A Capability Framework to Guide Community-led Development Practice in Aotearoa

About Inspiring Communities

Inspiring Communities is the reference point for community-led development (CLD) in New Zealand. Our vision is that all communities flourish. We use our team's CLD expertise and experience to mentor, connect, train and support people, organisations and communities to make their places even better to live, work, play and invest in.

For the last decade we have been learning with and from Kiwi communities about what CLD is, what good practice requires, and sharing tips, tools and frameworks that assist locally-led action to thrive.

Why a CLD Capability Framework?

CLD requires new ways of thinking and collaborative working. Having the right mix of capabilities within community-led initiatives is key. Inspiring Communities (IC) has developed a capability framework to help name values, qualities, skills, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes that are useful to have, learn or amplify to support sustainable change in communities.

How we work in CLD is really important, not just what we do or achieve. No-one is likely to have or need all the capabilities on this framework. Rather, this framework encourages individuals and teams to:

- **Name, recognise, affirm and use their own and each other's strengths for CLD work**

- **Regularly reflect on their vision, values, experiences and behaviours to identify areas for learning and growth, both individually and collectively**
- **Plan and seek opportunities that support their ongoing leadership learning and development**
- **Use the capability descriptions to support recruitment, selection, job design, performance feedback and career planning around CLD work**

The capability framework can also be used in 'Assessment of Prior Learning' for people who wish to formalise the recognition of their valuable, transferable CLD skills and knowledge grown from experience. Inspiring Communities is currently working with Otago Polytechnic to explore creative new ways to do this.

This framework is grounded in Inspiring Communities' work in Aotearoa since 2008. It draws on the practitioner competency work of the CLD Standards Council Scotland and is shaped by valuable feedback from national and international colleagues. Since we began this work, IACD (International Association of Community Development) has developed a draft set of international standards for community development practice. It is encouraging to see the strong alignment of this international work with our own. We have not tried to rewrite ours to fit the IACD standards: they are simply two useful and complementary frameworks.

As a learning organisation, Inspiring Communities is committed to 'learning by doing'. We expect this framework will be adapted and updated as its relevance and currency is tested by those who use it. We welcome your feedback and suggestions to assist this process. Please contact us at: **exchange@inspiringcommunities.org.nz**.

Introduction to the CLD Capability Framework

What is Community-led Development?

The essence of Community-led Development (CLD) is working together in a place to create and achieve locally-owned visions and goals. Rather than being a model or service, CLD is an approach that spans design, planning and implementation. There are five core principles of CLD practice:

- **Shared local visions drive action and change**
- **Using existing strengths and assets**
- **Many people, groups and sectors working together**
- **Building diverse and collaborative local leadership**
- **Working adaptively, learning informs planning and action**

Te Whakawhanake ā-Hapori

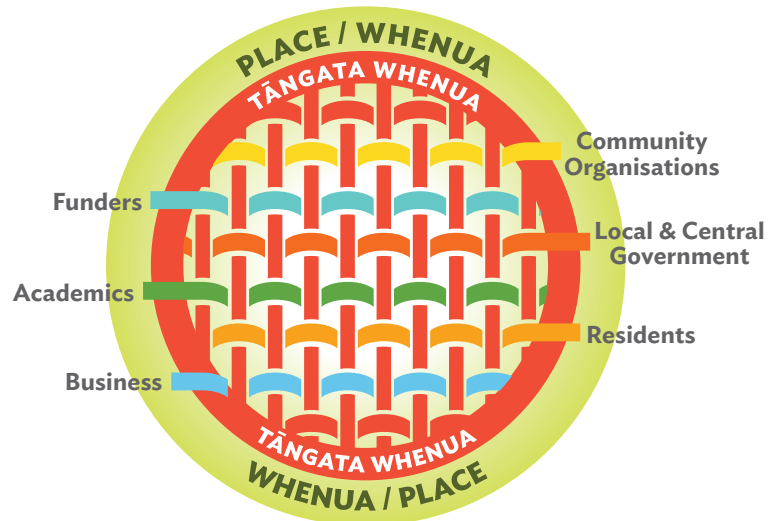**Weaving our connections and contributions**

Inspiring Communities champions 'place' within the context of Aotearoa and recognises te tino rangatiratanga of hapū as expressed in He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni (the 1835 Declaration of Independence) and affirmed in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Self-determined processes for whānau/hapū/iwi are at the heart of flourishing wider communities. All partnership or 'co' approaches with hapū/iwi are built on recognition of self-determination.

