

# WHANAKE

THE PACIFIC JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT





# WHANAKE

## The Pacific Journal of Community Development

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## ABOUT WHANAKE

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[Whanake: The Pacific Journal of Community Development](#) is a bi-annual ejournal for practitioners and academics who love community development. The journal mission is to serve as a crucible of democracy, where people come together to share their dreams and plan their common futures. It has refereed papers of 4000-6000 words, reviews, practice notes from the field, and opinion pieces. The journal provides space for posing questions, documenting emerging trends in research and practice, and sharing case studies and biographies.

Community development journals exist in the UK, USA and Australia. We see this as a journal for Aotearoa New Zealand and the wider Pacific. As such it reflects cultural diversity and is about the WE, not the I.

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# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: WHAT'S IN A NAME!

BY JOHN STANSFIELD

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# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: WHAT'S IN A NAME!

**GUEST EDITORIAL BY JOHN STANSFIELD**

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COMMUNITY development, my second craft after automotive engineering, has been the love of my life. It is a discipline that has nourished me, entranced me and given me rich, rewarding and colourful experiences that give meaning to life.

In 2013, after a 10 year sojourn back in the field – including a stint as CEO of the Problem Gambling Foundation, leading a social enterprise in waste elimination and as advocacy director for Oxfam – I returned to Unitec as Head of the Department of Social Practice. I was keen to be part of the renaissance of Community Development in Aotearoa New Zealand and the broader Pacific region. The greedy period of rampant neoliberalism that swept across New Zealand carrying Maggie Thatcher's epithet "there is no such thing as society" had all but driven the discourse of community development from academic language. To speak its name was "verboten" and as we witnessed the rise of more fashionable terms like social enterprise and social bonds it seemed that the sun was setting on community development. Indeed if you had asked me in the 1990s or first decade of this century to give an opinion on investment in community development I would not have rated its chances.

*Something though has begun to change in the fortunes of my beloved craft.*

Little sentinels appear across the landscape that bellow a change. That most blokey and engineering place, the solid waste department of my local Auckland Council, has begun to employ community development specialists. The jobs feed that runs, banner like, across my computer every morning, has begun to signal a renewed faith, by employers, in the skills of community development practitioners. Meanwhile in international development, Governments who had long since ceased to fund community development at home but continued to invest abroad, are beginning to awaken to what works. A grow-

ing clamour is emerging, calling for the rebuilding of the community behind the community development practice.

ANYONE who aspires to leadership in the community development sector is probably a candidate for the society of self-harm. We seldom treat our leaders well; it's part of our anarchic tradition. But anyone who aspires to leadership stands on the shoulders of those who lead before them. In my case they are broad shoulders indeed and in his 76th year I name Gavin Rennie as the longest serving teacher, practitioner, mentor and leader in my community of community development practitioners.

I first met Gavin in the late 70s, when he was already well established as a supervisor and mentor for young community development practitioners. A seasoned veteran of change within the bureaucracy, Gavin was the first community development practitioner employed by the then Waitemata City Council in Auckland, New Zealand. In 1976 we worked together in South Auckland, amongst some of the city's poorest communities, struggling to de-colonise the social work profession. Together we built an organisation to challenge the pathologising and racist practice of the local health authority.

Later in the mid-90s Gavin as an established academic invited me to develop a graduate programme for community leaders and managers. He became my boss, a position to which few aspire and fewer survive.

When I returned to the academy in 2013 my old friend was still teaching, and regaled me of stories of the decline and rise of interest in popularity of community development amongst our undergraduate and postgraduate students (at one point enrolments for his class were apparently down to one student – how he hid that from the Dean I will never know).

Gavin will retire this year from his academic role and has been nominated for the prestigious "Friend of Community Development" award conferred at the annual CDS conference to be held in Minnesota later this year. Our inaugural



editor for Whanake, this journal might not have been possible without his store of contacts and bank of goodwill amongst practitioners across the land. Enterprises like academic journals and ACDA, our latest collaboration, rely on being able to excite others in a shared vision and this issue of the journal is proof again that Gavin has engaged some fine minds.

ONE OF THE other great things about having a long-term mate like Gavin is that we've never really been too fussed about the perfect definition for community development but are pretty sure what is not. Since being back in a university environment, Gavin and I have spent much time discussing the general context we wish to place discussion about community development within. There are some stellar shoulders to stand on, in regards to giving definition to the practice.

As long ago as 1948 the United Nations defined community development as follows: "Community Development is a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and fullest possible reliance upon the community's initiative." (Quoted in Head, 1979:101)

Others, particularly the [Scots](#), who have great passion for the craft, continued to refine and debate and further refine a definition. Meanwhile, Biddle, in the highly rated Journal of Community Development, has debated what he defines as the 'fuzziness' of definition of community development (1966). Heade also discusses the long and proud history while attempting some taxonomy, and organisation [Infed](#) puts collective action and social justice at the heart of their definition. The clever folks at the UK based Community Development Foundation have taken things one step further and built an entertaining online [quiz](#) to inform and test our knowledge on what Community Development is. My favourite definition however, comes from my partner, dear friend, fellow conspirator, and lifetime social change activist Denise Roche MP. In her [maiden speech](#) to the New Zealand House of Representatives she said: "Community development is the crucible of democracy,

the place where citizens come together to share their dreams and plan their common futures."

When I began back in the department we talked about the fact that – despite not needing a solid definition – there is risk that the body of knowledge and skill that is Community Development might be lost or diluted if it was not celebrated, reinvigorated and protected. This journal was formed to do just that. Fitting within a broad framework of what Community Development should be, Whanake was born of wanting to create a place where citizens from across the Pacific region can come together to share their dreams and plan their common futures – safe guarding the many fine definitions that our community of practice has been built upon. Of celebrating, reinvigorating and protecting the conversations Gavin and I have held dear.

This issue of Whanake hence continues a fine tradition of challenge, which began in Volume 1, Issue 1, with Alastair Russel's polemic "[Yes we do politics here](#)". Among other articles, in this edition Paul Woodruffe challenges the contemporary neo-liberal view & champions the value of belonging. Geoff Bridgeman and Elaine Dyer take us through a highly innovative approach to place-making with the Toddlers Day Out, which emerges as a "challenging to measure" triumph of neighbourliness. And from the Himalayan foothills I bring tales of resilient communities growing their own futures.

I CAME BACK to Unitec in 2013 because I saw a bright future for community development and somewhat of a vacuum for the thinking and research that would inform it. I had an ache for the long gone gatherings, hui and conferences. I saw a risk that unless we as a profession and community of practice reclaim the intellectual space and reclaim the language, then others, probably philistines impressed with their ignorance and proud of their greed would steal the language from us and sully and pervert the brand of what we hold most dear.

So that's my take on community development and what its name, and this journal, are about. For me community development will always be a grassroots (or 'flax roots' as we often say New



Zealand), people-centred, collective approach that is informed by social justice and a history of struggle. It will understand and hold as sacred the principles of community empowerment that give primacy to the community voice and trust the processes that are part of it.

George Santayana is said to have gifted us this thought process of looking back in order to move forward. “Those who are unaware of history are destined to repeat it,” he mused. Amidst the leaking Panama papers and the rot of the Global Financial Crisis new shoots of hope are emerging, zero hours are rolling back, the greed that robbed societies of the income to build a just world, is being exposed. Journals like Whanake are here to challenge the status quo and remind practitioners that there is renewed energy within in the practice of community development.

Be vigilant and keep your eyes open, there are pretenders and brand thieves on every bend ready to steal what we collectively have built and would gift to those who come after. We owe this much to the Gavin’s of our world who kept the craft alive in a hostile environment in an earlier time.





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# IN THE CONTEXT OF MOBILITY, SOCIAL IDENTITY AND BELONGING, WHERE IS 'COMMUNITY' AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

BY **KAREN M. FAGAN**

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# IN THE CONTEXT OF MOBILITY, SOCIAL IDENTITY AND BELONGING, WHERE IS 'COMMUNITY' AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

ARTICLE BY **KAREN M. FAGAN**

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## ABSTRACT

The word 'community' is used in many diverse situations. It may be that we move into a geographical community, buy into a product community, are part of a shared interest community, participate in a work or student community, belong to a cultural or lifestyle community, or are perhaps put into a community by those around us. Whatever the situation, the word community comes with a range of assumptions. If we are interested in working alongside communities, it is essential that we take some time to reflect on the value of belonging to communities, and the location of longer-term communities in today's neo-liberal context. This is particularly relevant in Aotearoa New Zealand today within the currents of individualism, consumerism, globalisation and mobility.

Responsible involvement in community development, particularly in the provinces, requires ongoing engagement with the concept of community, including some of the underpinning values and beliefs that inform people's perceptions of community. It has been well argued that proactively building a sense of community increases participation and contributes to a sense of individual and social identity, along with a sense of belonging. However, if these communities do not have a firm foundation over time, what might be the impact on individual, community and societal wellbeing? This question is explored within the context of today's neo-liberal mobile society, with a particular reference to the social institution of schools, and residential-based communities. As a part of this, the use of

place-based community consultations as a strategy for community participation is critiqued.

## INTRODUCTION

An individual sense of belonging and a clear sense of individual and social identity have often been linked to the concept of 'community', with the belief that healthy communities contribute to individual wellbeing, and vice versa (Chile, 2007a). This paper begins by exploring the dynamic relationship between identity, belonging and community. It then explores the value of community, and includes some of the underlying beliefs and principles that underpin community development frameworks when engaging with communities. Community within today's neo-liberal context is discussed, with a particular focus on the impact that mobility may be having on traditional communities based around residential locations and social institutions, such as schools and workplaces. The philosophical positioning of common community development principles is used to guide this discussion, and highlights some challenges to those using a community development framework of practice, particularly in relation to the community consultation process and to the practice of proactively building what may well be short-term communities. The place-based communities of schools and geographical locations are used to illustrate these challenges. Lastly the foci of community in Aotearoa New Zealand today are examined, with a reminder to those using a community development framework of practice, particularly in provincial and rural areas, about the significance of informal, organic, longer-term communities in relation to individual, community and societal wellbeing.





## SOCIAL IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY

Human beings are inherently social animals (Bruhn, 2005). From birth through to death we live alongside each other and depend on others for our very survival. Even more than this, our relationships with others significantly contribute to our sense of who we are as individual people (Chile, 2007b; Rutherford, 2007). As social beings we compare and contrast, looking for similarities and differences; from these we develop a sense of identity, place and belonging. Even those who claim to be loners, and who profess that their self-identity is inherently linked to being alone, use a process of compare and contrast in order to locate the title of 'loner', and can be seen as belonging to a community of loners. Having a sense of being connected to something bigger than ourselves can contribute to our sense of belonging, which in turn can affirm our self-identity and enhance our sense of wellbeing.

Social identity theory clearly links acceptance

within meaningful social groupings and communities with self-perception and self-esteem (Fagan, 2010; Sengupta et al., 2013). A degree of mutual interdependence amongst community members contributes to a sense of obligation, responsibility, reciprocity and trust (Bruhn, 2005). Being practically and emotionally invested in the wellbeing of others can contribute to a community-based safety net, and enhances the likelihood of companionship, protection, support and encouragement from community members (Bruhn, 2005; Chadwick, 2008). Having an authentic sense of belonging to a community involves the process of building a shared history over time, along with some common understanding of that history, and contributes to the sense of the familiar and of belonging. It is having a sense of positioning within community that enables people to relax into acquired roles, and to be supported in those roles, which in turn can affirm identity. Group membership is where people learn about roles and responsibilities, and where they develop some kind of commitment to the wellbeing of that group or community (Chadwick, 2008).



*Image One: Where is community and why does it matter? Social work in action Karen M. Fagan*



Community development as a framework of practice is influenced by the belief that “The ability to participate in a society or community is essentially linked to a feeling of belonging to that group.” (Chadwick, 2008, p. 5). It is through a sense of belonging to a community that people are then motivated to participate in social action, as the wellbeing of the individual becomes inherently linked to the wellbeing of the group (Chadwick, 2008). As McKay (2014) notes, “We rely on communities to support and sustain us, and if those communities are to survive and prosper, we must engage with them and nurture them. That’s the beautiful symmetry of human society: we need communities and they need us.” (p. 1).

### **MOBILITY AND BELONGING**

Some communities provide a lifelong and inter-generational location for belonging. Ethnicity-based communities are an example of this, and it has been well researched that a positive ethnicity-based identity is central to the wellbeing of indigenous communities worldwide, including Māori and Pasifika people (Berk, 2005; Durie, 2005; McLennan, Ryan & Spoonley, 2010; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind & Vedder, 2001). However, there are many other identified communities in which people assert a sense of identity and belonging that, in reality, have proved to be more transient. Aotearoa New Zealand, like many other countries, has been profoundly influenced by the neo-liberal powers, be they political, corporate or both, that underpin capitalism and consumerism.

