability to reframe negatives into positives
 - Actively looks and recognises strengths of individuals and communities
 - Encourages others' stories to be told
- Listening and engaging with others who want to 'hear'
 - Relational focus: values and makes room for diverse perspectives and people
 - Engages at 'heart' level as well as head
 - Genuine consultation and inclusion (authentic enquiry) = people feel they've been listened to/heard
 - Sensitive to mood/context changes within communities
 - Not expect their vision to be someone else's vision
 - Able to interpret and reframe
 - Caring, compassionate, empathetic
- Empowering (great leaders grow other leaders, light touch by those people/agencies who have 'more' power/resources)
 - Desire to find and grow leadership of 'insiders'
 - Actively involving local people/residents: brings people out, inspires confidence in others that it's worth participating
 - Nurturing, encouraging, finding pathways to support leaders to grow: each one teach one, enabling others to find and reach their potential
 - Non judgemental

- Non hierarchical
- Open sharing of wisdom and knowledge
- 'Learning' leadership
 - Willingness to do things differently, learn new ways of leading
 - More than one mode of operating
 - Willing to get 'inside the box' – not just shake and feel from outside, desire to understand and support multiple views and perspectives
 - Able to move on from 'mistakes'/things that didn't work, use this as a basis to do things different next time
- Collaborative
 - Working with, not to or for
 - Compromising and negotiating: finding common ground
 - Valuing 'the collective'
 - Enabling individual ownership within the collaborative
 - Makes room for and actively fosters emerging leaders/ship
 - Values and actively supports community governance
 - Willing and encouraging of power sharing
 - Willing to share the helm with others
 - Utilises networks and connections to help influence/change
- Visionary
 - Understands the magic that happens when communities connect and work together
 - Looking for new ideas
 - Encourages communities to think bigger
 - Inspires others, lots of passion and enthusiasm
 - Positive attitude, optimistic about the future and what can happen
 - Catalytic: inspires others to act
- Authentic
 - Mana
 - Integrity
 - Values based: cares for people, equity and equality in relationships
 - Trusted and respected by others
 - Accountability
 - Mandate: people have given leaders 'their' voice, leaders roles are affirmed NOT taken
 - Humility: enables others to have honour and be honoured
 - Realistic
 - Patience: sometimes have to wait for others to be ready to hear
 - Consistency and long term commitment
 - Commitment, determination and belief in others
 - Practiced and wise: track record as a 'doer' - others know of/can see what they've done, has fallen over and stood up again, has 'lived'
- Brave, bold, outcomes focused
 - Can respond in/to a crisis and mobilise others
 - Can make decisions
 - Willing to take risks
 - Intentionally strategic: able to do as well as talk
 - Can develop leadership and governance structures that are fit for purpose
- Organic
 - Evolutionary, flexible and responsive to communities as they grow and change
 - Adaptable
 - Opportunistic

2. What challenges do we currently face in growing leadership in our communities?

Some broad concepts

- Ⓢ Lack of connectedness in communities, need for leadership and joined up leadership not really acknowledged or prioritised
- Ⓢ Different understandings and paradigms about leadership- what it is, who takes it, how it's grown, cultural contexts etc.
- Ⓢ Accessible support and learning opportunities to support leadership development and existing leaders

- Cultural beliefs:
 - Lack of understanding as to how to implement different views, perspectives and values around leadership – still feels Eurocentric
 - How to capture the essence of different world views
 - Ethical differences
 - Bi-cultural challenges and context of multiculturalism: how to value kaupapa and not change it into one world view
- Identifying and supporting 'breeding grounds' for leaders eg. Playcentre movement has been key in the past, where are the places now??
 - What would a community leadership pathway look like?
 - How do people know where to go to for support?
 - Visibility of leaders modelling a 'leaderful' approach
- Barriers: apathy/lack of motivation, sexism, racism, resources, transparency, truthfulness, time poor, transitory nature of communities, fear of unknown, lack of self esteem, the label and workload that might come with it, not stopping 'leaders' early enough who poison/derail/capture leadership space/community voice within their own communities - means that many other good people just walk away
- Difficulties in getting people, systems, funders, government, communities thinking outside of the box and how to/why to support community leadership.
 - Hasn't really been a priority area – we tend to think of the projects not in the people leading, building, nurturing, supporting, connecting etc.
 - Outside leaders can have undue influence - become the shakers and feelers and undermine the confidence of local 'insiders' who are leaders/leaders waiting to grow
- Differing perspectives on leadership
 - Generation gap – 'old leaders' not responsive to new/other approaches
 - Succession entrenchment, gate keeping behaviours eg. Maintaining hierarchies and status quo
 - Understanding modern and traditional leadership and the differences
 - Individual agendas and competing systems and frameworks
 - 'Political' elite identifying the leaders rather than communities ie. Often leaders who are identified by power elite aren't the 'real' leaders within communities.
 - Different mindsets of who we look to and see as leaders in our communities eg. Have to be old to be a leader
 - Impact of inspirational leadership eg. Bishop Tamaki can create leaders who see their way as the only way and role of everyone else is to follow
- Tall poppy syndrome
- Linguaging and labels
 - Leader label often gets in the way, people don't relate to it or see themselves/want to promote themselves as 'leaders of'
 - Need for new terminology that's more inclusive eg. Community leaders vs community champions??

