



Inspiring Communities Newsletter 40 - March 2014



EDITORIAL

Election year and some exciting changes at Inspiring Communities

In September New Zealand will engage in an election process that is the result of 100's of years of political evolution shaped by powerful movements for social change. Our representational democracy selects people to lead and make decisions (by the people, for the people, of the people) and sits alongside the many forms of

participatory democracy where people shape their lives in local communities.

Both expressions of democracy are important and shape one another. We in the Inspiring Communities team focus on supporting the evolution of the participatory strand. Supporting processes which help communities form a shared vision and then mobilise around achieving it. To do this we profile and link resources and people and initiatives be they [Neighbours Day](#) or time-banks. Through this focus, organised communities become part of a movement for social change that shapes our representational system. Recent decisions of Central Government to support community-led processes and invest in [Social Enterprise](#) being recent expressions of this.

To help increase the value of Inspiring Communities contribution to this social movement we will this year be focusing on two themes supporting local communities to;

- Be places where all children have safe, healthy and enjoyable lives and
- Contain resilient neighbourhoods where people are connected and mutual support flourishes

This focus is in addition to sharing and promoting ideas and examples of community-led development contributing to positive change across many areas. I hope you find this newsletter supports your involvement in this wider social movement.

David Hanna

National Manager

Inspiring Communities News

Contributed by the Inspiring Communities Team, Megan, Barbara, Denise and many more.

Network Survey time

- tell us what you think!

It's been two years since we tracked national perceptions about locally-led change in Aotearoa NZ. This month it's Survey time again!

We're keen to find out what's been changing in your community/organisation. We're especially keen to get your thoughts on our two new focus areas - *Neighbourhood Strengthening* and *Child Rich Communities*.

The survey should take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete. Everyone who takes part in the survey is eligible to win 1 of 6 free copies of [Learning by Doing](#)

Inspiring Communities would really value your thoughts and contributions - go to the survey - survey now complete thanks

Learning by Doing **- special autumn price, now \$25 plus P&P.**

We've had great feedback from Learning by Doing readers about the 'richness' of community-led stories, learning and thinking the book contains. Last year we sold 650 copies, sending books beyond Kiwi shores to Canada, Australia, and the UK! Learning by Doing is now a core text for an American PHD programme on community sustainability.

To help ensure you don't miss out, we're running an autumn special on our remaining copies.

For \$25 plus P&P you get community-led experience, ideas, pictures, tools and 'how to' advice from inspiring Kiwi communities!

[Order your copy now by clicking here](#)

The Power of Story – winning hearts, changing minds and showing outcomes

*Musings on a Bay of Plenty Community-led Development Workshop February 2014
from Ruth Gerzon and Lyndsay Tahitahi.*

Stories engage and build connections between diverse people, supporting them to celebrate shared experiences, touching their hearts and minds. The myriad ways stories can be shared make them effective tools for building communities.

[Moya Sayer-Jones](#) of Sydney, a dedicated story gatherer and promoter, recently shared tips from her extensive experience at a [workshop](#) for people involved in communities throughout the Bay of Plenty.

Drawing from participants' experiences, she helped us focus on the essential elements of good story telling. She showed us how story telling was not just for people good with words and used to writing and practically demonstrated how the use of photos and simple prompts can help everyone contribute and share. Moya has a huge passion about all voices being heard and valued.

One participant, Presbyterian minister, Chris Barnard, now plans to run a mini workshop for church members so that they can record their stories as part of preparing for their centenary celebrations. "... Moya's workshop helped me understand the importance of the role of story gatherer, how we can drive the

process, encourage people to be involved, and ways of really drawing their stories out.”

With Neighbours Day imminent the workshop concluded with ideas for using stories as part of their Neighbours Day activities. One great idea was to add ‘story’ to our menu for shared meals, by asking people to bring a dish of significance to them and to tell us all the story behind it!

Reflecting on it later, Lyndsay a participant said “I am more determined to tell my story well after being in the workshop. As a woman with a disability for over 25 years there were many seasons of silence (no words) because I didn’t know myself or how to describe what was happening in my life. Now I am compelled to write my stories. I am more acutely attuned to hearing other stories by people with disabilities and creating an opportunity and environment for that to happen. This workshop was inspirational!”

This Month's Inspiring Community - Mangakino.

Fondly known locally as the “Heart of the Dam Country” Mangakino, Whakamaru and surrounding districts boast a rich hydro-power heritage and a population of around a thousand people. In general the population is declining, but both the dairy industry, and the boost to tourism through walking and cycling trails are aiding the local economy. Nearly half the homes in Mangakino are owned by holiday-makers, which creates both challenges and potential. Increasing connections between the ‘townies’ and rural dwellers, and between the locals and holiday-makers are locally held aspirations.

Over the last three years, with support through the Department of Internal Affairs community-led development trials, local people have developed a set of aspirations, and new ways of working together more. In December 2013 the community celebrated its progress around four community-driven themes – Vibrant, Learning, Earning and Healthy, Well and Forward Focused in a ‘Christmas card’ for locals.