Implementing all CLD principles at once is often not possible, especially in establishment phases. What matters is starting from where you, your organisation or community are at and then applying a CLD lens to guide how things develop from there.

What are capabilities?

Capabilities describe qualities, skills, knowledge, attitudes and values needed to work in complex, uncertain and changing circumstances. Confidence and competence grow with practice – through doing, failing, succeeding, reflecting, adapting and celebrating. CLD encourages "learning from doing" to grow the leadership capability and confidence of everyone and as a key strategy for working with complexity.

While there are six inter-related capabilities woven like strands of harakeke through this framework, none of these stand alone.
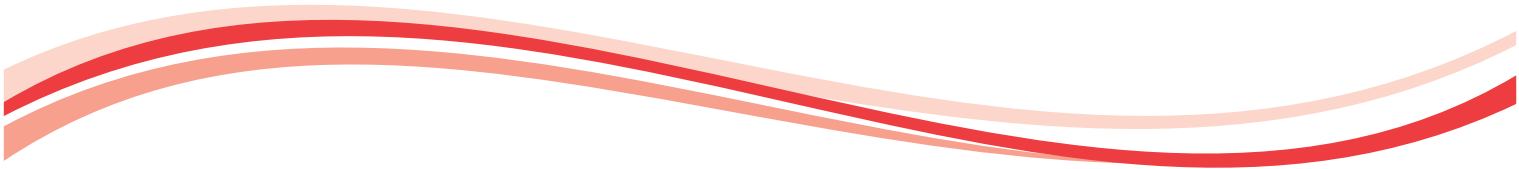
Rather they build on, incorporate and feed each other:

1. **Understand CLD practice and approaches in Aotearoa**
2. **Engage and build diverse relationships**
3. **Grow understanding of community and cultural contexts**
4. **Facilitate effective group processes**
5. **Organise to support, enable and grow CLD action**
6. **Nurture local leaders and leadership development**

All of these capabilities are underpinned by an understanding of place – e.g. Who was in this place? Who is in this place? Who will be in this place? Within this is a specific understanding of hapū/iwi histories and a relationship to place (i.e. Whose land are we on?).

Another underlying theme that is woven through these capabilities is an understanding of the nature of power – CLD work requires us to be able to navigate power relations and ensure differences are recognised, valued and constructively worked with.

While CLD work exists in a context of complexity, for simplicity we've settled on six core capabilities. We acknowledge that many more could be elaborated for greater accuracy/depth of detail (e.g. evaluation, governance). This is a living document that will be used and reviewed over time, especially in the light of current work on international standards.

Why have we named capabilities for different roles in CLD?

While Inspiring Communities and CLD focus primarily on communities of place, many of the same capabilities can apply to working with communities of identity and interest.

