

Bay of Plenty Community-Led Development Forum

Wednesday April 14th 2010
Te Ao Marama, Ohinemutu, Rotorua

Setting the Scene: What we are doing, and learning

Fifty people from Bay of Plenty communities gathered for a day at Ohinemutu, Rotorua, to hear, think and talk about how local people are building their communities, and how this can be strengthened. BayTrust, Rotorua Energy Charitable Trust and Inspiring Communities co-organised and co-funded the day. We were welcomed to Te Ao Marama by Hemi Wyckliffe and caringly hosted by him and the team.

"Community-led vs community-fed" was a catchy phrase that emerged from the day. Increasingly, people at the forum are recognising the limitations of deficit-based, top down approaches, and the need to nurture local capacity, capability and willingness to take leadership and action in local neighbourhoods and places.



Barbara MacLennan of Inspiring Communities facilitated the day, and opened with a few key concepts about what we are learning through a national network of interested communities and people.

(See Slides 1-4 of the full presentation from Inspiring Communities at

<http://www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz/community-led-development/regional-networks/bay-of-plenty/338>).

- Firstly, there is emerging evidence that taking a focus on “place” or neighbourhood unleashes enormous “cross-cutting” possibilities. Residents, joined by determined people from many other sectors CAN create change. Change IS possible.

- Secondly, we are learning about the enormous value of sharing tools and frameworks nationally and internationally. For example, the Stacey Matrix which was developed in Canada helps us understand the kind of problem or issue communities are working with. It assists us to ask 'Is this a simple, complicated or complex issue?' If it's simple, like baking a cake or holding a fund-raising stall— we can use 'how to' guides, or recipe books. If it's complicated, like flying to the moon, or building a community hall, technical assistance is likely to be helpful. If it's complex, like raising a child or increasing community safety, the only sustainable potential for solution finding will be through many parties working together 'around the table'.
- And thirdly the value of some frameworks we are using which help us remember that to create enduring change, we need to focus on a number of dimensions - personal, structural, relational and cultural change.

Three Bay of Plenty Community-Led Initiatives

Community Transformation through Environmental Restoration

Denise La Grouw of Hannahs Bay (Rotorua) talked about community transformation through environmental restoration. For a decade, local residents have worked to reclaim and improve a community reserve which had been neglected and environmentally abused. A significant wetland has been restored, indigenous vegetation is starting to flourish, there are community garden plots, art, memorials, and play areas.

Open-ness to any offers of involvement or contribution has been a key, and through this welcoming approach, local, national and international interests are now linked to this place. For example, many schools have spent time improving the reserve, international conferences have planted trees to counter "air miles", local people have worked off community service hours, and PD gangs have not only worked on their set hours, but returned to finish projects, or bring their whanau and families to garden.

Community Research for Community Strengthening - Talking with 1000 People

Danny Paruru and Louisa Erickson of Te Wheke Atawhai, the Health and Social Services arm of Te Whakatohea Maori Trust

Danny and Louisa shared information about the strengths based, community development research they are undertaking in Opotiki. Their goal is to talk with 1000 people, and through that to understand the aspirations that local people hold, and to understand what "wellbeing" means to them.

A team of local people, with extensive links into whanau, have been trained in kanohi ki te kanohi interview skills, and are going to homes to meet with willing participants. Already much has been learned about what matters to local people. This information will form the foundation for community development planning. The next stage includes nurturing local leadership capability to help meet local needs and aspirations which have been identified, and growing the potential for collaborative work across many organisations and sectors.

Timebanking: Giving and Getting – Trading Hours and Growing Community Cohesion

Claire Pye of Pou Whakaaro, Whakatane talked about their mission statement “a pillar of strength supporting communities to provide choices and opportunities for all people” and the principles of community participation and social inclusion which underpin this. In 2005 they set a goal to create a skills exchange for the whole community, and by 2009 they were in a position to establish a Community Timebank – one of the first in New Zealand. Research shows real benefits – in building trust and increasing community cohesion.

Within twelve months of establishment there are over 160 members, and around 500 hours are being traded each month. Actively linking right across the community is one of the goals. Business, local and central government, service organisations, Iwi and Maori, tertiary education, philanthropics, service organisations can all play a part. The Timebank actively seeks engagement with all sectors through presentations and through its Reference group.