In the past, places like work, school and residential communities have been central locations where people have had an ongoing (and often lifelong) sense of identity and belonging. While this is still the case for many, in today’s society a significant proportion of people in Aotearoa New Zealand have changed jobs, changed schools and shifted residential locations, and it is not uncommon for this to have happened a number of times. Today it is not unusual for family members to be living in different parts of the country, or in different countries, and for people to spend the majority of their day-to-day lives in communities with which they may well have had a short-term relationship. For exam-

ple, according to Statistics New Zealand, about one in five New Zealand citizens live overseas (as cited in Stuart & Ward, 2011), about one in four New Zealand residents were born overseas (as cited in Stuart & Ward, 2011), and almost sixty percent of New Zealand residents move once every five years (Bull & Gilbert, 2007). The ‘Growing up in New Zealand’ project (Morton et al., 2014) involved researchers interviewing over five thousand families of young children about a broad range of issues, including how often they shifted their place of residence. Of those interviewed, eighty percent had moved at least once in the past five years, and of those, seventy-four percent had moved twice or more (Morton et al, 2014). While moving house is quite common amongst many western communities, Morton et al.’s 2014 research identified a higher rate of shifting house amongst Aotearoa New Zealand residents than those in the United States of America, Australia, Great Britain, Sweden and Ireland.

Population mobility is reflected within school communities. School principals Bull and Gilbert (2007), whose research included twenty Aotearoa schools, revealed that almost a third or more of the students turned over in non-standard times during the school year, meaning that, along with the usual times when students changed schools such as graduation from primary school to intermediate, or from intermediate to high school, one in three students changed schools during the school term. From a local context point of view, Bull and Gilbert noted that this was significantly higher (at times almost three times higher) than the turnover rate identified in some studies from the UK (2007). From their findings Bull and Gilbert went on to question the appropriateness of what they called a ‘schoolcentric’ approach to belonging, in which schools actively attempted to build a sense of family or school community. They commented that “when analysing the interviews, we were struck by the number of times we were told by principals and teachers that they think of schools as being like families... Some schools use the term ‘whānau’ to describe groupings within the school, others referred directly to ‘the school family’ ” (2007, p.82). Bull and Gilbert identified that high levels of mobility are





a fact of life in New Zealand (2007), and suggested that a twenty-first century approach to schooling could involve home-school partnerships that supported students' learning if and when they changed schools.

One challenge for those involved in community development relates to Aotearoa New Zealand's current school-based curriculum that includes proactively building a sense of an identity within, and belonging to, a community within the school context (Ministry of Education, 2007). While yes, the notion of participation and inclusion within the school community can contribute to a responsive, meaningful, relevant, and engaged school environment, it could also be argued that for many people schools are actually short-term communities, suggesting a much lower level of longer-term connection. Teachers and students come and go. Proactively using the school environment as a significant community context for young peoples' identity development and sense of belonging could arguably have a detrimental effect. The reality is that young people are a part of this community only until they leave school. To use symbols and rituals, like songs, uniforms and other community bonding activities in order to encourage a sense of belonging and identity begs the question – what happens when people leave this school community? While some relationships and shared memories no doubt continue beyond school, the school-based community as experienced by the young person no longer exists. Thus the school community they were once a part of is no longer available as an ongoing location of support, belonging, or as a safety net.

It is worth noting that for many people the departure from a school community may not be a decision that they have made, but rather one determined by other factors, such as family decisions to move, or by the process of age and stage (Bull & Gilbert, 2007). From a wellbeing perspective, is there an ethical question attached to proactively enhancing a sense of belonging and identity within a community which has such a definitive ending? If the school community is significant as a place of belonging, what replaces this? Since developing a sense of identity and belonging to a community takes

time, what clearly identifiable and accessible process have we put in place as a society to sustain young adults during this transition? If having a sense of belonging to a school community is such a significant component of young people's everyday lives, it may be that departure from this school community can leave a noticeable gap for many.

## MOBILITY AND COMMUNITY

### CONNECTEDNESS

Shifting between communities, be they work, school, residential, or nation state communities, impacts on the level and depth of shared understandings people have within communities. A sense of belonging is built on a foundation of familiarity, of common experiences, and on a sense of reciprocity (Chadwick, 2008). From the point of view of an individual, it is not easy to have a sense of responsibility and commitment to the wellbeing of community members if one is unfamiliar with that community. Moving into a community means reconfiguring one's own position, not only from a personal point of view, but also from the viewpoint of the community into which one is moving. As Lawler (cited in Taylor, 2010) has observed, "identities are socially produced, and there is no aspect of identity that lies outside social relations" (p. 3). Hence, a high rate of mobility into and out of a community can lead to communities "in which it is difficult to identify who belongs and who is an outsider. What is it we belong to in this locality? What is it that each of us calls home and, when we think back and remember how we arrived here, what stories do we share?" (Bauman, 2011, p. 430). Being included into a community is a dynamic process and takes more than just a willingness or an invitation. Having an authentic identity linked to a community requires time in order to explore commonalities. This requires some testing out, redefining, and the building of trust through shared experiences as a pathway for moving from outside to an inside position within a community (Bruhn, 2005).

Moving between social institutions (like schools and workplaces) and residential locations (across towns, cities and countries) is by no means a new phenomenon, although the extent of this mobility is more significant today.



It has been proposed that neo-liberal economic influences have significantly contributed to this, and as an outcome “the web of social and institutional relations that held people together have been fragmented” (Rutherford, 2007, p. 12). Shared histories and narratives that contribute to a sense of commonality have been disrupted, and as such traditional community-based obligations and responsibilities have been impacted. Saville-Smith and James (2003) comment that “high levels of residential mobility and transience confront local communities with real problems of community attachment” (p. 2). Rutherford (2007) suggests that after thirty years of the “neo-liberal economic order, we are a society that is beset by loss, loss of belonging.... Companies are re-engineered, institutions reconfigured, departments reorganised...goals, visions and mission statements are invented and redefined...we are living in a social recession” (p. 8). These are strong sentiments which provide a real challenge to those of us who believe that healthy communities are fundamental to an individual’s sense of identity and belonging, and to societal wellbeing.

Goulet (1992) used the concept of anomie developed by Emile Durkheim (one of the founders of sociology) in order to further make sense of the impact that today’s neo-liberal influences have had on society as a whole. Durkheim has been attributed with suggesting that “rapid social change creates a vacuum in norms...called anomie, where the old cultural rules no longer apply. When things change quickly...people become disorientated and experience anomie as they search for new guidelines to govern their lives” (as cited in Newman, 2011, p. 218). It is not such a big leap from this point to link mobility and the fragmentation of the more traditional communities to at least some vacuum in social norms. Add to this a sense of individual disconnectedness, a level of social alienation, and an identifiable gap in social buffers that support and enable people to explore and develop their own sense of identity and belonging as they move between communities. Common outcomes may well be not only a sense of individual displacement, if only for a period of time while transitioning to new communities, but also a reduction in the individual’s sense of

community-based obligation, responsibility and reciprocity. Goulet (1992) observed that:

In the past every person knew his or her place in life. Now, however, that place is neither fixed once and for all, nor is it defined for specific actors in society. Small, closely-knit communities...within which people knew their place, their role, and their assigned vocation in life, have yielded ground to large impersonal institutions (p. 471).

As the focus on individual consumerism has increased, there has been an increase in communities being built up around the acquisition of products. In this scenario the sense of belonging and identity is often attributed to owning, or at least knowing about and promoting, these products. In these communities people can become a member, regardless of their work status, school attendance, residential location, ethnicity, age, etc. In a way, the purchase of a product like a surfboard, a vintage car, or an on-line game, becomes the ticket to membership. Rutherford (2007) identified a challenge in this shift in focus when he wrote that the “problems created by the neo-liberal economic order and the ways in which it has entangled the individual in the economic activity of consumption confront us with the need to remake a common life” (p. 15). This invites some reflection when considering Mackay’s (2014) assertion mentioned earlier on regarding “the beautiful symmetry of human life: we need communities and they need us” (p. 1). It is not so easy to equate consumer-based communities built around products with the notions of obligation, responsibility and reciprocity. Having said that, human beings are inherently social (Bruhn, 2005), so it may be that for many people the products become the vehicle around which a common life, and authentic community, is developed.

## **APPLYING A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

In the context of mobility, potential displacement and detachment, and consumerism, it seems easy to identify the vital role that applying a community development framework




of practice could (and does) have. Community development strategies enhance an individual's sense of belonging and identity within a community context, thus enhancing social connectedness and social cohesion. They also contribute to building mutual interdependence, inclusion, a sense of responsibility, reciprocity and trust, all of which contribute to a safer and more equitable society for all (Bruhn, 2005).

Community development comes from a fundamental belief that communities are their own experts in what they need in order to be a thriving place for all community members (Chambers, 1997; Ife, 2012; Toogood, 2015). This ethnographic approach to knowledge and wisdom promotes the notion that community members understand their own needs more than 'outsiders'. Working alongside communities, acknowledging and respecting wisdom from within, and including community members in decision-making processes as they self-determine, leads to a more equitable society in which human rights and social justice are more likely to prevail (Aimers & Walker, 2013; Ife, 2012). Goulet (1992) proposed that "development is essentially an ethical concern" (p. 169), and this belief is reflected in a community development framework of practice that draws on philosophical positions and principles of inclusiveness, participation, reciprocity, equity and empowerment.

Having said that, community is often talked about as though it is a cohesive whole, like a shoal of fish or a flock of sheep, moving as one clearly identifiable shape made up of many individual parts. The assumption here is that community members have a degree of homogeneity, in that they share something in common. When the word community is used in everyday language, it is often attached to the word that defines what is shared by the community members, for example, the Haumoana (a small town) community, the Horowhenua College community, the migrant community, the deaf community, and the cycling community. Using a community consultation process as part of a community development framework of practice often involves the assumption that even if community members do not all know each oth-

er, clearly identifiable community spokespeople may be found who not only have shared understandings and experiences with other members of their community, but also share an ethical position congruent with principles that underpin community development, such as inclusiveness and bottom-up participation (Ife, 2012). As such, there may well be an assumption that the spokesperson for the community will apply community development principles to guide their engagement with their community, and to thus enhance authentic representation.

The 2002 New Zealand Local Government Act requires local authorities to include a consultative process in order to identify community outcomes (McKinlay, 2006; Toogood, 2015). A community consultation process has often been used to achieve this, with the community being based on geographical boundaries reflecting the local authority concerned. It has been argued that much of this consultation process has occurred from a top-down framework, in that it is local authority and government staff who facilitate the consultation process with the respective communities (McKinlay, 2006). Much of this has occurred via public meetings or via gathering information by targeting identified community leaders. Having highlighted the rate of mobility in place-based communities, this raises a question about who gets to speak on behalf of the community and whose voices are not included. Not only does it take a certain level of confidence for individuals to speak in public, but also, it is not always easy to identify a system of accountability to ensure that those who do speak out are approved community representatives committed to community development principles like diversity, inclusion and bottom-up participation. It could be argued that those who are new to communities, who are still building relationships along with shared understandings and shared histories, and who have not yet gained a clear role within the community, are just overlooked. This acts as a reminder that within community consultation processes like public meetings and interviewing, consultation with identified community leaders could be more realistically viewed as consultation with the more established community members, or perhaps viewed



as consultation with the more ‘vocal locals’ who are able to present their views in this format. Using a range of other strategies alongside public meetings and targeting community leaders may “ensure that participation in decision-making is democratic and inclusive, enabling people to contribute as equal citizens” (Gilchrist, 2009, p. 4), which is another underlying principle of community development (Gilchrist, 2009).

## **WHERE IS ‘COMMUNITY’ – AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

So, to return to the primary question: in the context of mobility, social identity, and belonging, where is ‘community’ – and why does it matter? If those involved in community development remain primarily focused on residential locations and social institutions (like school and work) in order to engage with community, who are they leaving out? Evidence suggests that there are a significant number of people in Aotearoa New Zealand moving between geographically located communities (Bull & Gilbert, 2007; Morton et al, 2014). It is argued here that there are some ethical considerations relating to using a community development framework of practice in order to build a deeper sense of identity and belonging within communities that, in reality for many, do not actually provide continuity over time (like the school community). While ethnicity and religious/spirituality-based communities are well recognised as providing a life-long sense of identity and belonging (by birth and/or by choice), many people in Aotearoa New Zealand do not strongly identify with these as being formative communities for them. It has been well argued that people often belong to multiple communities (Gilchrist, 2009). Placing less emphasis on social institutions and residential locations as being primary communities of significance regarding identity and belonging, and more emphasis on communities in which people have more choice and longer-term involvement, may actually enhance individual, community and societal wellbeing.