- Perception that you have to be 'popular' to be a leader – sometimes being a leader means being comfortable with being not popular
- Changing political priorities – can destabilise good things happening in communities and demoralise local leaders in the process
- Tendency for agencies and individuals with power to 'do to' rather than for or with – requires a different culture of working
 - Lack of trust in communities, fear of letting them lead their own change
 - Desire to retain power relationships (imbalance)
- Knowledge and skills deficit:
 - Confidence to participate, be at decision making tables, able to ask hard/difficult questions and to take risks
 - Empowerment from within: humility, authenticity, tenacity, patience etc
 - Lack of critical analysis to address complex situations
 - Capacity to build consensus, collaboration and shared visions
 - Ability to work in a strengths based way that values and leverages off the potential contributions of many.
 - Coping with changes, crises and technology
- Personal toll – work, life, community, family leadership balance
 - Passion can burn out
 - People get sick
 - How we value and support those who support our leaders
 - Look to sustain projects but not enough headlights on the people
- Lack of places and spaces for communities to come together: farmers market, events and activities, community gardens, schools, around children, using local parks and reserves – ways that diverse leadership and activities within communities can be shared, made visible and celebrated
 - Need places and opportunities that promote shared understanding and connections between all those playing leadership roles within communities and celebrating collective effort rather than that of individuals

3. What practical things will help grow 'leaderful' communities?

Some broad concepts

- Ⓜ Developing strategic pathways for community leadership
- Ⓜ Allowing the development to be led from the 'insider' perspective
- Ⓜ The need for more co-designing and joint venturing initiatives
- Ⓜ More proactive talking about leadership and leaderful and creating cultures where everyone feels valued and that they too are a leader
- Ⓜ Continuing to be brave, optimistic, persistent and taking up the challenge to make this happen
- Those with leadership/power taking time to ask and to 'listen' to what's needed and then think/act to help make 'leaderful' communities happen - whakarongo mai!
 - More conversations like today – gets you thinking about what could be different, will take time for people to process and respond so needs to be more than one off. Good to get different thoughts and perspectives – leadership thinking develops faster when people cooperate rather than compete.
 - Encouraging this conversation in individual communities - being 'the insiders' and developing their own leadership strategies
 - Focus on with existing communities who are already working together to achieve their own goals – assist them to scope and define their leadership strategy. They can be role models for other

communities.

- Sharing and learning
 - Vital to get people together, leadership develops faster when people co-operate rather than compete
 - Creating opportunities for people to meet, learn together and build off each other's strengths and wisdom
 - Understand different cultures, takes time but worth the effort
 - Communicate and share what's happening
 - Celebrate community leaders and whole communities
 - Work from a strengths based approach
- Articulating and promoting what a leaderful community would look like in five years time – means people can understand and be part of the journey ahead
 - Telling the stories of where leaderful is happening so others can see, feel what it looks like
 - Sharing foundation documents and platforms that communities have self defined to guide others working with them eg. Otara Community Principles, Tamaki Inclusive Engagement Strategy
- Creating time – from the workplace, encouraging voluntary work and recognising the value of this community time
- Change paradigms of thinking and acting
 - A mutual understanding of the common goal of being good citizens of Aotearoa
 - Awareness – more initiatives that actively support community leadership
 - Resilience- sustainability of those there and growing those coming
 - Redressing power imbalances – change the current top down government- community relationship
 - Honesty and integrity and respect: making everyone accountable for this
 - Building inclusivity and Te Tiriti o Waitangi into everything that happens
 - Build from strengths based approach
 - Understand the 'organic' nature of community development and don't be tempted to micro manage what happens
- More neutral spaces – community hubs, communal gardens, bowling clubs = opportunities for people to be together and support/inspire each other
- Entrepreneurial – local economic development opportunities progressed eg. rent a bus for communities, utilising empty car yard spaces in short term, financial literacy: looking at how we make money work for individuals, whanau and community, growing social enterprise thinking....putting some power, faith and opportunities for communities to generate some of their own local economic solutions- not all about the private market.
- Development approaches
 - need to grow sustainable approaches NOT creating further dependencies
 - defining and articulating each community's leadership strategy so a new leadership cultures can be consciously developed
- Different kinds of support available through philanthropy, community trusts, central and local government – needs to be long term, base line funding
 - Seed funding
 - Mentoring programmes – building on skillsets from within communities eg. phonecall, email – simple support
 - Exploring professional/skill development opportunities that could be more available or tailored to the leaderful communities space
 - Intentional conversations about how existing leaders and emerging leaders might be supported = potentially different needs and different roles to play
 - Encouraging local government to work with community leaders in their place to think about and plan for what leadership supports could be put in place for their place – do it with whanau,

organisations, everyone talking together.

- Schools as potential hubs:
 - Seeing schools as learning communities – and partners in learning and leadership building alongside communities. Schools are/can be community hubs and offer a great way for both to mutually support each other eg. BOT trustees are community leaders – how do they bring their community to the school decision making table and vice versa.
 - Schools involving families more in what they do – they are a key community focal point and building block for more than just educating children.
 - Practical life skills need to be taught in high school: budgeting, business skills etc.
 - Develop skills of civic engagement, duties and responsibilities