

TE POU MATAKANA COLLECTIVE IMPACT INITIATIVE—AN INDIGENOUS APPROACH TO COLLECTIVE IMPACT

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Hector's research and evaluation portfolio is diverse and extensive having worked in areas such as hip hop dance and music, positive youth development, physical activity and nutrition, social marketing, sexual health, literacy, tobacco, criminal justice, the media, alcohol, gambling, mentoring, interpersonal violence and fire safety. He also guest lectured and tutored for a number of years at the University of Auckland and Massey University and was part of a team that delivered public health and evaluation training throughout the country.

Abstract

Te Pou Matakana Collective Impact (TPM CI) is a new and innovative approach to promoting *whānau ora* (family well-being). It utilises indigenous knowledge and cultural frames to facilitate collaboration across multiple sectors and to ensure that services and support are comprehensive, integrated, and designed to promote the best possible outcomes for *whānau*. A unique commissioning model has been developed to facilitate this process which places *kaupapa Māori* at the heart of its activities. This paper draws on the findings from a formative and process evaluation of this approach. It centres on the examination of Te Pou Matakana (TPM) Collective Impact (CI) initiative and examines the key features of its design, development and

implementation which have contributed to whānau ora. The paper also argues that Māori cultural values, principles and practices—and long, proud history of social and political advocacy and activism—both support and enhance the collective impact model. To conclude, implications for the future direction of the TPM Collective Impact initiative are discussed.

Key words: whānau ora, collective impact, kaupapa Māori

Kōkiritia i roto i te kotahitanga, kia Mataora te tū

Collectively we will build a better life

Background

In December 2014, TPM released a tender to Māori social and health service providers across the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand to join the CI initiative. By February 2015, 13 of these groups were awarded contracts to participate in the initiative. As part of their commissioning practices and commitment to achieving meaningful outcomes for *whānau*, TPM requested a formative evaluation be undertaken.

The primary evaluation objectives were to examine the design and development of the TPM CI initiative, to locate relevant research evidence as well as effective and/or promising practice that would contribute to indigenous best practice and programme outcomes. Methods for collecting data included a review of collective impact literature, *Kaupapa Māori* research documentation, TPM research reports, strategy documents and action plans, as well as qualitative interviews with TPM *Whānau Ora* partners.

At the time of writing this paper, the TPM CI initiative was nearing the completion of its first year and the team was working alongside each of the 13 TPM *Whānau Ora* partners¹ on: strengthening and harnessing the collectives' inter-sectorial relationships with community groups, public sector agencies, private sector organisations and local authorities; supporting partners in the design and delivery of initiatives best targeted to meet the long-term needs of *whānau*; and ensuring partner projects and activities were aligned to the TPM common agenda and shared outcomes measurement system.

Collective Impact

The term Collective Impact (CI) first appeared in the 2011 Stanford Social Innovation

¹ TPM commissioned entities and other stakeholders committed to achieving positive outcomes for whānau

Review article “Collective Impact”, written by John Kania and Mark Kramer and was defined as “the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem, using a structured form of collaboration.”²

According to the Stanford Social Innovation Review, initiatives must meet the following five criteria to be considered Collective Impact³:

1. **Common Agenda:** All participating organisations (government agencies, non-profits, community members, etc.) have a shared vision for social change that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed upon actions.
2. **Shared Measurement System:** Agreement on the ways success will be measured and reported with a short list of key indicators across all participating organisations.
3. **Mutually Reinforcing Activities:** Engagement of a diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, co-ordinating a set of differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
4. **Continuous Communication:** Frequent communications over a long period of time among key players within and across organisations to build trust and inform ongoing learning and adaptation of strategy.
5. **Backbone Organisation:** Ongoing support provided by an independent staff dedicated to the initiative. The backbone staff tends to play six roles to move the initiative forward: Guide Vision and Strategy, Support Aligned Activity, Establish Shared Measurement Practices, Build Public Will, Advance Policy and Mobilise Funding.

It is important to recognise that the context of each CI initiative is unique due to the nature of relationships, policies, norms and other factors involved and that this context will strongly influence the sequence in which each initiative unfolds. CI initiatives can cover a wide array of issues and areas including education, health, animal welfare, homelessness, poverty reduction, and youth and community development.⁴

The TPM Collective Impact Initiative

The TPM CI initiative supports a collective of 13 TPM Whānau Ora partners covering a number of geographical regions throughout the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. All the commissioned partners are *kaupapa Māori* providers whose organisational values are based, and naturally operate, in *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world) and which utilise Māori language and custom to deliver their services. The TPM CI initiative also recognises that:

- solutions for whānau extend beyond a single programme or provider

² (Kania, Kramer, & others, 2011).