In Aotearoa New Zealand there are times when a sense of nation state ‘imagined community’

(Anderson, 2006) is identifiable; for example, on ANZAC Day when large numbers of people attend dawn parades and share a sense of a common history. A nation state community is also visible at some sports events such as when the nationally representative men’s rugby team, the All Blacks, play another nation, or when national heroes like Sir Edmund Hillary or Dame Whina Cooper are commemorated, or when we discuss our national flag. It can also be seen when we, as part of the Pacific community, identify a commonality within the global arena. However, proactively building a sense of a collective nation state as a formative community for all citizens is arguably not consistently evident in Aotearoa New Zealand today. Perhaps, as we celebrate diversity, the notion of identifying commonality across all peoples has been confused with the oppressive notion of assimilation where the dominant is assumed to be the ‘common’.

When considering individual and social identity and a sense of belonging, it may be worth increasing the focus on the organic, and the wide range of grassroots communities where people today can, and do, have some ongoing involvement and commitment (Chile & Black, 2015), and thus a sense of obligation, responsibility and reciprocity over time. More informal communities built around shared experiences (like parenting, or being part of an Ironman team), or shared interests (like local history or music) or shared lifestyles (like organic farming or retirement), or shared activities (like sport, art and craft, or online gaming), or shared beliefs (like social justice, equity, sustainability or fair trade) provide plenty of scope for community development. These locations may well provide the longer-term communities in which factors like reciprocity and community-based safety nets are consistent over time within today’s neo-liberal, mobile context. After all, at least these communities tend to provide a location for identity and a sense of belonging to which one can remain, until (and if) one chooses to leave. And, as some commentators have suggested, communities are about relationships (Gilchrist, 2009) and “what people do for each other, not where they live” (Bruhn, 2005, p. 27), or work, or are educated.





## CONCLUSION

This paper explores the contribution that community makes to the process of building a sense of identity and belonging in the day-to-day life of everyday people. It discusses the role that communities can have in providing a safety net for people, and acknowledges the reciprocal and dynamic relationship between individual, community and societal wellbeing. The concept and value of community is discussed, and some of the beliefs and principles that underpin community development as a framework of practice, generally speaking, are identified. There is some reflection around community within today's neo-liberal context, with a particular focus on the impact that mobility may be having on traditional communities based around residential locations and social institutions. Those involved in community development are invited to consider potential ethical ramifications of proactively building a sense of formative belonging and identity within short-term communities. The school community (as a social institution) and residential-based communities are used to further explore these issues.

In the context of mobility, the use of community consultation via public meetings and interviews with identified community leaders is critically examined. The use of these processes for engagement with community raises questions around authentic community representation, and the likelihood that many, more mobile people sit outside these processes. This paper asserts that common perceptions of community in today's society, particularly those that can be found in provincial and rural areas, could benefit from a considered shift in focus. The paper invites readers to reflect on the place of more informal, organic and grassroots communities for affirming a sense of identity and belonging. Threaded throughout this paper is the assumption that authentic healthy communities significantly contribute to individual, community and societal wellbeing.

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# USING RESULTS BASED ACCOUNTABILITY TO SHOW PROGRESS IN A LONG-TERM COMMUNITY PROJECT

BY GEOFF BRIDGMAN AND ELAINE DYER

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# USING RESULTS BASED ACCOUNTABILITY TO SHOW PROGRESS IN A LONG-TERM COMMUNITY PROJECT

ARTICLE BY GEOFF BRIDGMAN AND  
ELAINE DYER

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## ABSTRACT

Violence Free Communities<sup>1</sup> (VFC) is a small New Zealand community development organisation which for 18 years has been running events and campaigns primarily in West Auckland, designed to prevent violence and increase community capacity and resilience. This paper applies a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework to an evaluation of the VFC's Toddler Day Out (TDO) event run in West Auckland from 2004 to 2015, focusing on data from 2014. This event attracts up to 18,000 people each year, is focused on reducing child abuse and increasing participation in Early Childhood Education (ECE), and involves over 70 different agencies promoting services and offering resources to families with children aged under six. Evaluating the impact of such projects on a community is a challenging and potentially expensive task for a small community organisation. In this paper we argue that an RBA approach, using performance and population measures, justifies a large-scale research project investigating the promising, initial indicators of TDO's effectiveness in creating non-violent communities. The performance measures (n=351 adults) show that 29% of the children under the age of six in the West Auckland local board areas come to TDO each year and that about 64.8% are coming for the first time. Adult interviewees are very positive about the event, and outline what they intend to do with the information and support they receive. Return visitors describe what they did as a result of the previous year's TDO. Stallholders describe the benefits of collaboration. TDO uniquely resources positive parenting,

encourages service and community collaboration, and reaches a very high proportion of the parents of preschoolers in West Auckland. The population data for West Auckland shows, over the period 2010-2015: a major improvement in ECE participation; a huge drop in child abuse substantiation rates, with these sitting well below national levels and targets; and a substantial reduction in crime rates. We argue that further research is warranted to determine the extent to which TDO is responsible, at least in part, for the big drop in child abuse substantiations and crime rates in this area.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper applies a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework (Friedman, 2005) to an evaluation of a community event in Waitakere City: Toddler Day Out & The Great Parenting Fair (TDO), run by Violence Free Communities (VFC). TDO began in 2004 and has been running every year since, attracting up to 18,000 participants each time (Violence Free Waitakere, 2013a). We argue that an RBA approach, using performance and population measures, justifies a large-scale project investigating the promising, initial indicators of TDO's effectiveness in creating non-violent communities. Specifically, a persistent annual drop in child abuse substantiations and crime rates in Waitakere City over several years warrants investigation; TDO may be responsible, at least in part, for this positive community development.

RBA engages with population accountability and performance accountability. The former is concerned with measures relating to the health and wellbeing of a population in a specific geographical area, and the latter is concerned with measures relating to participant outcomes from an engagement with projects situated in said geographical area (Friedman, 2009). The 2010

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly Violence Free Waitakere, until August 2015





report on the Canadian Vibrant Communities' 'grand experiment' (Gamble, 2010), the goal of which was to reduce poverty in Canada, is an example of how RBA reporting works. The report includes population data that shows how one measure of poverty (percentage of Canadians with low incomes) has declined over the period of the report from 11.5% to 8.8%. On the performance accountability side, the report documents "322,698 poverty reducing benefits to 170,903 households in Canada" (p.7) involving 1695 organisations in 13 different communities, as well as a direct influence relating to "35 substantive government policy changes" (p.7) concerning poverty.

RBA is "successfully" used (Friedman, 2009, p.3) in many countries around the world and is part of the contracting framework used by all government agencies in New Zealand when procuring community services (New Zealand Government Procurement, 2014). It has been incorporated into the Ministry of Social Development's Community Investment Strategy (Ministry of Social Development, 2012) and the programme for community-led development approaches pioneered by the Department of Internal Affairs from 2012 (Toogood, 2015).

In spite of high profile national public anti-violence campaigns such as It's not OK (Ministry of Social Development, 2016) and the Strategies with Kids – Information for Parents (SKIP) campaigns (Ministry of Social Development, 2010), the evidence from population data that anything has really changed appears to be slim (Toogood, 2015). The most recent national statistics on child abuse notifications to Child, Youth and Family Services (CYFS) are described by Unicef New Zealand (2015, para 1) as "unacceptably high" and by the Minister of Social Welfare, Anne Tolley, as "appallingly high" (Tolley, 2015, para 2). Furthermore, even at the local community level, it is not clear that progress on child abuse has been made anywhere. McMaster's 2012 observation in relation to family violence programmes is still relevant in 2016: "the problem agencies face is [that], apart from anecdotal stories of success, very little robust evaluation of the effectiveness of intervention programmes has occurred within the New Zea-

land context" (p. 9). This is where RBA can help determine whether or not unique community initiatives such as TDO are actually having any impact and can provide the robust evaluation that is required.

The value of an RBA approach depends, in part, on whether population data is collected in a consistent and reliable manner. For example, child abuse notifications have, in fact, declined 12% (Tolley, 2015) from 2014 to 2015, but as Johnson (2016) has pointed out in the Salvation Army's 2016 "State of the Nation" review, CYFS have changed their criteria for notifications by raising the bar for notification of emotional abuse, by far the largest contributor to the measure, thus reducing the number of events that qualify for notification. Gulliver & Fanslow (2012), in their review of population measures in the family violence field, conclude that none are very reliable. This is true of a wide range of population data around abstract concepts like violence and poverty. Changes to the way population data are collected frequently interfere with the interpretation of the data. In Canada an alternative measure of low income (the LIM) indicated that 13.5% of the Canadian population were on low incomes in 2010, not 8.8% as indicated by the LICO measure (Statistics Canada, 2012), used by Gamble (2010) to show the impact of the Vibrant Communities project. More recent reports using a new methodology indicate that 13.8% of Canadians were on low incomes in 2012 (Grant, 2014).

Internationally, despite the rise of RBA, there is a recognition that with respect to the assessment of the long-term impact of community development projects "our evaluation cupboards are mostly bare" (Fleming, Karasz, & Wysen, 2014, p. 361). Fleming, Karasz and Wysen's chapter appears in the US publication *What Counts? Harnessing Data for America's Communities* (Cytron et al., 2014). Wartell and Williams state in the foreword of this text: "There has never been an absence of appetite for transformative change in the world of community development. There has, however, been a dearth of data" (p. 1). In New Zealand the current focus on RBA (Ministry of Social Welfare, 2012), with its emphasis on the use of population meas-

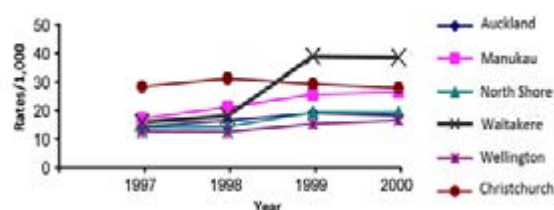


ures, is an attempt by the Ministry of Social Development to gain long-term data on the effectiveness of community development projects. However, much of the funding for such projects is short-term and doesn't allow for evaluations even six months out from completion (Haigh & Hucker, 2014). Even where community developers are keen to use population measures, getting the right measure with sufficient sensitivity is a challenge. In an extensive and generally positive review of RBA training and implementation in Wales (Opinion Research Services, 2011), the authors concluded that "stakeholders are less confident about implementing population frameworks" (p.6) required for long-term evaluation of projects.

So it is with some caution that this beginning exploration of the success or otherwise of TDO draws on the use, at a district level, of three broad population measures – attendance of preschool children in a state-funded early childhood education service; child abuse statistics (notifications and substantiations of child abuse); and crime rates (violent and non-violent). However, in this research, the population measures are sufficiently stable and the size and duration over many years of the TDO event should be sufficient for trends in population data to be meaningful.

## BACKGROUND

**Figure 1:** Notifications of child abuse/1000 aged under 18, 1997-2000.



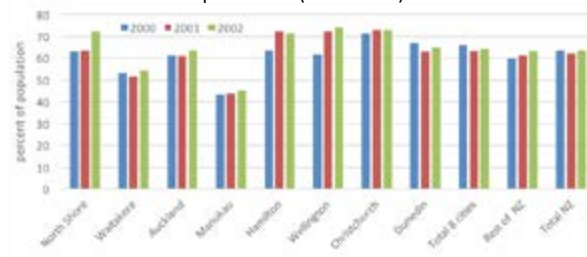
**Data Source:** Child Youth and Family Services (Waitakere City Council, 2002).

TDO began in response to data presented in a report to the Waitakere City Council (Waitakere City Council, 2002)<sup>2</sup> which identified the level of child abuse notifications to CYFS over the period 1997-2000 (see figure 1). Notifications in Waitakere City had gone from 16/1000

<sup>2</sup> Waitakere City was amalgamated into the new Auckland City in November 2010 (Department of Internal Affairs, 2011). In this report the area covered by Waitakere City is synonymous with the area described as West Auckland.

children under the age of 18 to 38.5/1000, a rate 38% higher than any other metropolitan centre in New Zealand and double that of the adjacent areas of Auckland City and North Shore City. Notification rates climbed nationally from 28/1000 in 2001/2002 to 126/1000 by 2009/2010 (Wynd, 2013a), so this became a national as well as a West Auckland concern.

**Figure 2:** Percentage of population aged under five years who attended state-funded pre-school (2000-2002).



**Data source:** Ministry of Education, percentages calculated using 2001 Census Data, (Reid et al., 2013)

A second issue of concern in 2002 was the very low early childhood education participation rate in Waitakere. Figure 2 presents the participation rates in state-funded early-childhood education from 2000-2002 (Reid et al., 2003), showing regional differences in participation. At 54.5% for Waitakere City in 2002, the percentage of under-fives in state-funded services was 10% lower than the New Zealand average; only Manukau at 45% was worse, with most metropolitan areas being around 20% better than Waitakere (ECE Taskforce Secretariat, 2010, p. 31). As studies have shown, a strong protective effect against child abuse results from engagement in early childhood education (Evans, Garner, & Honig, 2014; Reynolds & Robertson, 2003). It was therefore vital to have a strong representation at TDO from a wide range of early childhood education services including Kōhanga Reo (Māori ECE services), Pacific Island language nests and services that could meet the needs of a wide range of migrant groups (see VFC annual reports for more details: Violence Free Waitakere, 2012; Violence Free Waitakere, 2013b; Violence Free Communities, 2015a).