(See the full presentations at <http://www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz/community-led-development/regional-networks/bay-of-plenty/338>)

Small Group Discussions



Eight small groups focused on three questions:

Groups were pre-organised to encourage a “mixing” across the region, and across sectors.

- 1 Substantial time was first spent on hearing each other talk about their work in support of community-led development.
- 2 Groups then discussed “What are some of the changes we are noticing in communities that excite and encourage us?”
- 3 Finally groups selected some “gems”- things they’d talked about which they thought were really worth remembering about, and sharing

A wealth of information sharing went on in these small groups. Participants valued the opportunity to take time to talk cross-sectorally, and across the region.

Notes from Small Group Discussions

What are some of the changes we are noticing in communities that excite and encourage us?

Some broad concepts

- ⑩ Across organisations/sectors, an increased level of willingness to collaborate and attention to “how to”
- ⑩ At the neighbourhood and community level – growing interest in participating, contributing, taking leadership, learning
- ⑩ Increasing interest and capability to work across some silos – Iwi and Tau Iwi, ethnic and migrant communities
- ⑩ Increasing attention to relationships
- ⑩ Growing understanding about sustainability – everything is connected
- ⑩ Commitment to strengths based approaches
- ⑩ Increasing attention to whanau/families and practical activities in local neighbourhoods

Summary of points made:

- Increased interest in collaboration
 - More talk across organisations and networks
 - Recognition of strengths of different organisations
 - More attention to how to align organisations and strategies within neighbourhoods and communities – e.g. through alliances, complementary services; practical approaches such as bringing sports groups together to discuss potential shared interests
 - Local Government Act Community Outcomes – helped to focus attention on the need to collaborate
 - Evidence of some sectors changing approaches – e.g. philanthropics collaborating more
 - More potential for and interest in “win-win” solutions
- Skill and knowledge development to accelerate collaboration
 - Interest in the skills and mindsets needed to collaborate
 - Affirmation of the need for roles that broker and strengthen relationships – skill development
 - Importance of communication – need for skill development here
 - Leadership role models – I can/We can – how to accelerate this
 - Increasing community desire for education and learning about community development
- Growing interest and desire to participate
 - People wanting more say in what happens
 - Young people wanting to be active and involved, parents wanting to raise healthy and happy families, concerned about recession, violence
 - Once people start to participate, wanting more
 - Story telling as a powerful way to affirm the power of participation and shared activity, the potential of film
- More work across boundaries/silos
 - engagement with Iwi and Maori in local communities and neighbourhoods – a desire to explore potential together

- Learning from the past - traditional ways of living and skills e.g. in food production, conservation
- Intercultural activities, weaving ethnic and migrant experience and knowledge with others in communities, a real willingness to share and learn
- Increased attention to relationships
 - Paying attention to people and relationships
 - One act at a time
 - Generosity – of spirit, or sharing time and skills, acting with sincerity and care
 - Noticing – both involvement and non-involvement
 - Valuing all ideas and contributions
 - Technology – software e.g. to help connect whanau
- Focus on Strengths and Opportunities
 - Attention is on hope, celebration, synergy, building on strengths
 - Recognition of people and work achieved
 - Potential to create something new and different
 - Acknowledging assets and leveraging them
 - Sharing successes, learning, information, story-telling
 - “People have the power to identify their own solutions and affect the changes”
- Growing understanding about sustainability
 - More acknowledgement about interconnectedness between social, environmental, economic and cultural “worlds”
 - Increasing recognition that professional and personal are also inseparable – and opportunities to leverage that
 - “people development is synonymous with economic development”
 - Environment is a neutral place to start community-building – no-one has labels, and working together in the environment can catalyse conversations and relationships”
- More practical activity at neighbourhood and community level
 - People want to have influence on their immediate life and surroundings, and they know best what matters most
 - The value of community newsletters in sharing ideas and celebrating successes
 - Paying more attention to people and relationships, noticing – both involvement and non-involvement, acting with sincerity and care, valuing all ideas and contributions
 - Generosity – of spirit, or sharing time, connecting, meals - Manaakitanga
 - Increasingly tamariki are being involved – no-one left out
 - The important roles of carers, whaea, grandparents – opportunities to weave that more
 - Community gardens, men’s sheds, community firewood cutting
 - Timebanks



