

# Community-led Development *principles*

Community-led Development is working together to create and achieve locally-owned visions and goals. It's a place-based development approach that's built around five core practice principles.

## 5 principles ...

### 1 Shared local visions drive action and change.

- Building visions and priorities with those who live, work, care, play, and invest in that place – the principle of ahi kaa<sup>1</sup>.
- Tailor-making solutions from the 'ground up' and reflecting local aspirations, needs and conditions.
- Growing a shared sense of optimism and collective caring for people, place and the future ahead.

### 2 Using existing strengths and assets.

- Acknowledging everyone has a contribution to make – with attention to involve groups often ignored.
- Valuing local people as 'experts' in their place.
- Proactively engaging local voices and ideas.
- Building action plans built on existing community strengths, assets and resources.
- Encouraging and supporting local people with energy to do things, and connecting them up with others who can help.

### 3 Many people, groups and sectors working together.

- Involving all those who have a stake in creating visions and aspirations, plans and activities and working/doing together.
- Fostering new connections between diverse people, organisations and sectors to unlock resources and enable new thinking.
- Creating strong local relationships and linkages – at street/ neighbourhood level, between local groups, agencies, businesses and also with organisations based outside the local area.

### 4 Building diverse and collaborative local leadership.

- Intentionally strengthening, growing and joining up local leadership.
- Recognising and celebrating local leadership and achievements.
- Making change visible and communicating progress within communities.

### 5 Working adaptively, learning informs planning and action.

- Holding an intentional vision/goal with a flexible 'doing' framework.
- Not waiting for the 'perfect' plan or 'complete' analysis – they don't exist.
- Being prepared to take action, acknowledging uncertainty and adapting as things progress.
- Proactively sharing experiences, learnings, and results within and across communities.
- Understanding that ongoing small steps collectively contribute to larger transformational change.
- Making links and encouraging systems changes (policy, funding, practice etc) for lasting impact within communities.

<sup>1</sup>Ahi Kaa is a fundamental traditional Māori cultural concept meaning 'site of burning fires'. In contemporary times, Ahi Kaa is used to refer to people who uphold a particular purpose within the community. That is, they are the 'keepers of the home fires' be that at home, on the marae or within a particular organisation or movement.

## Community-led Development

is a way of working together in place to create and achieve locally owned visions and goals.



### Essential conditions for community-led change:

- 1 Willingness to learn and imagine a better way of doing things.

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- 2 Utilising existing strengths and assets.

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- 3 Knowledge of community context and history.

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- 4 Leadership capacity, plus efforts to develop community leaders - including those who are most affected by community conditions/ desired changes.

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- 5 Relationships and teamwork.

*From the Annie E. Casey Foundation*

### Some of our top tips:

- 1 Start from where you are and be clear on your 'why.'

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- 2 Have lots of conversations and ask powerful questions.

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- 3 Discover what you have already, and make sure everyone knows.

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- 4 Aspire to build community and active citizens through all you do.

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- 5 Look for bright spots in your community - go where the energy is and get behind people and their passions.