We have used a matrix to describe three profiles of people involved in CLD, capabilities they might need, and behaviours, attitudes and values they might express. This is **NOT** intended to imply a hierarchy but rather aims to acknowledge some different ways that people engage as active citizens in CLD, formally or informally, as neighbours, community leaders, paid or unpaid workers and the complementary skills and roles played.
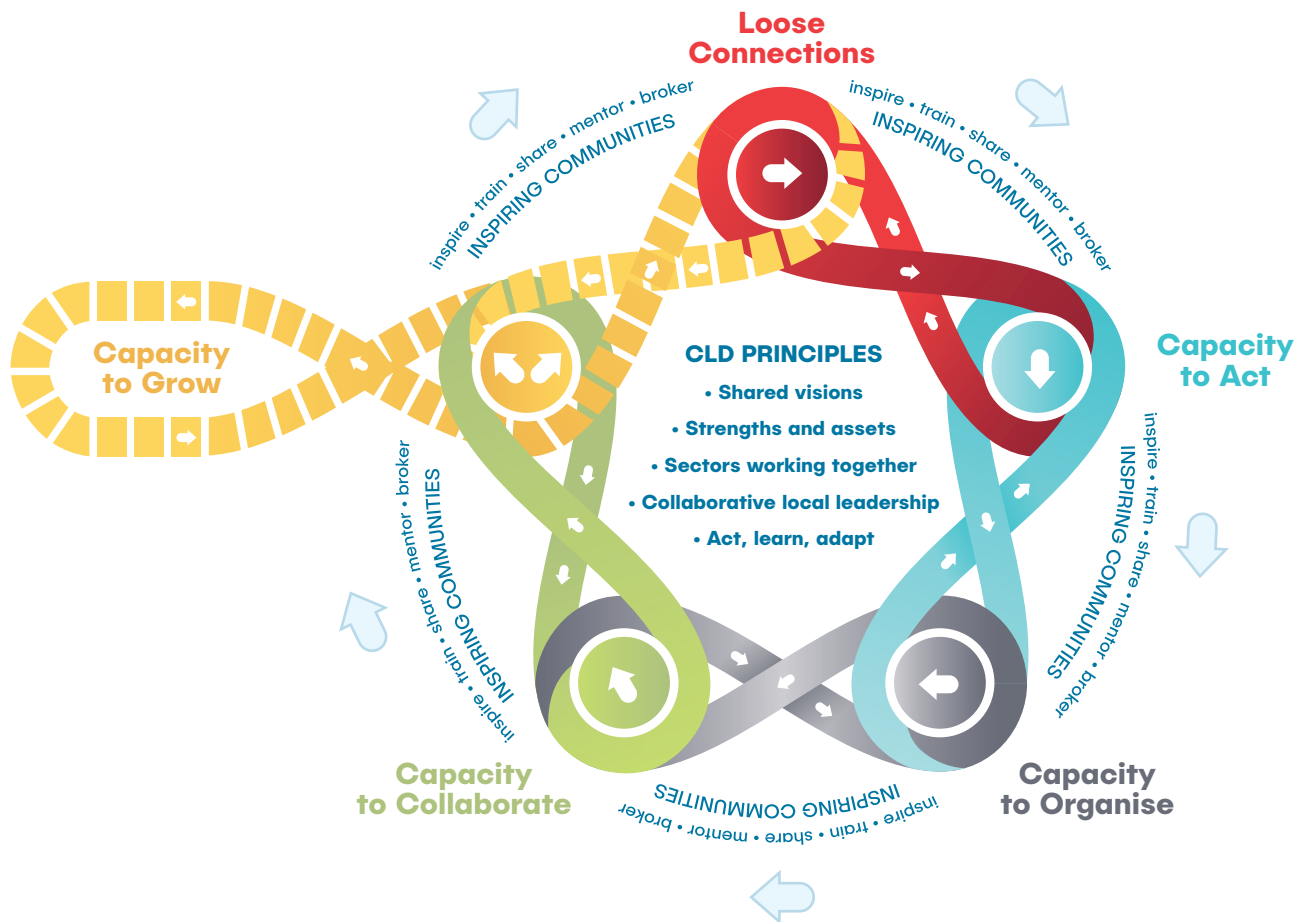
Any one person or team may have or need capabilities across different parts of the matrix.

- **"Street Leader"** capabilities are typical of practical people who build relationships and take useful, caring, fun action with others in their street or immediate neighbourhood, often on a completely informal, voluntary basis

- **"Community Activator"** capabilities are used by people quite intentionally catalysing, convening and supporting community-led development initiatives around particular issues/actions across a wider community. These initiatives often involve a wide group of stakeholders

- **"CLD Enabler"** capabilities are applied by people supporting local community-led development initiatives from their primary work role, e.g. as a funder, a school, an NGO, an iwi or hapū organisation, a business, a local or central government agency. In some cases people using these capabilities are active partners in CLD collaborations on behalf of their agency

Of course, any framework has its limitations as well as its uses! As soon as we name some of the parts – especially in a linear diagram – we can lose some of the rich interconnections of the whole. For Inspiring Communities, as an organisation focused on learning, we see this framework as an extension of our Theory of Change on the following page.

Our Theory of Change

Community-led development strengthens social connections so communities thrive.
Inspiring Communities offers services that help accelerate change.

Loose Connections

inspire • train • share • mentor • broker
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Capacity to Grow

Capacity to Act

CLD PRINCIPLES
- Shared visions
- Strengths and assets
- Sectors working together
- Collaborative local leadership
- Act, learn, adapt

inspire • train • share • mentor • broker
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Capacity to Collaborate

inspire • train • share • mentor • broker
INSPIRING COMMUNITIES

Capacity to Organise

This theory of change illustrates how sustainable change happens using a Community-led Development approach

The starting point is the premise that all communities have the ability to thrive. So much shapes the vitality of a community, from economic to social factors. The relationships and trust between local people is vital to negotiating the complex challenges they face.

Citizens, individual or groups, respond to a crisis or address a local issue because they see possibilities for how things could be better. They harness loose connections and help grow a capacity to act, and in doing so form a shared vision.