TDO was thus designed to address these concerns about child abuse and ECE participation in Waitakere City/West Auckland. It is a one-day carnival held in a large stadium, with over 100 stalls promoting services and resources that can help parents, particularly of preschoolers,

get the support they need to be good parents. TDO raises awareness, for families with under-six-year-olds, of the importance of group socialisation, pre-literacy skills, good health and a loving parental environment in these early years. It also links parents to the support services that can help them achieve these goals. To do this, VFC and the ECE group co-organising the event bring together early childhood education, social, health and community services to create an integrated, 'one-stop shop' where people can access the resources they need. In order to be effective, the event has to be culturally rich and great fun, so there are many activities for children: interactive and educational games; an entertainment stage presenting comedy acts, dance and cultural performing groups, interactive events and competitions; huge bouncy castles; and outside the stadium, safety displays, food stalls, fair rides and more information services (see figure 3)<sup>3</sup>.



Figure 3: Images from the 2014 Toddler Day Out & Great Parenting Fair.

In 2013, TDO attracted an estimated 18,000 people to the Waitakere Trusts Arena (Winther & Dyer, 2013) and each year from 2009 has attracted between 10,000 and 15,000 people (Dyer, Naidu, Cottrell, & Weir, 2009, 2010; Dyer & Winther, 2011, 2012; Winther & Dyer, 2013;


3 All photos above used with permission of VFC from their 2014 TDO annual report (Violence Free Waitakere, 2014a) and the photo spread used for the thank you message to contributors. All photos used with permission of participants.

Colmar Brunton, 2014; Violence Free Communities, 2015). In 2015, 75 education, social, health and community services involving over 230 volunteers ran information and/or fun activity centres, including sections ("villages") focused on the needs of specific cultures (Violence Free Communities, 2015). An additional team of 60 volunteers helped in the overall management of the event.

Because we are looking at gross population measures of change in a geographical area of around 200,000 people, we need to consider what else was happening over the period from 2004 to 2015 covered by this research, particularly from 2010 onwards. We have already mentioned the national It's Not OK anti-violence campaign begun in 2007 (Ministry of Social Development, 2016) and SKIP (Ministry of Social Development, 2010) Strategies with Kids, Information for Parents launched in 2004. In 2007, Waitakere City "celebrated becoming a [United Nations] City for Peace" (Waitakere – A City For Peace, 2007, para 1), dedicated to promoting a "culture of peace" (para 5) in its community. This involved support for organisations like VFC running violence-prevention initiatives.

TDO was not the only programme run by VFC over the period 2002-2015. VFC's vision is to "innovate for violence prevention through creating community resilience", and one of our key aims is "to produce model projects which successfully create community resilience and other effective alternatives to violence" (Violence Free Communities, 2015b, p. 1). All VFC programmes are aimed at creating better and stronger relationships between parents, carers and children, and between families, whanau and their communities. These programmes include Violence Free Begins With Me, Little Kauri, Banishing Bullying Together, the Promoting Great Parenting Network, Westie Dads in Action and Marvellous Mums<sup>4</sup> as well two major programmes *Our Amazing Place – Community Treasure Hunt* (Roberts, Geall, Howie, & Bridgman, 2013) and *Jade Speaks Up* (Dyer, 2014) which are used in many other New Zealand centres as well as West Auckland. These programmes have been used by thousands of adults and children in Waitākere over the past five years.

4 See 2013 VFW, 2015 VFC Annual Reports for details of all the above programmes; Violence Free Waitakere, 2013b; Violence Free Communities, 2015.



In addition to the work of VFC, there are many good NGO and state organisations in the West running strong family and child support, prevention, intervention and rehabilitation programmes as well as supporting national campaigns. However, though all of these inputs may influence rates of child abuse, ECE participation and crime, none of them are unique to West Auckland, while TDO stands out as an event of sufficient duration, difference and scale to suggest it may account for any positive changes in population data that cannot otherwise be accounted for.

## METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS

### PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Three published data sets are used as measures of the short-term impact of TDO. The main measure is the independent 2014 Colmar Brunton evaluation of TDO, commissioned by Auckland Council, one of the major funders of TDO. The Colmar Brunton questionnaire had five rating questions: event satisfaction, promotion of the event, reasons for attending, support for the event and use of ECE services. It also included an overall satisfaction question; demographic questions on gender, age, ethnicity and location; questions about whether one was a first time attendee; whom one attended the event with; and what relationship one had to the children present. In addition it asked a number of qualitative questions, including two that explored the likely impact of TDO: “What one thing did you find most useful today?” and the impact one year out: “What changes have you made as a parent, if any, as a result of the information you received from last year’s event?” The questionnaires were given to participants on the day of the event or afterwards by phone or email. Participant selection was based on convenience sampling, i.e. on the availability of potential interviewees in this context. Generally interviewees were selected from people waiting in long queues for the rides or the bouncy castles, watching the entertainment or waiting for their child to have their face painted. The interviewers were from a wide range of cultures.

In other years VFC has administered its own evaluation questionnaires using similar ques-

tions. In this report we use the in-house data from 2010-2013 and 2015 (Dyer et al., 2009, 2010; Dyer & Winther, 2011, 2012; Winther & Dyer, 2013; Violence Free Waitakere, 2015) to get attendance and return rate values for 2010-2013 and 2015. In addition, because the Colmar Brunton (2014) research did not include a stakeholder questionnaire, we provide data from a small 2015 in-house questionnaire (Violence Free Communities, 2015) on the interest taken by interviewees in stakeholder services, the enquiries stakeholders receive after the event and their experience as participants.

We use chi-square analysis to show whether the TDO interviewees have the same cultural profile as the Waitakere populations, and a Margin of Error calculator (SurveyMonkey, 2015) to show to what extent the sample size affords reasonable confidence that the findings are representative of the attendees of the TDO event and of the under-six-year-old population of Waitakere. The estimation of the attendance numbers at TDO events used a mix of counts of numbers through the door and grid counts to arrive at a preliminary estimate, which was checked against attendance estimates made by Trusts Arena staff (who are very experienced in the estimating of crowd size at events held at the stadium). Because the event ran from 10 am to 3 pm, it was a free event with no ticket sales, and there was a mix of indoor and outdoor activities, estimates were rough and rounded to the nearest thousand.

### Population measures

The population data (child abuse rates, ECE participation rates and crime rates) were adjusted to fit the boundaries of what used to be Waitakere City. Trends over time, and particularly over the last five to six years, are examined with comparisons made between trends in Waitakere City/West Auckland and with other major Auckland regions (the former Auckland, North Shore and Manukau Cities, now Auckland Central, North Shore and South Auckland). Population rates for the various measures used are based on Statistics New Zealand’s 2015 Sub-national population estimates (RC, AU), by age and sex, at 30 June 2006-15 (2015 boundaries). Some data are excluded, such as 2015 child



abuse prevalence notifications (data no longer available online) and 2015 crime rates (changes in reporting criteria make comparisons with previous years challenging)<sup>5</sup>.

## RESULTS

### Performance Outcomes: Representativeness of the sample

**Table 1:** Comparison of the percentage cultural composition of the 2014 TDO interviewees and the Waitakere (West Auckland) population (2006 census) and combined population of the three West Auckland local boards (Whau, Waitākere Ranges, Henderson-Massey – 2013 census – Statistics New Zealand, 2015).

	Toddlers Day Out 2014	Waitakere 2006	Whau, Waitākere Ranges, Henderson Massey 2013
European	58.8	59	43
Māori	15.9	13.1	10
Pacific Peoples	19.5	15.3	17
Asian	21.8	16.1	23
Other	10	9.8	7
		$\chi^2=2.89$ , $p=0.58$	$\chi^2=8.12$ , $p=0.08$

Table 1 shows that the cultural composition of the 351 TDO interviewees in 2014 was not significantly different from the 2006 Waitakere population (Waitakere City, 2006 –  $p>0.05$ , chi-square) or from the 2013 combined population of three West Auckland local boards (Whau, Waitākere Ranges and Henderson-Massey – 2013 census, Statistics New Zealand, 2014,  $p>0.05$ , chi-square) which covers the vast majority of the old Waitakere City land area. Those 351 adult interviewees came with 546 children

(= an adult-to-child ratio of 1:1.56). Most adults came with another adult as well, so it is likely that the sample (assuming random selection) represents close to 9% of the 13,000 people that came ( $\pm 3\%$  margin of error  $p>0.05$ , SurveyMonkey, 2015).<sup>6</sup>

People came to TDO from 14 local boards and from outside of Auckland altogether, but 88% came from the three local boards that used to be part of Waitakere City. Eighty-two percent of the adults interviewed were parents, with another 10% being grandparents. Eighty-four percent of the children of the interviewees were under the age of six, which suggests that there were roughly 6654 ( $13000/2.56 \times 1.56 \times 0.84$ ) children under six and at TDO in 2014, of which 88% (5856) were from Whau, Waitākere Ranges or Henderson-Massey. This figure represents 28% of the 22,085 under-sixes living in those areas (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). The margin of error when drawing inferences from the sample to the general population is an acceptable  $\pm 5\%$ ,  $p<0.05$  (SurveyMonkey, 2015)<sup>7</sup>.

Potentially then, over the period of the preschool years, it is possible that every preschooler has attended TDO. The average return rate of attendees to TDO in the following year over the six years, 2010-2015, including the Colmar Brunton questionnaire, is 35.2% (16-54% range). The average attendance over this period has been over 13,000 annually, or 79,000 in total. This means that TDO is capturing a substantially new group of attendees on each iteration and over the past six years around 51,190 (64.8% of the total of 79,000) are coming for the first time. If 60.9% are under six years old, and 88% of these (over 27,451 different children) are from West Auckland, this would be over 100% of this under-six cohort (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Even if attendance estimates were a 100% overestimate, we would still predict that 60% of the

<sup>6</sup> The margin of error assumes a random selection process such that the demographic proportions in the sample ( $N=361$ ) match those of the population sampled ( $N=13000$ ). Our sample reflects the demographic of a population engaged with under-six-year-old children. 351 interviewees/13000 =  $\pm 6\%$  margin of error; 896 (interviewees and their children)/13000 =  $\pm 4\%$  margin of error; and 1150 approximately (interviewees, their partners and their children)/13000 represents a  $\pm 3\%$  margin of error,  $p<0.05$ .

<sup>7</sup> We have 351 adult interviewees representing 546 children, of which 458 approximately are under six and live in Whau, Waitākere Ranges or Henderson-Massey. Four hundred and fifty-eight as representative of a population of 22,084 children has a  $\pm 5\%$  margin of error,  $p<0.05$ .

<sup>5</sup> In 2015 the crime data measurement system was changed to better reflect the impact of crime on victims and to align with international measures (New Zealand Police, 2016). "The old and new statistics are not comparable" (p. 4). Although there are processes that can achieve a degree of comparability, they are beyond the scope of this report.

West Auckland under-sixes participated in TDO over this six-year period from 2010 to 2015.

## Performance Outcomes: Experience of TDO

**Table 2:** What the 351 interviewed TDO participants found was the ONE most useful thing from today. 'Predicted adult numbers affected' is an extrapolation from 351 interviewees to the 5181 adults estimated to have attended Toddler Day Out & Great Parenting Fair (Colmar Brunton, 2014). Margin of error is  $\pm 5\%$ .

Information/ support area	% response	Predicted adult numbers affected
Having fun, great rides	17.9%	841-929
Play activities, parenting resources	12.3%	574-635
Nothing, not sure, confused	12.0%	561-620
No answer	12.0%	561-620
General information	10.5%	494-546
Early childhood education services	8.5%	401-443
Safety in the home, in the car, first aid	6.6%	307-340
Health and dental health	5.7%	267-295
Fire safety	3.1%	146-162
Healthy eating and nutrition	2.6%	120-133
Connection to families, cultures, community	2.6%	120-133
Chance to give feedback	2.0%	93-103
Connection with farm animals	1.4%	67-74
Ease of access	1.4%	67-74
The market/food stalls	0.9%	40-44
Dads, single parent support	0.6%	27-30
Total	100.0%	4685-5179


The 2014 Colmar Brunton report shows that interviewees were generally very positive about the event, with 80% saying they would recommend it to a friend and 77% expecting to return next year. Further: 94% felt that the Auckland Council should support events like this; 87% felt that events like this make Auckland a great place to live; and 83% felt that events like this "make me proud to live in Auckland". The event has a clear feel-good factor, and it also translates into positive and potentially long-term behaviour change.

