



Readiness for community-led development

Elements to think about and discuss

Here are some questions to help you think more deeply about your community context, stories and experiences. This process can help you to think about what's needed for the full potential of your community to be achieved and what support or actions might be built into your planning and processes to help build community capacity to participate, lead and succeed. Understanding the big picture of a local community - its strengths, challenges and experiences - is important. Individually and collectively, a range of readiness factors will impact on the pace, buy-in and process of locally-led change.

If your community has gaps or challenges in relation to any of the factors below, that doesn't mean that community-led development can't or won't succeed in your place.

Please note that many of these questions won't generate simple answers. Welcome diverse perspectives and then decide when you have a 'good enough understanding for now'. Then try some small, achievable actions that will build community and keep adding to this collective understanding of 'who we are' and 'who we are becoming' out of every action and local relationship created. Community readiness keeps evolving as confidence builds from action and reflection, successes and failures. It's not just what we know but how we engage and build relationships.

Look at our website for more ideas on engaging with diverse people and sectors.

Community Readiness Elements	Background questions for discussion and discovery
Demographics	<p><i>What social, economic and health/wellbeing factors need to be considered in your community?</i></p> <p>Communities under huge financial stress or pressure may need additional support.</p> <p><i>What about do you about ethnicity, languages spoken, housing (including those without homes) and age structures in your community in the present, past and future?</i></p> <p>What might the 'who is in this place' mean for timeframes, diversity of engagement and development approaches and extra resourcing that might be needed over time?</p>
Psychosocial factors impacting community capacity	<p><i>Are there any impacts or stresses from local crises/disasters/challenges (e.g. floods, youth suicides, loss of land) still being felt?</i></p> <p>How could they impact on the ability and capacity of local people to participate and lead in local recovery and rebuilding activities?</p> <p>Are there supports or conditions that need to be in place or integrated along the way?</p>
Community histories and dynamics	<p><i>What are the underlying local traditions, behaviours and contexts in your community?</i></p> <p>Think about co-operation and conflict and social, economic, environmental and cultural justice.</p> <p><i>What are the hapū, iwi, Māori histories and relationships with this place?</i></p> <p>Are there past events or milestones which may have positively or negatively impacted the community's view of itself and its future (such as colonisation)?</p> <p>Are there powerful individuals, families, institutions or networks who strongly influence what happens in the community, when and how?</p>



	How are they engaged/not engaged in locally-led change processes at the moment?
Power relationships	<p><i>Who has or is perceived to have power in the community?</i></p> <p>Which voices are generally privileged?</p> <p>Which are absent from engagement, decision making and action taking? Why?</p> <p>What is the community's experience of working with or alongside agencies?</p>
Local leader capacity	<p><i>Who is involved in action-taking or leadership in the community?</i></p> <p>Is there a wide variety of people or only a few?</p> <p>Are leaders found only in specific areas, such as sports clubs, churches, business, hapū, etc. or in all parts of the community?</p> <p>Are different community leaders connected? Do they meet regularly?</p> <p>Do people willingly volunteer to help out when needed?</p> <p>Is there a mix of experienced and new leadership emerging?</p>
Resource base	<p><i>What assets, skillsets, services, infrastructure are there in the community that could be better used in the future?</i></p> <p>What existing relationships are there between local community and hapū/iwi/Māori?</p> <p>How well are local businesses connected with the local community and vice versa?</p> <p>How is the community connected to or supported by external funders and investors? How willing are they to get in behind locally-led change efforts?</p> <p>How do or could local people contribute – financially and non-financially - to achieve community-led outcomes?</p>
Strength of relationships, connections and trust between local residents	<p><i>Do local people know and connect to each other?</i></p> <p>How does geography and community size impact on community activity and relationships now and into the future?</p> <p>Are there community activities or events that bring people together regularly?</p>



	<p>Do you have established local ways to share information, news and advice? E.g. community newsletters, Facebook pages, community databases, community markets etc.</p> <p>What do we see as the (loose) boundaries of the community for effective impact?</p>
Collaboration experience	<p><i>How often and when has the community talked and worked together in the past and what did this enable?</i></p> <p>Who was engaged and what voices were missing?</p> <p>What groups or agencies typically take on convening, coordinating or support roles within or across the community?</p> <p>Are there new alliances and good relationships between different groups that can be built on further?</p>
Existing community organising infrastructure	<p><i>What sort of community groups and structures bring people together?</i></p> <p>This could be for sport, arts, cultural, education and other community purposes.</p> <p>What communication and connection happens between key groups, networks, community champions to share and support new ideas and activities?</p>
Community understanding about itself	<p><i>What does the community understand to be the underlying causes and impacts of local challenges and/or new opportunities for change?</i></p> <p>How does the community view itself? What's its narrative (E.g. helpless vs hopeful) and is that changing? How?</p> <p>What aspirations/vision for the future do people have? How is this implied by what people are doing or more directly expressed by what people are saying?</p> <p>How does the community currently track progress and learning about how change happens locally?</p> <p>What value is placed on learning, reflection and sense making, and how is that shown in current/planned activities?</p>
Community optimism, pride and self-belief that	<p><i>The pulse or mood of a community has a major impact on community participation in and ownership of locally-led action</i></p>



locals can
influence their
own future

processes.

How strong is local identity and pride?

What are the drivers behind this?

What do people care about most?

What gets people motivated and involved?

Do local people feel their voices are listened to and heard?

ABOUT



Inspiring Communities catalyses locally-led change, to achieve sustainable, effective outcomes.

We are the reference point for community-led development in New Zealand, building on international and local practice-based evidence to grow and share expertise.

Inspiring Communities operates across many sectors at multiple levels.



RESOURCES

Harakeke/Flax - from the root to the flower the harakeke shares its properties.



ADVICE

Korimako/Bell Bird - fluent, graceful speaker.



EVENTS

Whakaatu/Presenting - the peak of the mountain as a stage to present from.

Talk to us about your CLD training, workshop needs, coaching, support and opportunities in your community or region. We understand diversity! We can tailor packages to your specific requirements.

Email us exchange@inspiringcommunities.org.nz.