Using community-led development (CLD) principles increases the ability of individuals and groups to realise the potential of their community. It involves identifying existing community strengths and connecting with other communities that have addressed similar issues. They begin to make plans and take action around the emerging vision.

Sometimes this throws up more challenges and complexities, but reflecting on these enables insight into how to sustain positive change. The process is seldom linear, there are ebbs and flows with related joys and frustrations. It takes time but future success is built from these foundations.

As momentum builds there is more activity – initiatives move from one-off actions to substantive organising, using skills and experience from outside their community. This extends the influence, bringing more people and organisations to the table, which requires developing more local leadership skills to ensure the shared vision remains on track.

This cumulative process tends to evolve from a focus on organising to a capacity to collaborate. The ability to engage with groups who have different views and approaches is critical to the transition and unlocks the capacity for diverse groups and sectors to work together. It is vital in this phase that the local leadership formed during the earlier phases continues to be central to the process.

Guiding the transition between these phases are the disciplines of measurement, reflection, learning and adaption. The change is dynamic, it acknowledges there is no perfect plan and understands that small steps contribute to larger transformational change.

This theory of change has evolved from what Inspiring Communities has learned from the collective wisdom in communities across New Zealand. Inspiring Communities inspires, trains, mentors, and brokers groups - transitioning around the theory of change - growing and sharing local wisdom - Local Wisdom[2]

INSPIRING COMMUNITIES: CLD CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

Core Capabilities	"Street Leader" behaviours, attitudes, values	"Community Activator" behaviours, attitudes, values	"CLD Enabler" behaviours, attitudes, values	Outcomes that capabilities support[2]
1. **Understand CLD practice and approaches in Aotearoa** 1.1 **Grows understanding of what CLD means in practice in Aotearoa and how to work creatively and confidently in complex CLD situations through ongoing action, reflection, learning and adaptation** 1.2 **Grows understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, colonisation and its impacts on Aotearoa**	Values inclusive, fun, supportive neighbourly connections Is ok about not knowing everything and sees this as a positive. Can ask for help/ insight as required Encourages learning and feedback about what worked, what didn't (and for who), why and what might work better next time Is positive and responsive about learning new ways of doing things Helps make reflection enjoyable and supports a desire to learn and get better	Brings CLD, place-based approaches & complexity insights to support the community to identify and work with their strengths & opportunities for collective action around local issues Role models personal reflective practice, through self-awareness, inviting feedback, reflecting on learning, adapting own practice, seeking assistance, giving credit where it's due Demonstrates high tolerance for working with ambiguity, risk, vulnerability and uncertainty Facilitates intentional collective learning processes within and between communities to reflect on action/ experience, makes sense of complex issues, shares ideas, issues, skills, knowledge and creative possibilities to review progress against vision, goals and targets Helps share frameworks for learning and to grow a culture of evaluative thinking and learning by doing Supports constant iterations of strategy, celebrating success, spotting failures, admitting them, understanding them and moving forward Shares practical CLD knowledge appropriately to support (but not control) communities through different stages of their CLD journey	Applies CLD understanding to brokering the community voice as well as CLD understanding within own sphere of influence this includes influencing organisational culture, policies, practices, behaviours and systems as well as local projects Promotes CLD learning and development opportunities and communities of practice within own organisation, with communities and between practitioners Seeks to learn, adapt and apply/share learnings Responds constructively to CLD 'learning from doing' in complex situations and understands tangible outcomes not easily or quickly achievable Actively shares models and frameworks that are useful for learning by doing	CLD principles are modelled through adaptive leadership within a strong evaluative thinking culture of 'learning by doing'

[2] More than one capability contributes towards each of these outcomes, which is a limitation of a linear diagram. Think of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of this table as strands of harakeke woven into a whole kete which is greater than the sum of these parts named here.