Few come to TDO with the expectation that they will learn useful things that in small ways will transform their lives (see table 2). More than 70% come "for fun" and "having a day out" that's "good for [their] children". It's a chance "to spend time with friends/family" and "it's free" say another 40%. When asked what "the one most useful thing" was that they got from TDO on the day, one participant retorted "I wasn't aware it was meant to be USEFUL! I thought it was meant to be fun." However, watching or participating in activities in which the children are having great fun may in itself be a useful learning experience for stressed parents.

Table 2 shows us what was "the one most useful thing" the 351 participants found on the day and extrapolates this to the roughly 4685 to 5179 adults that attended. Having fun doing the children's activities and going on the bouncy castles and carnival rides outside was "the most useful thing" for nearly a fifth of the adults, suggesting that between 841 and 929 adults went home that day feeling that they had given their children a good time.

Over 50% indicated that they had obtained useful information from the day. Twelve point three percent (representing 574-635 adults) had taken home ideas about child development, how to play with their children, how to manage difficult behaviour, and how to access community activities (sport, toy library, dance, gymnastics) and parent support and training. A further 9.7% (453-502 adults) found out about safety issues in the home or car, or about fire safety; 8.5% (401-443 adults) found out useful information





about early childhood education services; 8.3% (387-428 adults) got useful health, dental, nutrition or healthy eating information; and 10.5% (494-546 adults) generally valued the information they received on the day. Even the 0.6% (27-30 adults) who most valued the dads' or sole parents' information or support represents an important resource being fed back into the community, as does that of feeling a "connection to families, cultures, community" which was the most useful outcome for 2.6% (representing 120-133 adults) of the interviewees. One describes this connection: "Auckland seems to be incorporating these great commu-

nity events for every culture to bring us as a nation closer. I love it!"

These outcomes from the day of the event could be seen as transitory. More substantial are claims of actions taken by interviewees returning to TDO the following year. Data from 2014 suggests that there should be a high return rate to TDO – 77% say they will return. However, when the Colmar Brunton report asked participants "What changes have you made as a parent, if any, as a result of the information you received from last year's event?" only 56 (16%) of 351 interviewees indicated they had been before.

**Table 3:** What the 351 TDO participants interviewed in 2014 reported as changes they have made as a parent, if any, as a result of the information received from the 2013 event (Colmar Brunton, 2014). Fifty-six responses. 'Predicted numbers affected' is an extrapolation from 351 interviewees to the 6079 adults estimated to have attended Toddler Day Out and the Great Parenting Fair in 2013 (Winther & Dyer, 2013). The margin of error for 56 out of a population of 6079 is  $\pm 13\%$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

Information/support area	% response	Predicted numbers affected
Play/sport activities, parenting resources	28.3%	1467-1950
Safety in the home and car	16.7%	865-1151
Nothing, not sure, can't remember	13.3%	689-916
No time to get info, didn't understand the question, fun	10.0%	518-689
Joined playgroup or day care service	6.7%	347-462
Health: immunisation, brushing teeth, asthma, first aid	6.7%	347-462
Healthy eating, recipes, cheap meals	5.0%	259-344
Fire safety	5.0%	259-344
General information helpful for self and others	5.0%	259-344
Got more connected to/engaged with community	3.3%	171-227
Total	100.0%	5182-6890

Table 3 shows that 77% of those who had attended the 2013 TDO, and returned one year later, could attest to changes they had made as parents and carers as result of that attendance. These included getting children engaged in sport, dance or swimming; being a more positive, engaged and informed parent or grandparent; enrolling in ECE services; addressing home, car, water and fire safety issues; making a range of health and nutrition changes; doing first aid; using information from the event for oneself or others; and becoming more engaged with one's community. Once again, if we extrapolate from the return interviewees back to the number of adults estimated to have attended TDO in 2013 (6079 – approximately one third of 18,000), the percentages in table 3 represent hundreds, and for some issues, thousands of people making positive changes in their lives. We do have to note, however, that the margin of error here is  $\pm 13\%$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and that people returning for more TDO experience may represent a different cohort from attendees in general.

While we have focused on the independent Colmar Brunton 2014 evaluation of TDO, the results from similar in-house VFC evaluations show very similar levels of participation, satisfaction and engagement with specific aspects of TDO. The VFC evaluations also show that the response to TDO is consistently very positive, that the information and activities presented on the day are highly valued, and that the participants are culturally representative of West Auckland communities.



In addition to the attendee questionnaires, a 2015 qualitative stallholder questionnaire was also very positive about TDO which, for most stallholders, is an annual event (Violence Free Waitakere, 2015b). They report on the interest taken in their services; the enquiries they receive after the event leading to use of their services (ranging from ECE services and parenting education through to free dentistry and dance or gym classes); as well as the collaboration and pleasure they experience as participants, and how that translates into their daily work of supporting families. The following quote from a stallholder provides an example of how this collaboration works:

“I saw lady who was really upset as her 15-year-

old daughter was pregnant and as they were a high needs family, they were unable to cope with more expense. Pregnancy Help, Parent Aid and many other organisations provided all the help they needed. She was overwhelmed with the support that was available.”

### Population outcomes

In summary, the performance data argues that coverage and outcomes of TDO define the event as one that could have significant influence on ECE participation and child abuse rates in West Auckland. In this section we explore whether those rates have changed in a positive direction from 2002 and whether those changes are exceptional and point to differences that require explanation.

**Table 4:** Change in participation in Early Childhood Education 2002-2015 and the relationship between participation and the average decile rating of schools (2015) in a local board area 2002, (ECE Taskforce Secretariat, 2010, Education Counts, 2016).

City	% participation in state-funded ECE 2002	Local Board	% participation in ECE December 2015	Average decile
North Shore/Waitakere	72.4	Upper Harbour	98.7	8.9
North Shore	72.4	Kaipātiki	97.1	7.6
Auckland	63.6	Waitematā	97.0	6.5
Waitakere City	54.5	Waitākere Ranges	97.5	6.6
		Henderson-Massey	93.3	3.7
		Whau	93.2	3.8
Manukau	45.3	Papakura	92.6	3.6
		Ōtara-Papatoetoe	95.3	1.6
		Manurewa	92.1	2.0
		Māngere-Ōtahuhu	89.7	1.4
New Zealand total	63.9	New Zealand total	98.7	na

4 looks at participation rates in state-funded early childhood education, 2002 (ECE Taskforce Secretariat, 2010) to 2015 (Education Counts, 2016)<sup>8</sup>. By 2015 the gap between Waitākere and Manukau and other cities, and New Zealand as a whole had narrowed from 10-30% to 1-10%. However, table 4 demonstrates that levels of poverty as measured by school deciles (Ministry of Education, 2015)<sup>9</sup> are a powerful influence on ECE participation and the outcomes for the West Auckland boards that formed the old city of Waitākere, while much improved (40% better), are no better than the improvements that have occurred in Manukau (nearly 50% better). There is no unique feature of the West Auckland data that could suggest that TDO has provided a resource for change that may not be available elsewhere.

**Figure 4:** Notifications to CYFS of child abuse in 2011-2015 of 0-17-year-old children as a percentage of population.



The data on child abuse tells a different story. In 2000, the rate of care and protection notifications to Child Youth and Family Services in Waitākere City was the highest in New Zealand (see figure 1 above), according to data provided by Child Youth and Family Services (CYFS). The rates of care and protection notifications to CYFS, at 3.85%, were around 50% higher than those for Manukau, and double those of the North Shore and Auckland. Rates were climbing across New Zealand and by 2010 the national rate of notifications was 12.6% (Wynd, 2013a). However, Wynd (2013b) shows that between 2008 and 2012 the rates of substantiated child abuse for Waitākere were falling, and although still relatively high were better than Manukau and some other parts of New Zealand.

<sup>8</sup> The Ministry of Education changed the way they collected ECE data in 2014 and advised because of a data collection and definition change the 2014 data was not necessarily comparable to data from previous years. However, by December 2015 that advice had been removed. Alarming, the Henderson-Massey prior participation rate has dropped 1.8% from December 2013 to December 2015.

<sup>9</sup> The correlation between average decile level and average prior participation in ECE was 0.90 in December 2015 (Education Counts, 2016).

Figure 4 gives population rates of notification of child abuse of children and young people for 2011-2015. These are incidence rates (Child Youth and Family Services, 2015a, Statistics New Zealand, 2015)<sup>10</sup>. The child and youth under-17 population was calculated for each aggregate of CYFS districts that approximated the old cities of Waitākere, North Shore, Auckland and Manukau<sup>11</sup>.

Figure 4 shows that overall New Zealand incidence notification rates of child abuse from CYFS have remained stable over the five years to 2015, and that rates have dropped in the greater Auckland region, with the largest percentage drop in notifications being 25% in West Auckland. Notifications increased by 7.5% for the rest of New Zealand. At 8.1%, the West Auckland rates are half those of South Auckland and well below the national average.

**Figure 5:** Percent of distinct children and young adults in the 2010-2015 0-17 year-old population that were substantiations of child abuse notified to CYFS offices



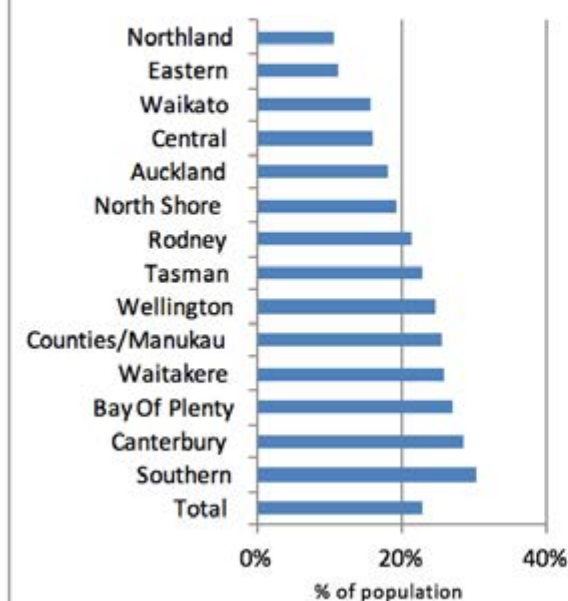
Figure 5 looks at the percentage of distinct children and young adults in 2010-2015 (the prevalence rate) that were substantiated cases of child abuse notified to CYFS offices (Child Youth and Family Services, 2015b; Statistics New Zealand, 2015). Figure 5 shows that substantiation rates have been falling in West Auckland almost every year since 2010, dropping by 52%, and much faster than other districts and New Zealand (an 18% drop) as a whole. This means that there were 676 fewer children suffering substantiated abuse in 2015 than there were in 2010. If West Auckland had made the same per-

<sup>10</sup> 10 CYFS in 2016 are not including distinct children and young people (prevalence) data for notifications on their webpages reporting child abuse statistics. They are reporting distinct children and young people for substantiations.

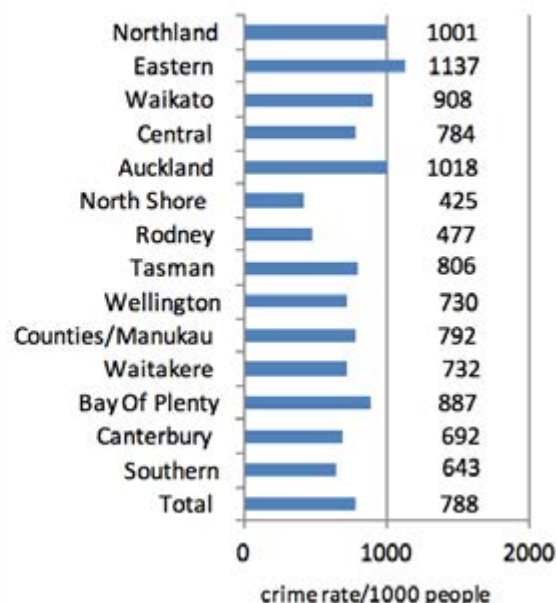
<sup>11</sup> The aggregations used in figures 4 and 5 were: West Auckland = Waitākere, Henderson-Massey, Whau and 14% of Upper Harbour; North Shore = 86% of Upper harbour, Rodney, Hibiscus and Bays, Kaipātiki and Devenport-Takapuna; Auckland = Waitemātā, Albert-Eden, Wai-heke, Puketāpapa, Ōrakei, Maungakeikei-Tāmaki; Manukau = Māngere-Ōtahuhu, Ōtara-Papatoetoe, Manurewa, Howick, Papakura, Franklin.



**Figure 6a:** % decrease in crime rates from 2010 to 2014.<sup>12</sup>



**Figure 6b:** 2014 crime rates /10,000 population.<sup>12</sup>



cent progress as New Zealand as a whole, that would mean 436 extra cases of substantiated child abuse; if it had made the same progress as the rest of New Zealand excluding Auckland there would be 562 extra cases.

