
SHAPING THE FUTURE

Enabling Community-led Change.

Kia whakamana i te whakawhanake ā-hapori.

www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz/shaping-the-future



Local wisdom²

EMPOWERING RESPONSIVE
KINDNESS RELATIONSHIPS
TINO RANGATIRATANGA FLEXIBLE
DIVERSITY MANAAKITANGA POWER
ADAPTIVE WHAKAWHANAUNGATANGA
DECENTRALISED SHARING TRUST
HOLISTIC EQUITY ENABLING
COURAGE KOTAHITANGA
INNOVATION RECIPROCITY
STRENGTHS-BASED

Realising the potential of community-led innovation requires new dynamic ways of working.

Growing a sustainable economy and enhancing wellbeing means interconnected action, a greater provision for power-sharing, and different collaborative structures and accountabilities.

If you want to form better relationships with community and explore more authentic and effective ways to do so, this is a good place to start. When integrated, these shifts will support you to embed local, hapū and iwi-led aspirations, grow collaborative projects, facilitate more effective decision making and remove bureaucratic barriers.

TAKING ACTION

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Decentralise. Devolve funding and power to hapū and local communities. Involve hapū and communities in design and local decision-making processes alongside iwi, councils, business, and other key stakeholders. Support tino rangatiratanga and local self-determination.
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Recognise and respect difference. A variety of responses will be needed to serve and support diverse parts of local communities and enable equity. One size solutions do not fit all, and imposing them can undermine local initiatives and marginalise those outside the mainstream.
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Value people and relationships. People, connections and trust make things happen. Build social infrastructure through networks, brokering and weaving roles. Relationship comes before partnership.
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Embed collaboration. Look for further opportunities to work with others, especially across silos. Partnering makes better use of local resources, shares risk and encourages innovation and learning.
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Build local economic resilience. Fund locally-led enterprise and action. Support processes and capability building that connects and builds more integrated social and economic capacity.
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Tolerate more risk. Complex challenges require creative responses to see what works. Mandate innovation and learning and provide flexible funding that allows for change and adaptation.

SHIFT

DECENTRALISE

Devolve funding and power to hapū and local communities. Involve them in design and local decision-making processes alongside iwi, councils, business, and other key stakeholders. Support tino rangatiratanga and local self-determination.

“We need the central system also aligned to the local – who is serving who?”

“The strength of Māori and iwi community responses over lock-down highlighted capability and reinforced the need for systems with more autonomous Māori leadership and decision making.”

“What would a ‘bottom up’ commissioning process look like? Can we design services and contracts based on what is already working on the ground?”

HOW

- Design locally responsive systems now for the next crisis.

“By week one there should be a koha pot that’s not tagged to food parcels, just a pot that can be tapped for the resources that are needed e.g. recompense for volunteers (petrol etc) as this was a big cost in rural areas.”

- Understand the difference between regional agencies and structures and those at local community and district levels. Don’t just devolve funding and decision making to regional levels as this can simply replicate bureaucracy. Instead, decentralise to district and local levels because this is where understandings of context are most nuanced and where local relationships are held.
- Involve community and hapū/iwi partners in the design of local Caring for Communities workstreams (social recovery response) and resource them to be active partners.
- Make central government data more readily available and build capability for hapū, iwi and communities so they can use it to make their own decisions.
- Grow local and central government capacity to more effectively partner with hapū and local communities.
- Redesign government commissioning processes for social services.

SHIFT

HOW

RECOGNISE AND RESPECT DIFFERENCE

A variety of responses will be needed to serve and support diverse parts of local communities and enable equity. One size solutions do not fit all and imposing them can undermine local initiatives and marginalise those outside the mainstream.

- Planning processes need time for more authentic, ongoing engagement that recognises the expertise held in different parts of communities – e.g. disability, low income, Māori, Pasifika and other ethnicities.

“Go to where people are and actively ensure that diverse voices are included.”

- Build understanding within central government about the existence and complexity of community systems and the organic nature of support that works best.

“Recognise that diversity isn’t duplication – it’s what prevents people falling through the cracks of mainstream responses.”



Community response, Tāneatua.

SHIFT

HOW

VALUE PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

People, connections and trust make things happen. Build social infrastructure, through networks, brokering and weaving roles. Relationship comes before partnership.

“Value relationships, because those who are close see what nobody else sees.”