Some GEMS from Small Group Discussions

Synthesis of key points, and some inspiring stories

- ⑩ Communities setting directions – “others asking, not telling”... “community-led vs community-fed”
- ⑩ Non-competitive collaboration, attention to common goals, values
- ⑩ Recognition that potential resources are much wider than what’s in our own kete
- ⑩ Relationships are the key – sincerity, care, respect and valuing of all contributions
- ⑩ Empowerment of Iwi and Maori
- ⑩ Unleashing generosity
- ⑩ “Every Voice Counts” - a grass roots democracy organisation growing in Whakatane to challenge existing local government political structures that are not listening to what community are saying, or want
- ⑩ Community Treasure Hunt in Pt Chevalier - rather than expecting the community to come to Transition Town (TT) meetings, a small TT group organised a treasure hunt on a Sunday afternoon and invited locals, 350 people turned up and through the “hunt” visited places in the community they hadn’t been before, and had a lot of fun together

Inspiring Communities – Some More of Our Learning

Mary-Jane Rivers and Megan Courtney of Inspiring Communities presented more about what we are learning, including:

- Some features in common
- Some history and background about the Inspiring Communities Network
- What’s been happening regionally in Auckland
- What we are noticing and learning

(See Slides 5-16 the [full presentation from Inspiring Communities at our website](#))

Going Forward

A brief facilitated session before the Forum closed identified interest in:

- Forming a BoP Community-Led Development network
- Having other opportunities to meet like today– maybe 2 or 3 times a year
 - Hear more
 - Hear from others
 - Deepen relationships among people interested in community-led development
 - Include others who couldn’t make it today

- A desire to share the contact database, so that people can keep in touch with each other in the interim
- Offers to assist with a further gathering



“What you would like to happen? How can you help?” Key Outcomes from the Survey

Participants completed a survey form at the end of the day. Following is a summary of the feedback through the Survey. These key outcomes will assist with further planning.

What do participants/organisations need to help grow and strengthen neighbourhood and place based development?

- More talk and support for community-led, “bottom up” approaches including engagement at local levels and conversations across community organisations
- More understanding and support by local government
- Training/learning opportunities for people committed to CLD, including governance and management of organisations
- A way to share stories efficiently
- Forums and gatherings to discuss CLD at local and at regional levels

What does the Bay of Plenty need?

- A network of interested people - whakawhanaungatanga
- Efficient way of keeping in touch and sharing information about approaches, projects, stories, learning
- Gatherings, forums
- More Timebanks!

Offers of contribution

- Ideas, sharing and gathering information through networks, presentations, project management skills, co-ordination, training programmes and skills, good practice models, venues

What supports are needed to help strengthen leadership in your community?

- Processes to identify leaders and then to mentor, train and support them
- A focus on supporting emerging young leaders
- Political support for community leadership development
- An emphasis on skills for community-led development
- Story telling skills – so that we can share great stories about local leadership
- Training and support for existing leaders – trustees and managers
- Support to identify potential leaders at local body levels

In 2010-2011 how would we know that community-led development was understood and supported in the BoP?

- Vibrant, alive, engaged, healthy communities; more volunteering; whakawhaungatanga
- Community-led development would have a higher profile
- We would be sharing each others' success stories
- We would have research which demonstrated and profiled what is changing through community- led development
- Funders and Contract Managers would include and encourage community-led approaches; and Councils would be asking – what can we do to help?

How should Inspiring Communities use the small resource to help strengthen CLD in the Bay of Plenty?

- Top priority - Develop a regional community-led development network that focuses on sharing stories, issues, resources and solutions – especially through workshops, and through facilitating communication channels about community-led development in place based communities in the Bay of Plenty.



The organising team for the Forum:

Left to right: Barbara MacLennan (Inspiring Communities); Yvonne Baldock (BayTrust); Alison Perrin (Rotorua Energy Charitable Trust) and Terri Eggleton (BayTrust).