## DISCUSSION

This data on child abuse rates clearly suggests that something unique has been happening in West Auckland over the last six years that has shifted the way that parents respond to young children. Wynd (2013b) presents data showing that for CYFS's two West Auckland districts (Westgate and Waitakere), substantiations as a proportion of notifications have been falling almost every year since 2007. Combining data from figures 4 (notification incidence) and 5 (substantiation prevalence), shows that this trend continues for West Auckland, which has seen a 7.4% fall from 2011 to 2015 in the proportion of notifications that are substantiated. This is a much greater fall than for other Auckland regions (2.6% to 3.2%), the rest of New Zealand excluding Auckland (2.5%), or New Zealand overall (2.9%). This suggests we have a consistent pattern of positive reduction of child abuse in West Auckland over a nine-year period.

One of the clear consequences of child abuse

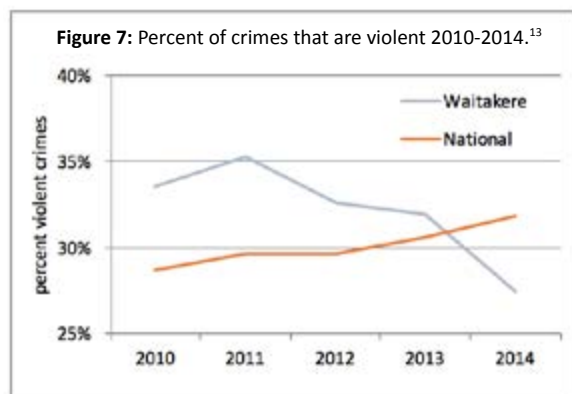
is the increased likelihood of victims becoming involved in criminal behaviour generally and violence in particular (Currie & Tekin, 2006; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013; Division of Violence Prevention, 2014). Thus if child abuse rates drop we should expect to see a fall in crime rates, particularly for violent crime. Figures 6a and 6b show that the Waitakere police district, basically covering West Auckland, has had a 27% drop in crime rates over the five-year period from 2010 to 2014 (Police National Headquarters, 2011-2014).<sup>12</sup> That represents over 5000 fewer crimes in 2014 – just under 14 fewer crimes every day – than would have been expected from 2010 crime rates.

The overall rate of crime in West Auckland is 7% lower than the national average. West Auckland looks like one of the safer places in New Zealand to live, despite the impressions, and labels like 'murder capital' that media attached to the area following the recent spike of high profile attacks and killings in and around Henderson ("Communities moving on after spate of violence in 2014," 2014). On top of this, figure 7 shows that violent crimes<sup>13</sup> are declining as a percentage

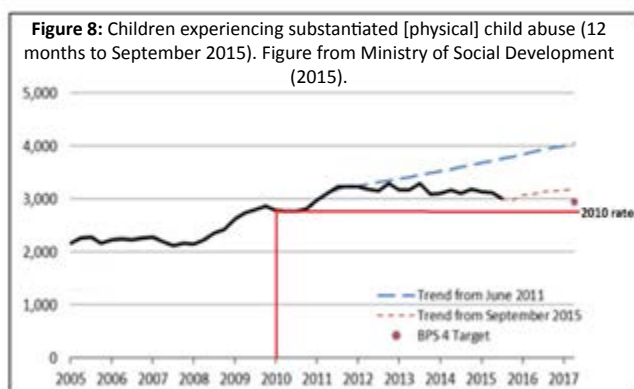
<sup>12</sup> These figures are drawn from the national, regional and Waitematā district reports 2011-2014. The 2011 report contains the 2010 data as well.

<sup>13</sup> Violent crime is defined as homicide and related offences, acts intended to cause injury, sexual assault and related offences, dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons, abduction, harassment and other related offences against a person, robbery, extortion and related





of total crime in the Waitakere police district (down 6% since 2010), but are increasing nationally (up 3% – Police National Headquarters, 2011-2014). These trends, of changes in crime rates and child abuse substantiations that are better than the national, are not because West Auckland has become prosperous. If anything the 2013 Census data (Bridgman, 2014) suggests that it has become less so. While there are pockets of affluence, the decile ratings in table 4 show that more than three quarters of those living in West Auckland (i.e. Henderson-Massey and Whau local boards) are relatively poor. Something is buoying this community and while we have not necessarily proved that the work of VFC is a key factor, what has been demonstrated is the need for further research on this point, perhaps working backwards from population data.



Population data, particularly concerning child abuse, are central to any exploration of well-being in New Zealand. In 2011, using population data, the New Zealand Government's Open Government Partnership set five Better Public Service target areas for New Zealand, two of which, Supporting vulnerable children and Re-offences, unlawful entry with intent/burglary, and breaking and entering (Ministry of Justice, nd).

ducing crime, are highly relevant to this discussion (State Services Commission, 2016a). Reports on those target areas show that between 2010 and 2016 crime, violent crime, youth crime and re-offending rates have dropped consistently quarter by quarter between 15% and 45% and are likely to end up below their 2017 target set in 2010 (State Services Commission, 2016b). However, the target for supporting vulnerable children has the number of children suffering substantiated physical abuse rising by 5% from 2010 to 2017 (Ministry of Social Development, 2015). Some of MSD's projections suggest they will not reach the Better Public Service (BPS) target by 2017 (see figure 8).

Figure 8 shows that across New Zealand, the number of children experiencing substantiated physical abuse has risen from about 2750 in 2010 to 3000 in 2015. This is an 8.5% increase in substantiated child physical abuse prevalence and contrasts with the 18% decrease in overall substantiated child abuse prevalence nationally (2010-2015) shown in figure 5, and does give concern for the value of the overall measure (Johnson, 2016). However, if there was a 26.5% difference between the change in overall and physical abuse rates 2010-2015 nationally, in West Auckland – with a 52% drop in overall rates over the same period – it would be reasonable to expect a drop in physical abuse rates<sup>14</sup>.

If population data is to be used to drive positive social change, one would expect that government agencies would notice the differences between regions, and support and replicate the projects that were connected with success. After all, RBA is at the heart of the New Zealand Government's Better Public Service targets. Major resources are given to the projects whose success will be measured by population data. In relation to the Supporting vulnerable children target, the Vulnerable Children Act 2014 has been enacted (Children's Action Plan, 2015) and \$350 million has been allocated "for community-based social services [to] effectively support Government priorities" (Ministry of Social Development, 2015, para 7) including supporting vulnerable children.

<sup>14</sup> District-level data on emotional, sexual, physical and neglect categories of abuse are not currently available, but the Ministry of Social Development write that they are preparing this data for release shortly (personal communication, April 15, 2016).



RBA research is increasingly do-able. The government has created a new website, [www.data.gov.nz](http://www.data.gov.nz) (ICT.govt.nz, 2016), not only to support agencies to access published data but also to request unpublished data held by government agencies. In the future it should be possible for small agencies to access a wide range of annualised population data relating to micro-communities they are wanting to serve. This data will hopefully identify the strengths as well as the challenges of communities and help us understand what we can learn from communities, as well as what resources they need to flourish. Further research on the impact of projects such as TDO may be able to use micro-community data to track small annual shifts in events, health states, choices, behaviours, and access to and use of resources that accompany improvements in community wellbeing. Such information would be invaluable in supporting government/community targeting of effective strategies to actually reduce rates of child physical abuse, rather than just watching their increase.



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### Author Bios



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# AVONDALE CREATIVE SPACES: A CASE STUDY IN COMMUNITY BUILDING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

BY **PAUL WOODRUFFE**

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# AVONDALE CREATIVE SPACES: A CASE STUDY IN COMMUNITY BUILDING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

PRACTICE PAPER BY PAUL WOODRUFFE

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## ABSTRACT

This case study outlines the process, delivery and outcomes of a series of public artwork initiatives undertaken through a partnership between Unitec Institute of Technology research group The everyday collective laboratory and Avondale Community Action (ACA). To assist in promoting the benefits of participation and attracting volunteers to assist in ACA's random household survey, a series of interconnected creative events were designed. These projects, held within the Avondale town centre, were also intended to engage the local people in community based creative processes, making this activity visibly public, and responding to an identified need to introduce public artwork into the Avondale town centre. This was intended to be a signal to, and a catalyst for, positive change – promoting the concept of having “creative space” within the community. These projects were jointly funded by the Whau Local Board, Auckland Council and Unitec, all of whom agreed to a set of specific outcomes. These were primarily to promote public engagement with the arts, data collection for the facilitation of networking, and the prototyping of small-scale, affordable, temporary public artworks as well as assisting the survey to gain traction.

## INTRODUCTION

### An everyday collective

The everyday collective laboratory is a Unitec-based research group that consists of a fluid network of staff members, graduates and student research assistants from across disciplines, all of whom are interested in design for social

change, public engagement, environmental design and experimental public artworks.

The aim of the collective is to use the resources of the institution to assist not-for-profit community (NFP) groups in projects that would normally be beyond their capability; for instance projects that include advocacy, communication, environmental design and/or collaborative public art projects. Our current focus is in the western areas of Auckland city. Past projects can be seen at: [www.collectivelab.wordpress.com](http://www.collectivelab.wordpress.com)

### Avondale Community Action

Avondale Community Action (ACA) was established in early 2012 by a group of local residents in Avondale. It is a fully independent network of local residents who come together to advocate for more inclusive and transparent decision making processes, specifically for Auckland Council controlled improvement initiatives for the area ACA mapped as being “Avondale”.

Avondale is a neighbourhood that prior to ACA forming, did not have any existing ratepayer or resident association groups. The Whau Local Board recognised the need for such a group in order to improve the quality of its community consultation processes, and so indicated the board would assist in funding one. The establishment of ACA was assisted and mentored by Gail Fotheringham, Auckland Council, and Dr Tess Liew, an academic and social worker, both of whom have extensive previous experience in the mentoring and start-up of community organisations. On their advice, ACA agreed that the completion of a random household survey would be a priority project, and that this was fundamental for understanding the community. It was also recognised, as Liew states, that “people may feel uncomfortable about being brought together simply in order to interact with each other, they are generally much more comfortable about being brought together for a specific purpose” (2013, p.181). It was this col-



**Image 1:** Members of Avondale Community Action taking part in one of the 'creative spaces' initiatives. Image credit Paul Woodruffe

lective goal – to bring people together in order to complete the survey – that was hoped could lay the foundation for community-building in Avondale, and the process for this was supported by the creation of a website and a Facebook page.

Charitable Trust status for ACA was obtained in 2013. This means that from that point, Unitec was no longer needed as a funding agent, and that ACA is now fully financially independent as a registered charitable trust. Through its status and subsequent eligibility to apply for funding through organizations like the Portage Licencing Trust, ACA is able to assist smaller community groups with their funding.

### Partnership

It was agreed in 2012 during the initial meetings of Avondale Community Action (ACA) that in order for the organisation to be completely volunteer based, it would need to undertake community building projects that could be sustained through periods of limited or no funding. It would therefore be necessary to form partnerships with larger organisations.

At that time, The everyday collective laboratory research group saw potential in collaborating with ACA, as it offered an opportunity for a multi-disciplinary project. The everyday col-

lective could contribute specialist expertise to ACA's projects and assist in funding applications through Unitec's Research and Enterprise Office. This specialist expertise proved to be especially valuable for the ethics approval process that was required for quality assured data collection in the household survey.

### Community Development

As expertise and hours were needed for the data collection and analysis, students from Unitec's Social Practice Programme were approached to assist with the random household survey, which began in July 2012. The everyday collective laboratory designed the survey document's typography and layout, and ethics approval for the survey was facilitated through Unitec's Research Ethics Committee. In undertaking the survey an informal partnership was established between ACA and Unitec, especially in regards to problem solving issues around engagement and participation. The benefits of this partnership went beyond the application of specialist expertise, as it connected ACA members with the researchers and students of Unitec. Furthermore, as Ife observes: "The participants in a community project may have joined initially because they believed in the value of the project itself, but it is often the social interaction associated with the project that keeps them involved" (2013, p.181).





## THE BEGINNING

The first project that the newly formed ACA agreed to undertake was the completion of a random household survey. It was agreed that this could deliver data capable of enabling the group to understand the residents' perceptions and opinions of their social and economic environment, and could produce a snap-shot of people's aspirations for themselves and for their local community. This project involved a considerable number of volunteers for the door-to-door work, as well as the technical and organisational survey skills required for data collation and analysis. It also required the local people to want to participate in it, and this in turn required a degree of trust on the part of the respondents towards ACA.

One of the first public forums that the group held to gauge the public response to the concept of forming ACA was at St Ninian's Church, on a weekday evening in 2012. Quite a number of local people turned up to hear what this new residents' group had to say. The overall impression from ACA members attending the meeting was that the people's voices had not been heard by local government in the past, and that they were very sceptical that it would be heard now or in the near future. But they were receptive to the formation of a residents' advocacy group.

The result of this meeting was that ACA decided to form a working party tasked with devising strategies that could raise the profile of the group, establish a graphic identity, and make the winds-of-change they were advocating for visible on the main streets of the town centre.