³ (Kania et al., 2011).

⁴ (HanleyBrown, Kania, & Kramer, 2012); (HanleyBrown et al., 2012).

- whānau have multiple and complex needs
- CI requires a commitment from a range of different providers across sectors to act collectively to support successful change for whānau

Kaupapa Māori is often described as a “by Māori, for Māori” approach that is connected to “being Māori”, building on Māori philosophies and principles and facilitating Māori autonomy over their own cultural well-being. As an analytical approach kaupapa Māori is about thinking critically, including developing a critique of non-Māori constructions and definitions of Māori and affirming the importance of Māori self-definitions and self-valuations. Accordingly, TPM defines the five conditions of their CI as:

- **Kia kotahi te whāinga (Common Agenda):** All partners have a shared vision for supporting whānau to be successful, including a common understanding of how they will build whānau capacity and capability through agreed upon actions.
- **Kia kotahi te ine (Shared Measurement):** Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures that efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.
- **Kia kotahi te hoe (Mutually Reinforcing Activities):** Partner activities must be differentiated (to avoid duplication) while still co-ordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
- **Kia rere tonu te kōrero (Continuous Communication):** Consistent and open communication is needed across the many partners and among external stakeholders to build trust, assure mutual objectives and create common motivation.
- **Kia pakari te iwi tuararo (Backbone Organisation):** Creating and managing collective impact requires dedicated staff and strong leaders who possess a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and to co-ordinate participating organisations and agencies.

At the heart of the TPM CI initiative are a set of kaupapa Māori values and principles that emphasise the relevance of Māori perspectives (*Te Mana o Te Ao Māori*); focuses on outcome measures that will help to improve the circumstances of Māori whānau (He Tangata, He Tangata, He Tangata); and supports an integrated or holistic approach to achieving sustainable positive outcomes for Māori families (*Ngā Hononga Maha*). Further details around the design and development of the TPM CI initiative is covered in a later section of this paper.

Issues of Equity and Community Leadership in Collective Impact

The international literature reviewed as part of this paper highlights the increasing frustration that “communities of color” are experiencing with the CI approach.

Ironically, they feel a sense of exclusion from the pressure of conforming to a collective strategy that doesn't necessarily align to their interests and values. Furthermore, while CI is often seen as a "new" and "innovative" initiative, communities of colour have argued that this way of working is not new for them. Le (2015) in his article: "Why Communities of Color are Getting Frustrated with Collective Impact" details the challenges and frustrations that these communities have experienced through their "involvement" with CI initiatives. These include:

- Columbusing: CI is seen as yet another example of the mainstream community "discovering" something that has been around for a long time.
- It perpetuates trickle-down community engagement.
- Backbone organisations become gatekeepers of resources.
- Organisations are forced to align with CI agendas.
- It creates and maintains the illusion of inclusion while avoiding the realities that it may not.
- It diverts funding away from direct services.
- At times it may not work, but people are reluctant to say so.
- Feedback and solutions from "communities of color" often get ignored.
- Equity gets shoehorned in as an "afterthought".

Kania & Kramer (2015) write that while the CI framework can empower people to make a difference in their communities, equity seems to be a critical missing component and that "the five conditions of collective impact, implemented without attention to equity, are not enough to create lasting change." Schmitz also writes that the lack of authentic inclusion, racial inequality, community engagement, transparent communication, and mitigation of power relations can seriously impact on the effectiveness of a CI initiative. Furthermore, equity and addressing the needs of those groups often most affected by social and health disparities should be at the core and the primary focus of a CI initiative.

In dealing with the issue of ensuring equity in CI, Arias and Brady (2015) suggest that the structural causes of inequality along race, class, gender and culture lines need to be tackled head on and that equity needs to "live in the backbone and be baked into how it functions...":

Equity need[s] sic to be an explicit lens for your work, through which you do your analysis and strategy design... starting with the goal of diversity, for example, won't get you to equity, but starting with equity can get you to diversity.

Another vital component of a collective impact initiative is providing the type of leadership that contributes to a culture in which partners and other community leaders can collaborate effectively. This should involve working to build trust among participants, ensuring that all partners can engage fully in an initiative, and that every partner is working towards a common goal.

Creating a culture in which community leaders can collaborate effectively is also necessary. When leaders seek to bring data-driven solutions to low-income communities and “communities of color”, they must take care to apply an equity lens to their work. Members of those communities not only should be “at the table”—they should hold leadership positions as well.