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2. **Engage and build diverse relationships** 2.1 **Finds and makes connections across/between different parts of the system to engage many different people, groups and sectors to work together collaboratively** 2.2 **Uses emotional intelligence, cultural competence and sound communication skills to build respectful formal and informal relationships**	Plans and undertakes simple actions to get to know neighbours/bring neighbours together Finds at least two other people interested in engaging with them Observes where the energy and interest is, not just their own Works with neighbours to take up neighbourhood ideas/concerns with relevant stakeholders e.g. local Council, local Māori Works with local businesses, churches, cultural or community groups to invite their contribution and involvement	Brings self-awareness, emotional maturity and cross-cultural competency to build and maintain trust and respectful relationships Recognises/connects with hapū/iwi/Māori Uses active listening, questions, observation, inquiry, dialogue and feedback to engage and involve a broad network of community stakeholders Is available and responsive and out in the community – recognisable, approachable Motivates people to engage, encourages participation of groups not usually involved so their voices are included, overcomes or reduces barriers to engagement/involvement Helps access 'non-local' people (outside experts), resources and networks to enrich local process Supports communities to identify key stakeholders who influence or have an interest in the community's particular concerns/initiatives. Helps build strategic relationships and navigate power dynamics Promotes collaborative relationships, networks and partnerships to resource and progress community aspirations Engages with local government to enable community voices and strategic priorities to inform community planning processes	Encourages and supports their own organisation (e.g. local and central government agencies, businesses, NGOs) to build effective communication and relationships with communities of place, including hapū & iwi Brokers opportunities for community voice to be heard with key influencers Understands their own power equation and how they exercise power in different settings to make intentional decisions about when to act and when not to Shares power and resources to enable community capacity building and community-led initiatives to be supported and systems barriers to be reduced or removed Strategically supports and resources collaborative networks and partnerships to enhance CLD outcomes Builds and brokers the case for resourcing and supporting CLD approaches with key influencers within and beyond own organisation	**Respectful relationships and trust strengthen community capacity to act, to keep shaping shared vision, and to organise and collaborate around that vision**

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3. **Grow understanding of place – its community and cultural contexts** 3.1 **Gathers, analyses and uses a wide range of knowledge and data to inform plans, process and decisions** 3.2 **Builds own and other's capability to observe and make sense of emerging patterns and trends, and to understand/work with the wider systems and structures that the community is part of**	Asks questions, listens well to learn about neighbourhood and create opportunities in discussion with others Shares knowledge and networks with others	Learns about mana whenua, local history, taura here, mātāwaka and tauiwi relationships. Uses astute listening and multi-sensory noticing skills to observe and understand the community as a living eco-system with its own past, present and future patterns, rhythms, energy and tensions Uses range of relevant and creative methods to engage communities in observing, gathering, recording, analysing, interpreting 'data' in order to build shared community understandings about its history, current strengths, assets, issues, aspirations and opportunities and to enhance practical 'community research' skills Enables ongoing surfacing of community wisdom, informed by understanding of historical, environmental, political, social, economic and cultural context Supports communities to identify and address structural factors, power dynamics and system change priorities that impact on community wellbeing Assists communities to tell their own story and communicate what's happening/changing, the difference they are making and what a CLD approach is enabling	Learns about Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its context for their organisation and the wider community Develops, strengthens and maintains relationships that support Te Ao Māori and work with other cultural contexts Observes, ask questions, listens well to learn about community and cultural context and understand it as a living, ever changing eco-system Reviews community research conclusions and disseminates relevant findings to key influencers to inform organisational policy, planning, processes and practices Records the process and outcomes of CLD initiatives for sharing with wider audiences	**Deepening understanding of the community as a living eco-system: its strengths, assets, opportunities, aspirations, tensions, rhythms and changes happening over time**

INSPIRING COMMUNITIES: CLD CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

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4. **Facilitate effective group processes** Facilitates/hosts creative participatory group processes to support effective relationship building, discussion and decision-making	Builds conversations with neighbours that lead to simple actions that neighbours undertake with each other/in and for their street or neighbourhood Welcomes ideas and suggestions and can harness the insights/value in all of them Keeps moving from personal vision to shared vision Works in a culturally inclusive manner, including with Māori	Uses cross-cultural competency, including understandings of Māori, to help groups set and reinforce clear, inclusive tikanga and values around how they will work together Facilitates shared community visioning and ongoing identification of priority next step actions using effective listening, questioning, synthesising and decision support skills and communities' own research Works constructively with interpersonal and intergroup dynamics to support effective team work Uses self-awareness of personal triggers to support a calm environment and a 'holding lightly' if situation becomes stressed and conflictual Assists groups to recognise, value and work with diversity and uncertainty, address conflict, think creatively, adapt, take risks, identify allies, negotiate positive outcomes and collaborative actions with a diverse range of stakeholders engaged Helps groups identify and address power imbalances, democratic processes, political decisions and discriminatory practices that affect community engagement and wellbeing Piggybacks on existing local events, activities and groups and helps bring outside knowledge into local spaces to leverage the relevance and usefulness of CLD locally	Uses co-design approaches to host large and diverse gatherings to seek a common vision Acknowledges own bias and is comfortable hosting events with people with opposing views and approaches Utilises cultural competency to support sound cultural practice or framework for gatherings, including understandings of Māori culture and tikanga Works with local systems to enable local action e.g. access to resources such as meeting rooms, letters of support, guest speakers, assistance with promotion Helps communities understand how to influence policies and systems change related to their priority concerns Understands concepts around differing levels of engagement/participation	Creative, participatory, group processes actively engage and involve local people in planning, decisions and action around emerging shared visions