It was acknowledged that branding ACA through graphic design as well as becoming involved in local event management could also greatly assist in the recruitment of volunteer workers for the survey. This could also encourage more people to become aware of the advantages that participating in the survey could bring to the community. It was at this early stage, with the assistance of Gail Fotheringham from Auckland Council and Mark Allen the Whau Local Board Advisor, that the Local Board became interested in the value that ACA and the random house-

hold survey could bring to the community and to their decision making. It was agreed by all parties that the project philosophy was to "allow the process to determine the outcomes, rather than the perverse approach of allowing the outcomes to determine the process, and that this is at the heart of good community development" (Ife, 2013, p182).

The ACA working group, tasked with improving the public engagement for the survey, decided to schedule a series of creative events based from a "hub space" within the town centre. A funding proposal for this was designed and presented to the Whau Local Board, and funding was applied for from Unitec's Foci Research Fund.

It was acknowledged in the proposal that a series of creative projects through a partnership with Unitec and the Whau Local Board could be capable of generating a greater public profile for ACA as a neutral and independent community driven organisation. It could also be of help to increase membership and volunteer recruitment and communicate the value of the random household survey to the residents of Avondale. These projects came under an umbrella title of "Avondale Creative Spaces".

The first of a series of planned occupations of space for creative-practice-based events included one for ACA's first birthday. A local café situated in what used to be a petrol station, and still retaining the large forecourt roof, hosted an afternoon of live music from local musicians and a wall of coloured boards that people were invited to draw and write comments on with coloured chalk. The event also featured a display of local produce in the form of lemonade and fruit drinks made from the fruit of local trees, thus launching the "Made in Avondale" label. This was an idea that was designed so that it could be extended beyond the fruit-based preserves and used to promote a wider variety of locally made products. It was a well patronised event, with the local Police attending and showing their support. The popularity of the event, as well as the public's willingness to participate in the art making and the appearance of locally made produce, confirmed to the



ACA membership the validity of using creative practice to bring people together (the enthusiasm for the event extended to an old planter box being weeded and re-planted with herbs by some keen local gardeners). This event illustrated that participatory community activities could progress organised advocacy for a positive change in Avondale.



Image 2: Avondale street corner sculpture. Photo credit Paul Woodruffe

## A CREATIVE SPACE

“Public art logically and potentially becomes adopted as both study object and place of study in a social-scientific fashion, as it finds itself in a socio-spatial field of force that is as intricate as city life itself.” (Zebracki, 2012, p2.)

The working party of Avondale Community Action Trust, who was tasked with running the Creative Spaces project, had several goals. These included engaging with as wide of a cross section of the local residents as possible, creating a highly visible presence in the town centre, making the projects as participatory as possible, and lastly recruiting as many new members for ACA as possible.

The funding applications applied for from the

Whau Local Board and Unitec were successful, and a vacant retail space in the main street was identified as a possible base for meetings, exhibitions, events and concerts. A lease was proposed for 1865 Great North Road – an empty retail space in the centre of the Avondale township – and it was also decided that events and interventions would be held or placed within other negotiated community spaces.

A Facebook site was created and the project was given a coordinator role that was filled by Michelle Ardern, a local designer and photographer, who described the project as “an initiative by Avondale Community Action that aims to encourage, support and install a number of creative projects in and around the Avondale town centre. We want to provoke, entertain and amuse locals, visitors and passersby in Avondale as well as encourage the participation and collaboration between local residents, businesses and artists.” (Avondale Community Action, n.d. para 4)

The 1865 Great North Road premise was secured for the hub space of the project, and as ACA had not yet obtained Charitable Trust status Unitec’s Research and Enterprise Office administered the funds granted by the Whau Local Board, arranged for public liability insurance and undertook the lease agreement for the space. This system of management ensured financial accountability, and avoided any issues of financial impropriety in purchasing goods and services, thus satisfying Council requirements for funding. A schedule of events and an operating budget was drawn up for the space and also for off site actions, the front of the building was given a hand painted sign, and the window space was set up for 24 hour video screening and information display.

### Public artworks

To promote and publicise the opening of the Creative Space, and to produce an immediate change to the main street, it was decided that two pieces of public artwork would be made by The everyday collective for two spaces adjacent to 1865 Great North Road. As the budget was very tight for what was planned, they had to be classed as temporary in order to avoid re-



source consent costs. Due to the consent processing time and the considerable expense that surrounds public artworks and their placement, a solution was needed for the two pieces of public artwork. As the Creative Space was only funded for three months, the visibility of the artworks needed to run concurrently with the Creative Space activities in order to achieve the effect we wanted in the town centre.

The solution was “sign art”. Signs do not require the same consent processes as classified artworks do, and the maximum proportions permitted for a sign are quite generous. So the two proposed sculptures became “signs” rather than artworks. Both works were made from laser cut steel, which is relatively inexpensive and durable. Through the use of figures these depicted the past of Avondale and its contemporary life. One was placed on privately owned land, the other on open public space; both had typography on the base that identified them as part of the ACA Creative Spaces project.

To accompany the placing of the artworks, a series of interactive workshops were run in the Creative Space by ACA member and coordinator Michelle Ardern. These were called “Weaving A Story” and Michelle used fabrics and natural fibres to produce a wide variety of artworks, engaging a very diverse group of participants. Some of these works were also placed in the main street. These design interventions announced the arrival of the Creative Space to all who used the main street in Avondale, and were very successful in promoting ACA as an agent for positive change.

### Creative interventions

The repurposed retail space at 1865 Great North Road held a wide variety of exhibitions and events, with many local artists holding exhibitions of their work there. Creative workshops, some of these being staged specifically for school children, were well attended as were music concerts, often drawing full houses. A group exhibition that was open to the public was held at the end of the tenure at the space; this event enabled anyone who had made anything creative to show their work in the context of a wider body of events and shows. This was

successful in terms of community building, and appeared to empower people who previously had not considered themselves good enough to exhibit in such a public arena. This presented an interesting cross section of works and reflected the diversity of the neighbourhood in a very public way.

The “Weaving A Story” workshops were held both in the local school hall and in the Creative Space at 1865 Great North Road. These workshops not only taught skills to those who wanted to learn, but also enabled participants to communicate their identity to the community through the making and exhibiting of the work. These workshops produced some very colourful lantern shades that were then hung from a large tree in the town centre, a striking and effective intervention within the streetscape that drew a very positive response from local residents. These inexpensive but highly visible creative interventions achieved the desired effect of making change visible on the main street, and the inclusive nature of the works encouraged more people to enquire about becoming a member of Avondale Community Action Trust.

## A BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY

The Creative Spaces project was a great success for both ACA and the local residents of Avondale, and can be measured as such by the attendance at the events and the feedback given to the volunteers. One aspect of this success was the large number of people who turned up at all of the events and exhibitions, often spilling out onto the pavement and creating a lively scene that gathered up people passing by. Importantly, the project was able to establish the profile of ACA as a group independent of the Whau Local Board and one that was not politically aligned, as this was an initial impression some local people held. The project was also successful in collecting email addresses that enabled a database, from which a network of local creative practitioners was formed, to further help facilitate locally driven makers projects.

### Challenging convention

Many of the local artists who exhibited, like



other artists and designers who came to the exhibitions and events, shared their opinions on exhibition practice within small, community based temporary spaces that exist outside of traditional art dealer conventions. These opinions confirmed the observation that “though communities can not be the real entities that lie in our collective imaginations, it still makes sense to reflect upon the real potential of alternative modes of making our practices public” (Panigirakis, 2008, p35). The creative spaces that were facilitated had opened up some of these alternative modes through the attendance and enthusiasm of viewers who had never visited mainstream galleries, and who did not consider themselves regular consumers of art. It was a curiosity of what existed within their community, rather than the perceived quality of the artworks, that encouraged them into the exhibition space.

Some of the better-known local artists who had established dealerships in the city declined to participate. This provoked questions about the intentions of the curatorial practices encouraged through the Creative Spaces project, and challenged notions of the role and obligations of artists in our society. Panigirakis observes (2008, p.43): “After all, a community mural painter, arts therapist, social outreach worker, youth counselor or educator is unlikely to be concerned about the public’s perception of assistance given to a disenfranchised group, regardless of how conceptually aware they might be. This dimension – along with balancing the nuanced power relations between participants – is part of these professions’ core values.” Murals aside, at what point or level does the artist become social worker? And how does the abandoning of curatorial practice for an open door policy on works effect experimental forays into art for social outreach? The function of art made by adults was in a small way challenged by the nature of the exhibitions shown in the 1865 Great North Road space, as was the nature and function of publically commissioned street art. Sheikh suggests to artists working in the public domain that “we need not only new skills and tools, but also new conceptions of the public as relational, as articulate and communicative” (2008, p.53). How can a community or

section of a community participate in the creation of public artworks? And how can creative practice be used for community building beyond place making? The Creative Space raised these questions.

### Creative practice as community building



Image 3: Avondale courtyard sculpture. Photo credit Paul Woodruffe

The project format posed questions about how both professional art and amateur art practice can intersect in a festival type format. This question was answered through a high public engagement in the events, and the positive feedback received. However the original project question asked was ‘how can art practice make change visible and promote community engagement possibilities’. This was within the context of also question how a tertiary art and design institution could, through teaching integrated research, make more direct connections to a community close its campus. In doing so it further highlighted in this context how relationships can be structured and managed sustainably, respectfully and for mutual benefit.

The metal street sculptures, although originally intended as temporary, were kept in place and are much loved – so much so that one was stolen. Given the inexpensive construction and easy replacement of the designs, the theft did not have the negative media coverage that





would have occurred if it had been, for example, a \$50,000 bronze statue. This design approach meant that given a budget that would normally be attached to public sculpture, many pieces were placed around the town centre; a rotating series of works by various local artists that created an interesting narrative and brought art to multiple streetscapes for the cost of a single large piece.

With this approach to sculpture there comes a challenge to the practice of artists, as Zebracki states when referring to public artwork: “The context of practice includes artists, individuals or collectives, who usually enjoy artistic liberties, acknowledgement and safekeeping of their artworks” (2012, p.9). In this project, the safekeeping of artworks had to be abandoned, and the works were, to the passing public, anonymous. The works were designed to become like the street trees: part of a changing, evolving set of signposts that offered what storytelling could bring to the everyday experience of wayfinding.

The project highlighted the fact you can make a real difference in the experiential aspect of a place with, relative to the effect, very little money, and that existing spaces – no matter how architecturally challenged – can host exciting and stimulating events. Temporary and evolving interventions contribute hugely to the vibrancy of a street. De Sola-Morales referred to working within urban space as akin to using acupuncture, and says that “the skin of the city is not a flat envelope. It is in itself, and as a skin, a qualitative network, a membrane of differences that are subject to interventions and strategies, whether they be rough or smooth” (2005, p.24). This theory supports the methodology used in the Creative Spaces project, one of many small actions, interventions or “needles” across a series of connected spaces, rather than a single location that contains all the action or a single large piece of artwork.

## THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

The direct result of the Creative Spaces project was an acknowledgment by ACA that a visible and accessible presence on the main street of Avondale was essential for completing the

random household survey. The use of an open “hub space” identified the organisation as being transparent, independent, culturally diverse and locally lead. It provided a communal and safe place for people to ask questions and enquire about becoming involved, and it provided a platform for information sharing and local news. The number of volunteers for the survey increased, and most importantly the Whau Local Board recognised this value and funded in the following year an adjacent space in order to complete the survey. This new space became the “Survey Hub Space”. A group of local artists who had participated in the Creative Spaces project set up their own group called “Whau the People” and through this obtained funding to run an arts festival in Avondale. ACA, which by then had its Charitable Trust status, administered the funding.

The Creative Space project was successful in establishing ACA as the community organisation it wanted to be. It created databases for local people who could connect through shared interests. It also prompted discussions on the nature and function of public art. Further, by making the project visible on the main streets it proved that art can contribute to community building and increase public engagement with democratic processes.

### The results of the survey

The prime motivator for the Creative Spaces project was engaging with the community in order to get traction and participation for the random household survey. It is therefore important to include the summarised findings from ACA itself.