“These community actions are the result of many shoulders to the wheel – by community organisations and clubs, neighbours, Pouakani Marae, businesses, funders, and central and local government all working together” says Tina Jakes who is chair of the local Community-Led Development Group. They have helped to facilitate conversations, activities, events and relationships over the past three years. “It’s fantastic to see the progress we’re making by actively working together more and supporting each others initiatives. It makes us all realise how much talent and capability we have here.”

A community workshop with Peter Keny in late 2013 focused on enterprise and economic development and revealed some precious assets to retain, regain, grow and create! Locals are busy planning and implementing ideas that were generated.

A Community Events Calendar is updated regularly for publication in the local newspaper, and for hanging on community noticeboards in Whakamaru and Mangakino. Training in event organisation and management has been added to the list of Community Workshop topics. These Workshops run at least monthly and are open to the whole community.

Increased visitor numbers are ensuring the local cafes did really well over summer.

Learning to do things differently together is a strong theme in Mangakino, and the Principal and Board at Mangakino Areas School have really demonstrated “stepping up”. When the community wanted to trial a community van, the school said “how about we use ours to test the idea out, and see what the potential is”. This pragmatic approach, coupled with a strong philosophy of doing the best with what we have, and learning as we go, is showing some remarkable results.

Principal Leonie Philburn says “We’ve had a 600% increase in our year 13 intake this year, up to six from one last year, and we also have six Year 12 students!”. Unpicking the contributions to this fantastic development, she talked about the opportunity to network with a Rotorua Trade Training provider and tertiary institutions at a hui facilitated by Pouakani Marae; following learning leads from teachers conferences; and a visit to another Area School which has turned around student retention and achievement. “These opportunities all helped get us thinking, then it’s all about sharing this learning, and working with our own community, teachers, students and families to find Mangakino ways of doing things in new ways. We’ve restructured our timetable, and created opportunities for our senior students to attend Trades and In-School Academies every week, by making arrangements with a Tokoroa School and two tertiary providers.”

"As a result, our students are now learning construction, automotive, home care, outdoor education, visual arts and carving. These are totally new options for our school and community."

Learning Links

- [*Connecting Neighbours in Kiwi Neighbourhoods*](#) - Would you use this [website?](#) It's a free and private website for NZ neighbourhoods to create an easy way for neighbours to talk and share online, creating more real world connections while ultimately growing stronger, safer and friendlier communities. The site is not active everywhere just yet but already providing some interesting reading. They welcome you to get in touch with them.
- [*New Poverty Toolkit*](#) - Aspiring to being “the best place to raise a child” has led to many things in Hamilton in Ontario Canada. One of them is [a 'Toolkit on Poverty'](#) Designed for Community Foundations, this kit is really useful for

anyone wanting work towards addressing 'root causes' rather than just 'good causes'. Included in the toolkit is background information, discussion questions, tools, and lessons learned to help you understand and address poverty in your place. It also has links to other relevant resources and websites.

- ***At the Heart Training Resources now free online*** - if you're working in the family-centred, community-led development space you'll be pleased to know that the At the Heart training DVD can now be accessed free online, [simply follow this link to module #1](#).

In terms of engaging with local and central government, we held three community-led learning sessions with caucus members of the National, Labour and Green Parties. We presented at both the Local Government Community Development Conference and at the Local Government Community Boards Conference in Wanaka. We also collaborated with Councils and other organisations in Hawkes Bay and Nelson to run regional workshops sharing key "Learning by Doing" frameworks, tools and techniques.

Successful CLD Learning Workshop held with central government agencies

In Wellington last month, Inspiring Communities worked with Treasury and with input from, [Tiakina ō Tātou Tamariki](#), [Great Start, Taita](#), [Good Cents Porirua](#), the [Todd Foundation](#) to co-host a community-led learning forum called "Enabling Communities to be their Best."

Around 25 invited officials representing a wide range of government agencies attended with much interest in locally-led experiences of evidence gathering and evaluating change.

A workshop report and potential next steps actions are currently being prepared. Email us at exchange@inspiringcommunities.org.nz if you would like a copy.

Neighbours Day - it's nearly here!

New Zealand's biggest celebration of neighbourliness, Neighbours Day Aotearoa is coming up this weekend! If you're one of the 800+ streets in NZ who have already registered their activity online - awesome! If you haven't yet, it's not too late - we'd love to know what you've got planned. [You can register your event by clicking here](#)

Over the Neighbours Day weekend (29-30 March), thousands of neighbours around New Zealand will come together to once again turn strangers into neighbours and streets into neighbourhoods. All around New Zealand, people are organising street parties, weaving lessons, trips to the beach, gift swaps, chalk drawing on public walkways and other neighbourly activities.

Have great fun with your neighbours this weekend.

Changes to Inspiring Communities Team

There are some changes underway for Inspiring Communities. David Hanna, (former IC Board member) is now National Manager and some of the office support duties are being shared with the Wesley Community Action team from Wellington.