INSPIRING COMMUNITIES: CLD CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

Core Capabilities	"Street Leader" behaviours, attitudes, values	"Community Activator" behaviours, attitudes, values	"CLD Enabler" behaviours, attitudes, values	Outcomes that capabilities support
5. **Organise to support, enable and grow CLD action** **Designs and implements effective communication, funding, governance and evaluation mechanisms, appropriate for the Aotearoa context. These systems help amplify and support community energy, ownership and tangible impact**	Implements simple communication mechanisms for neighbours, e.g. street contact list, Facebook page Pulls together project teams as needed/ appropriate	Supports communities to create appropriate organisational culture, structures and decision processes that align with their vision and values Assists community to utilise its assets to plan and implement specific projects, events and strategies to achieve momentum towards its aspirations Effectively works with the tension between good process and tangible impact on community aspirations/issues Helps the community communicate its vision, priorities, needs, successes and learning to different audiences using a range of written and oral communication skills and media Supports communities to mobilise and manage people, resources and funding effectively and meet legal obligations Supports communities to design and implement culturally relevant planning, monitoring, evaluation and accountability mechanisms that reflect CLD values	Respects cultural diversity of communities and the organisational cultures arising, in their expectations of community engagement and accountability Identifies opportunities for cross-organisational support for CLD initiatives Leverages organisational resources of time, money and expertise to support CLD initiatives Negotiates mutually agreed accountability, learning and reporting mechanisms Understands the CLD tension between process and results and works respectfully with communities to support both Leads innovative systems improvements that help embed CLD principles as 'business as usual' in their organisational policy and practice	**Organisational culture, systems and structures support community capacity to organise, mobilise resources, take action, achieve results and grow**

Core Capabilities	"Street Leader" behaviours, attitudes, values	"Community Activator" behaviours, attitudes, values	"CLD Enabler" behaviours, attitudes, values	Outcomes that capabilities support
6. **Nurture local leaders and leadership development** **Understands existing leadership structures, including local Māori leadership** **Spots emerging local leadership in a wide range of forms** **Intentionally nurtures new leaders and opportunities for their development**	Shows awareness of own values/world view and respect for those of others Encourages and supports neighbours to take on leadership roles and new action/projects Is comfortable inviting people to offer to do a specific task Values the contribution of all ages, cultures, abilities, especially those not usually seen as leaders Comfortable when new leaders step up and ways of doing things change	Builds understanding of local leadership structures, including Māori, and those who seem to have power, influence and/or interest in CLD Actively works to shift leadership to those who are most affected/will benefit most from changes through inclusive practices that build confidence, voice and participation Provides mentoring as necessary & participates alongside community members' expertise to implement events, activities or initiatives Proactively works with the diverse strengths and values of emerging local leaders to build shared capacity to lead, to address tensions & complexities, to innovate and function as effective teams Shows awareness of own values, world view, leadership style and respect for those of others Supports and enables a range of styles of leadership appropriate to diverse situations Understands the value of many local people leading collaboratively together and actively supports, trusts, celebrates and enables this Makes sound judgement calls about when to step up, step back, walk alongside or exit to maintain boundaries and encourage local leadership development	Builds respectful relationships with local leadership structures, including Māori Offers/generates peer support for community activators and street leaders to help grow capabilities Helps own organisation respect and utilise community expertise in its ways of working Shares tools, offers training and support to others so they can use them too Shows awareness of own values/world view/leadership style and respect for those of others Brokers access to key influencers in the system who can also help • recognise, support and celebrate local leadership and CLD success • remove barriers or amplify opportunities where organisational capabilities, policies or procedures are impacting on the community's aspirations • provide access to capacity building support Helps grow a belief that local leaders of many kinds will bring positive changes and develops a willingness to act on this belief	**Diverse local leadership grows the capacity to collaborate within and beyond the community to drive local vision, action, learning and sustainability**