What the Trust found from the survey was that:

“The Avondale residents who participated in this survey indicated that they liked living in Avondale and most of them felt a sense of belonging in their community. They liked the accessibility and the location of Avondale and also the sense of community and the friendliness of the people. But respondents felt that the area, especially the town centre, was run-down, neglected and lacked basic services such as banks and a post office. Of the small





percentage of participants who plan to move away from Avondale, the most common reason given for these plans was housing issues. For the most part, participants reported feeling safe in their community. The main reason given for this sense of security was the feeling of community. The most commonly cited threat to the participants' sense of security was drunk and disorderly people, loitering, homelessness and beggars. Disruptive behavior and loitering was also cited as a reason that participants did not find parks and green spaces in the area safe and pleasant places to visit. However, the majority of participants indicated that they did find the parks and green spaces safe and pleasant. They attributed this to lots of people using the parks and the wide-open spaces with nice scenery. Many participants felt that Avondale needed a swimming pool, a community centre and more meeting places. When asked what they would like to see developed in the empty spaces around Avondale, participants indicated that public spaces such as parks and playgrounds would be beneficial to the community as well as food and retail shops." (Avondale Community Action, n.d., para 1, 2, 3)

### Reflection

As noted above, because Avondale Community Action now has Trust status, Unitec is no longer required for funding administration. Although not in the Trust Deed statement, a new representative from Unitec will hopefully be on the Board to continue the relationship – ideally someone who is both a staff member and a local resident. Avondale Community Action Trust has after three years of successful projects earned the trust and respect of the Whau Local Board, who are happy to work with them as a mandated citizen's organisation.

This willingness of the Local Board to recognise creative events as community building also led to a new arts-based group to form in Avondale; "Whau the People". This group is run by residents who participated in or managed creative events run by ACA as part of the initial project. Whau the People run and facilitate the Whau Arts Festival (established in 2014), an event based in central Avondale that uses creative

practice to engage the community, taking over the concept of the Creative Spaces project.

Another ACA run creative space in Avondale is unlikely, as this new group will be responsible for local arts initiatives, festivals and exhibitions. The Trust is now focused on becoming an organisation for the facilitation of funding, for leading community advocacy on local issues, and to act as a talent pool for all the organisational skills smaller community groups do not have access to. ACA has subsequently become a core organisation within the community, and one that can support any initiative that reflects their trust charter.

The Creative Spaces project proved that Local Government does not have to fund the building of expensive new spaces to promote, nurture and involve the local population in the creative arts. Existing spaces can be inexpensively adapted and modified, with funding spent on the people making the work instead of bricks and mortar. It is the visibility and abundance of creative practice that enables the life of a town to be celebrated, to grow sustainably, and to provide opportunity for its residents.

Following the success of the "sign art" design, Auckland Council commissioned The everyday collective to run a student project to create a "gateway" on the Whau River bridge – a design that would celebrate the past, the present, and the natural environment of the Whau. The Survey Hub Space at 1882 Great North Road provided a platform for feedback on the initial gateway project concept designs, and feedback sessions with the project designers were advertised and held there. The Survey Hub Space provided a working model for a community service. It did so by being a social place where new initiatives and ideas for improving the physical and cultural landscape of Avondale could be presented and workshopped in an authentic way. This was in line with the Whau Local Board's recognition for the need to improve the quality of their community consultation processes.



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### Author Bio:

**Paul Woodruffe** graduated from Auckland University of Technology in 1978 with a Diploma in Graphic Design, and later Graduated with Distinction in a Masters Degree in Landscape Architecture (2010). Paul has worked as an art director for films and design and as a freelance landscape designer and visual artist. He has exhibited widely through commissioned paintings, public artworks and design.

After holding part-time lecturer positions at Auckland University of Technology and Manukau Institute of Technology, he became a tenured 0.5 proportional staff member in the Department of Design and Visual Arts at Unitec Institute of Technology in 2003, becoming an Academic Leader Undergraduate in 2014.

His interests include research into the values of place, identity and belonging, and the use of art and design for social and environmental improvement. This is carried out primarily through the collaborative research group The everyday collective laboratory, which consists of multidisciplinary researchers and practitioners from across the Faculty of Creative Arts and Business at Unitec.

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# IACD PRACTICE EXCHANGE INDIA 2016

BY JOHN STANSFIELD

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# IACD PRACTICE EXCHANGE INDIA 2016

## CONFERENCE REPORT BY JOHN STANSFIELD

Put 18 Community Development specialists on a train together in India and you have much more than a mobile party. You have the international professional development experience of a lifetime. The International Association for Community Development (IACD) held a practice exchange in India in March 2016. Participants came from India, Kenya, USA, Scotland, Wales and myself, deputy editor of this journal, from New Zealand. The trip began with a roundtable conference on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) held at the India International Centre, (IIC), in New Delhi where we met with senior NGO leaders, community development (CD) practitioners and were far too well fed. The roundtable explored the implications of the goals for CD practice in India. We had a stunning line up of senior leaders and some very bright and enthusiastic younger presenters who were

already well on the way to incorporating the goals in their organisation's practices. Leaders from the northern states told alarming tales of the impact of climate change, in particular the decline in snowfall that is so essential for downstream agriculture.


Following the roundtable the adventure began in earnest with another fabulous Indian vegetarian meal selected by our hosts. We then took the night train to Kathgodam, followed by a hair raising minibus ride to Ranikhet in the state of Uttarakhand where we stayed in the historic Chevron Rosemount hotel and continued to eat far too well beneath the majestic Himalayas. Our hosts Anita and Kelyan Paul founded and co-lead the [Pan Himalayan Grassroots Development Foundation](#).

Grassroots is an inspiring organisation with a real depth of community development experience and innovation. This includes the house of [Umang](#), its fair trade enterprise and store. A team of hand knitters produce hundreds of fab-



**Image 1:** Villagers in a small town in the state of Rajasthan are working with the Centre for Community Development to implement an irrigation scheme that aims to lessen the localized impacts of climate change. Image by John Stansfield





ulous warm garments. The foundation also has a very advanced understanding of mountain ecology informing both its [community forestry](#) and [sustainable agriculture](#) efforts to improve livelihoods, nutrition, food security and environmental protection. Of particular interest to me was their small scale bio-gas plants, which I had been involved with some 20 years ago in Nepal. These units – originally made insitu of clay bricks – convert cow dung to cooking and lighting gas as well as fertilizer for crops. Grassroots has been in China investigating new fibre-glass units which are much faster to produce. Despite being a more advanced technology the units are still able to be managed and maintained in the village and produce clean gas, saving trees and improving the health of users. The villagers in Ranikhet took us to their impressive water reticulation plant and explained that prior to building this, women would walk to the river at 4am to fetch water as this was the safest time to avoid pollutants from upstream villages. As with other rural villages we visited there were very few working age men, as most were living as migrant workers in far off cities like Delhi.



**Image 2:** A doctor associated with NFP organisation Aarohi, located in the Central Himalayan region of Uttarakhand, speaks to IACD conference members. Image by John Stansfield

The next stop in the village was a large army regimental base. It is home to the [Kumaon Regimental Community Centre](#) where war widows have a fascinating enterprise producing Dharchuli shawls and stunning hand spun hand loomed tweed coats and jackets. Before my eyes the wool was deftly loaded into the loom and in a flurry of arms the cloth began to take shape. I am now the proud owner of a very warm one-of-a-kind tweed jacket produced with stunning skill on an ancient wooden loom. Now if only I had of had a bigger suitcase I would have gotten the coat as well!

Other visits whilst in the highlands included to the health centre and school of the [Aarohi](#) grassroots non-profit organisation. This school is another inspiring group which Anita and Kelyan were instrumental in founding. The health centre and school of this organisation were very impressive and their achievement of a 99 per cent immunisation rate in remote communities would be the envy of any New Zealand minister of health.

Another night train back through Delhi and then one further train saw us in the pink city of Jaipur in the state of Rajasthan, where we were once again stunned by the architecture and vibrant colour of one of India's most popular destinations. In Jaipur we were guests of the impressive [Centre for Community Economics and Development](#), which had developed a very strategic approach to their work resting on true CD principles of 'Community Empowerment' and 'Advocacy'. They had a very clear understanding of the SDG's and were incorporating them into all their work. The walls of the conference room were lined with working plans that gave a situational analysis of the issues relating to the goals. These were linked to current work as well as identifying areas for improvement and potential collaboration. The centre is housed in a beautiful building and also incorporates the Social Work Academy for Research, Action, and Justice which hosts visiting scholars and conducts research for action. Our generous hosts facilitated visits to two of their projects. A bone jarring two hour bus ride over the Rajasthan plains took us to a rural village where farming intensification was made possible through irri-



gation and crop diversification. However it had become necessary to dig the wells for irrigation deeper and deeper. These villagers are at great risk from climate change and our hosts were quick to explain the urgency for action around the SDGs.

The skill share concluded with a morning of reflections on what we had learnt and commitments to work further on the goals, which will feature in the joint IACD CDS conference in Minnesota, and the planned IACD ACDA conference in Auckland, February 2017.

Overall, the trip left me with an appreciation of how much more we need to learn and do to incorporate the SDGs into CD. It also highlighted the tremendous potential of using these goals as a framework for collaboration across civil society and with the state and private sectors. Indian NGO's – like those elsewhere -are at different stages in their understanding and utilisation of this opportunity with the more advanced having much to teach us in our Pacific region about how to put the goals at the centre of Community Development practice. I hope we see some of these inspiring leaders at the February conference.

If you ever have the opportunity to participate in an IACD practice exchange grab it with both hands. I am sure my colleagues will agree, we shared a rich and refreshing experience that will inform our planning and shape our future practice.



### Author Bio

**John Stansfield** is a Senior Lecturer at Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand and a Trustee at Waiheke Resources Trust, Auckland, New Zealand

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# CALL FOR PAPERS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

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*Whanake - The Pacific Journal of Community Development* accepts submissions for publication on a rolling basis. Papers are first published online in HTML format, then as part of a digital pdf edition. If you are interested in publishing a paper with Whanake in the future, full guidelines are available [on the website](#).

The first edition of Whanake for 2017 will comprise of a special conference edition managed by Whanake Editorial Team in association with Aotearoa Community Development Association (ACDA) and International Association of Community Development (IACD). A call for conference papers and contributions to the conference is below.

All conference correspondence should be addressed to Whanake Deputy Editor and conference chair John Stansfield, via: [CDConference@gmail.com](mailto:CDConference@gmail.com)

## SUSTAINABLY YOURS: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND A SUSTAINABLE JUST FUTURE

In 2015 member states of the UN adopted *Agenda 2030* including the 17 Goals for Sustainable Development bringing together goals for social environmental and economic aspiration within a sustainability model. Delivery is to be effected by collaborations between state, private sector and civil society. Unlike the former Millennium Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals apply to both the developing and more developed world recognising that the opportunities to improve social, economic and environmental wellbeing are present in all societies.

The conference will address the challenge of *Agenda 2030* to Community Development practitioners, agencies and academics.

### Contributions will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Alignment with the conference theme and subthemes listed below
- Addressing at least one of the goals
- Contribution to the field of knowledge
- Novel approaches
- Rigor and robust analysis

### The subthemes for the conference are

- Responding to conflict and forced migration
- 'Gimnee Shelter'; the housing crisis
- Community led economic development
- Indigenous knowledge and practice
- Disaster preparedness and community response





## ACDA AND IACD ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE A RANGE OF WAYS FOR YOU TO CONTRIBUTE TO AND PARTICIPATE IN THE SUSTAINABLY YOURS CONFERENCE.

### Conference Proceedings:

The Conference Proceedings Editorial Committee accepts submissions in the form of papers suitable for peer review and according to the conference themes. These papers may also be the subject of a presentation at the conference.

Select conference papers will be published in a Whanake special edition in early 2017. Completed papers for review must be with the CPEC 10 October 2016. They will then be assessed, peer reviewed and considered for publication. Authors will be advised of the outcome by 20 November, and will be invited to present an oral version of their paper at the conference.

Guidelines for submission for Conference Proceedings are [here](#)

### Quality assured presentations:

QA oral presentations will be for a maximum of 30 minutes including questions. We want an interactive conference as you will have a skilled enthusiastic audience, so we ask contributors to work to a guide of 10 minutes for questions and adopt an interactive format.

To be considered for a QA oral presentation you must submit an abstract to the Conference Quality Committee by 10 October 2016. Authors will be notified of the outcome by 20 November.

**Note:** Authors whose abstracts are accepted can consider developing their resulting oral presentation into a full paper at a later date, which will be considered for publication in *Whanake: The Pacific Journal of Community Development* (November 2017 issue). Deadlines for full papers in this stream to be advised.

*Guidelines for submissions of an abstract, for an oral QA presentation, are [here](#)*

### Practice workshops:

Practice workshops are for a maximum of 90 minutes. The conference committee will also consider 45 minute workshops. To be considered to hold a workshop, submit an outline, and brief bio of the presenter/s, by 1 November 2016.

*Guidelines for the presentation of a workshop are [here](#)*

### Poster presentations:

The conference will consider submissions from presenters wishing to present a poster session. Poster sessions will be ten minutes and a poster space will be allocated for the breaks. Applications to present a poster must be made by 20 November 2016.

*Guidelines for the presentation of a poster session are [here](#)*

### Conference film festival:

Individuals and agencies are invited to show a short film (maximum 30 minutes) for inclusion in the Conference film festival. Applications must include a description of the film, and a brief bio of the filmmaker or agency, by 20 October.

*Guidelines for submission of a short film are [here](#)*

