

Scones, not wine

How great enablers work



It's not about corporate-style schmoozing with a glass of wine. Manaakitanga is about taking the scones and the cuppa tea to the hui and making time for a kōrero. Community building starts with relationship building – a real, genuine interest in people and their lives.” Funding for Change in Ōtepoti, p. 1.

One of the most effective ways to support equitable practices in funding organisations is to empower staff to be true community enablers. Many of the people who contributed to the *Funding for Change* report spoke of the importance of relationships, of how the right people acting with openness, warmth and manaakitanga can make a significant difference. This theme has been reiterated in all our conversations since.

We've collated a list of some of the attributes we've observed in great community enablers – this list also incorporates some of the qualities noted in the *Funding for Change* report.

- They uphold the mana of community members and take care of the details of relationships, eg making sure people are invited to things or are involved in changes that affect them.
- They notice leadership qualities in others and gently facilitate those to come forward.
- They understand the power they hold as people who work in the system and take care to centre the voices of Māori, Pasifika, community and youth.
- They have cultural competency and a strong understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. They understand the principles and practices of community-led development.
- They have a wide grasp of the community ecosystem and work to build relationships and connections between people.
- They visit groups, spend time seeing them in action and have informal kōrero. They take the time to really understand what groups do.
- They build genuine relationships over a long time, reaching out proactively to groups rather than waiting for them to come to the funder.
- They work with groups to help them write applications, navigate options and find the path forward.
- They are enthusiastic and prepared to go the extra mile in the work – and their organisation resources and supports them to do that.
- They get involved and do the leg work to help community members participate and lead, eg driving around, picking people up, washing the dishes, organising supplies, helping with event set-up.
- They feed people and care for their wellbeing. They bring the scones.
- They share resources whenever they can.

A useful document is *A Capability Framework to Guide Community-led Development Practice in Aotearoa*, which was developed by Inspiring Communities. The framework speaks to the values, qualities, skills, knowledge, behaviours and attitudes that can help support sustainable change in communities. The framework outlines the capabilities of enablers – those who support local community-led development from their primary work place, which might be a funder, school, NGO, iwi or hapū organisation, business, or local or central government agency.