According to Barnes and Schmitz (2016), one of the biggest mistakes that social change leaders make is failing to differentiate between mobilising and organising. Mobilising is about recruiting people to support a vision, cause or programme. In this model, a leader or an organisation is the subject that makes decisions and community members are the passive object of those decisions. Organising, on the other hand, is about cultivating leaders, identifying their interests and enabling them to lead change. He continues:

At its best, community engagement involves working with a variety of leaders — those at the grass tops and those at the grass roots—to ensure that an effort has the support necessary for long-term success.

Jim Collins, in his management strategy book *Good to Great*, argues that effective leaders “first [get] the right people on the bus... and the right people in the right seats—and then they [figure] out where to drive it.” Engaging grassroots leaders also requires intention and attention:

If we commit to engaging community members, we have to set them up for success. We have to orient them to our world and engage in theirs. We need to work with leaders to make meaning out of the data about their communities: Where do they see their own stories in the data? How do they interpret what they see? Remember, data is information about people’s lives.⁵

John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann argue that too often “experts” undermine the natural leadership and the sense of connectedness that exist in communities as assets for solving problems. In other words, it is important to view community members as producers of outcomes, not just as recipients of outcomes. Instead of trying to “plug and play” a solution, leaders should consider the cultural context in which people will implement that solution:

They should develop a deep connection to the communities they serve and a deep understanding of the many constituencies that can affect the success of their efforts (Barnes & Schmitz, 2016).

Whanaungatanga and Rangatiratanga: Collective Impact and Indigenous Best Practice

The body of literature surrounding collective impact provides a thorough description of core principles and processes within collective impact

⁵ A quote from Angela Frusciante in Barnes, M., & Schmitz, P. (2016). Community Engagement Matters (Now More Than Ever) (SSIR). Retrieved April 10, 2016, from http://ssir.org/articles/entry/community_engagement_matters_now_more_than_ever

methodology. However, a unique indigenous approach to collective impact within [a]... New Zealand context has yet to be explored and defined.

Through our thought leadership and knowledge of various cultural frameworks we have synergised overall collective impact principles... to describe our distinctive approach to collective impact.

(From an interview with a TPM Whānau Ora partner)

As described in a previous section, the TPM CI initiative is underpinned and supported by a set of kaupapa Māori principles that both highlight the connection between culture and well-being and support Māori ways of knowing and doing. Within this framework, Māori practices and concepts such as *whanaungatanga* and *rangatiratanga* (leadership/sovereignty) are well supported:

It's not really new... people... [coming] together for a kaupapa (goal). It's our *whanaungatanga* [in this context utilising family and community connections and relationships] process. We understand the importance of that. They may talk about building partnerships... but that's just *whanaungatanga*... and we're better at doing it.

(From an interview with a TPM Whānau Ora partner)

As highlighted in the international literature, the view that CI as “not new” would seem to apply to Māori whose values, systems and worldview are underpinned by collective approaches and actions. For example, *whanaungatanga* is described in the Māori Dictionary as “a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging.” It may develop through kin-based relationships and obligations, or can extend to others to whom one develops a close familial friendship or reciprocal relationship. Similarly, the terms *rangatira* (leader), *rangatiratanga* (leadership) and Māori leadership are complex and difficult to describe, however, Pihama writes that the term “leader” (and therefore leadership) is related to having vision and collective well-being.

Numerous examples exist of Māori *rangatiratanga* and *whanaungatanga*—or Māori organising collective action around a shared vision to address social, cultural and health disparities. Early in the 20th century, Dr Maui Pomare and Dr Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hīroa) worked with iwi and iwi leaders to address the rapid decline in the Māori population due to a range of health, social and environmental concerns. The initiative according to Kingi (2005) utilised “Māori networks and approaches”, public health and health promotion approaches, as well as political lobbying. The initiative would eventually contribute significantly to the eventual recovery of the Māori population (Walker, 1990). Kingi (2006:6) writes:

And, while the population growth was slow— at first— an analysis of the 20th Century reveals a massive increase in the Māori population. A fact which is

perhaps no better illustrated than by the some 604,000 New Zealanders who now claim Māori ancestry.

This collective approach to growing and nurturing local iwi capability, capacity and community leadership would continue well into the 20th Century under the auspices of Te Puea, Ratana and the Māori Women's Welfare and Health Leagues.⁶ Later in the century, as more Māori relocated to cities and urban environments, a number of Māori clubs or associations were established (both formally and informally) to provide a "culturally" friendly and familiar face for those Māori now residing within the cities. One of the most well-known and regarded of these groups being the Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club.⁷

Over time, this modern migration of Māori would also have the observable effect of producing an urban Māori diaspora whose identity would be less attached to traditional or tribal structures and more aligned to contemporary urban realities. For example, their shared histories of urban life, geographical associations that were not always linked to tribal or historical boundaries, and an experience of cultural alienation driven by generations of disassociation with their tribal homelands and structures. It is during this time that a number of urban-based Māori authorities were established to address the needs of those Māori who had made the cities their home, including the Manukau Urban Māori Authority and Te Whānau o Waipareira. More recent examples of Māori-led collective initiatives include the Māori cultural revival, *kōhanga* (pre-school Māori language nests) and *kura kaupapa* movement (secondary school Māori language immersion programmes), the ratification of the Treaty of Waitangi, and the many land protests and occupations.