- Support and invest in the groups and networks that look after communities. This capacity building investment is an insurance policy for future challenges and crises.
- Provide ongoing funding support for local networks, brokering and co-ordination roles, and community and economic backbone functions – not just front-line service provision and projects.
- Create secondments or similar opportunities for central and local government staff to work with local community and Māori organisations, to build understanding of how things operate on the ground and see the solutions that communities have designed for themselves.
- Build direct relationships and quality engagement between Wellington-based staff of central government agencies and local community networks and agencies (don’t just rely on regional offices for this).
- Invest in more spaces and processes that enable locals from different perspectives to connect and support each other to act.

SHIFT

EMBED COLLABORATION

Look for further opportunities to work with others, especially across silos. Partnering makes better use of local resources, shares risk and encourages innovation and learning.

“During times of crisis, the National Emergency Management Agency fills a co-ordinating role. But under normal circumstances there is no agency responsible for co-ordinating funding and support for diverse whole of community agendas. How could this gap be most effectively filled?”

“Government and Councils have had to act in ways that don’t come naturally and they did a good job. But they need to understand what it was like from a community organisation perspective—the people who were actually collecting and dropping off the shopping.”

HOW

- Require greater cross-sectoral working and community collaboration from regional and local leadership of government agencies. Build systems and structures which incentivise collaboration, provide capacity for them to do so, and mentoring to enable this as a new way of working.

“Work together with others in your area to plan initiatives and co-ordinate funding applications, rather than competing against each other for the same funding pools.”

- Set up cross-departmental projects with local communities to solve specific local problems (e.g. drivers licensing, getting teens back to school). Put investment into facilitation and brokering to build shared pathways and to force shared accountability for making change.

“Incentivise collaboration by providing good and realistic funding that rewards truly collaborative approaches. Be willing to pay for relationships, time and process as much as outcomes.”

- Move away from contestable funding as this undermines the relationships that communities need to collaborate effectively.
- Invite local people to be part of debriefing and post-rāhui reviews.

SHIFT

BUILD LOCAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE.

Fund locally-led enterprise and action. Support processes and capability building that connects and builds more integrated social and economic capacity.

“Why can’t a shovel ready project be called a youth worker?”

HOW

- Take a more considered approach to the next tranche of government investment in job creation – focus on supporting local businesses and community economic development aspirations.

“We need a Grassroots fund that enables different and broader parts of the community to get involved in local resilience conversations and be part of action taking too.”

- Use social procurement to create local jobs and increase local prosperity – the community benefits by employing local residents and retaining rate payer dollars in the local economy.
- Make it easier to establish and develop social, community and whānau led enterprises. Reduce current barriers, provide more support and small-scale, start-up funding and ongoing resourcing and support for non-traditional businesses and business owners.



Leading with empathy, Kore Hiakai, Auckland.

SHIFT

HOW

TOLERATE MORE RISK

Complex challenges require creative responses to see what works. Mandate innovation and learning. Provide flexible funding and parameters that allow change and adaptation.

“Look at what happened when they were flexible and responsive, and nothing went wrong! A lot of rule breaking happened, and nothing went wrong, and many things went right.”

- Continue to mandate and empower local agency staff to act flexibly and responsively.

“We saw MSD case managers operating from empathy rather than punitive spaces – document that and make more of it. Capture the examples of those who were confident to operate in values-based ways, used discretion– a taste of what could be. Bring that forward outside of crisis conditions.”

- Develop funding success measures collaboratively, not just for accountability but to support learning, adaptation and iteration.
- Create more locally held small-scale grant funds with minimal red tape and faster decision making to allow communities to be more responsive and kick-start or test new initiatives aimed at building local resilience.

ABOUT INSPIRING COMMUNITIES

Inspiring Communities has championed New Zealand's growing community-led development (CLD) movement since 2008, currently engaging a network of 4000 people, groups and organisations. Our vision is for all communities to flourish, with a focus on enabling effective community-led change. We work with communities, councils, government and agencies to support initiatives, projects, skills and policy that make local places even better to live, work, play and invest in. Our work crosses all sectors at local, national and international levels. Alongside our public good activities, our consultancy arm *Powerdigm* provides services to help agencies and organisations navigate community innovation. We can support your work in this nuanced and specialist space.

🌀 www.powerdigm.org.nz

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Local wisdom²

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