These examples also highlight the various types of collective approaches that have influenced the development and advancement of many Māori health and social service development initiatives. For example, sharp contrast can be drawn between Ratana, who unlike Te Puea, had no rangatira status, or traditional iwi base yet was able to inspire a "shared vision" amongst his followers and lead one of the largest independent Māori movements in history.⁸ Senge (2014) and Kotter (1996) also argue that leadership should be vested in many people, in many places, and not just at the top of the organisation or as part of the formal organisational hierarchy. Thus, it is apparent from these examples that influence can be exerted by leaders at many different levels, sites, locations and times. In some cases, these "layers of leadership" can operate independent of each other or, as Kingi (2006) suggests, have powerful cumulative effects over time. It could also be argued that, in most instances and due to limited resourcing, most Māori providers of social and health services often work together by consequence or necessity, rather than by a deliberate choice.

⁶ (M. Durie, 1999; M. H. Durie, 1997; Katene, 2010).

⁷ (Walker, 1990:199).

⁸ (Katene, 2010; Raumati, 1998).

Developing and Implementing an Indigenous Framework for Collective Impact: Current Considerations and Future Directions

As part of the process evaluation of the TPM CI initiative, a set of quality indicators and a developmental rubric was generated that could be used to help determine and track the development and progress of the TPM CI initiative's activities as it "matured" over time. Phases in the rubric ranged from development and implementation (*Te Pihinga*), to innovation and refinement (*Te Māhuri*) and finally establishment (*Te Kōhure*). Based on the findings of the evaluation report, the TPM CI initiative was still in the early developmental stage (*Te Pihinga*) and was in the process of implementing their core activities.

The TPM common agenda and "theory of change" was the culmination of a positioning paper— overseen by famed Māori academic Professor Sir Mason Durie— that was informed by an extensive review of historic and current Māori outcomes frameworks; shared outcomes frameworks used internationally and research on the application, benefits and limitations of using these models; and consultations with government, academic and non-government stakeholders in New Zealand and internationally. The shared outcomes framework was then used to inform the TPM "commissioning for outcomes approach". An independent panel of recognised experts in various fields were also selected to oversee the design and development process of the TPM initiative.

Individualised local and regionally based action plans were developed by each Whānau Ora partner, all with a long term and sustainable focus. The types and breadth of projects that each provider outlined in their action plan was extremely varied—ranging from housing, *rangatahi* (youth), whānau, increasing household incomes, employment and education training opportunities. Each plan also boasts an impressive array of cross-issue and sector partnerships.

The TPM Outcomes Framework also formed the basis of the Shared Measurement system and reporting against these outcomes in the framework is part of each partner's contracted reporting requirements. TPM is currently using Whānau Tahī to support the delivery of the CI initiative. The Whānau Tahī Navigator is a software application that provides the platform for an "Enterprise Ecosystem" that can be extended/configured to add new capabilities and/or connect to other systems through close-knit integration, in effect combining other systems into a single unit. As part of their action planning, all partners were also required to outline a whānau/ community engagement and communications plan.

Progress reports and qualitative interviews provided numerous examples of partners starting to meet regularly around the CI initiative, sharing knowledge and best practice, and using existing networks, relationships, resources, existing skills, passion and already established community events and programmes to leverage

their work. A range of communication channels were being utilised by partners including websites, social media, focus groups, regularly scheduled *hui* between partners and external stakeholders, meetings with constituencies, impact reporting, monthly newsletters, iwi forums, good news stories, and many more. Partners also noted that many of the communication channels being used were already established and based on “what worked” for their communities.

Relationships with partners and other key stakeholders were being fostered and strengthened, and the sharing of best practice among the partners and regional collectives was being actively encouraged, led by the TPM backbone. An internal communications platform for concerns to be addressed, ideas to be discussed, expectations to be managed and trust to be developed between partners were being developed concurrently alongside external communications for receiving the views of the community, communicating results to the public, identifying areas and issues to be targeted, and building public support for the TPM CI initiative. The role of the TPM Backbone Organisation included:

- actively encouraging and facilitating collaboration and community/whānau engagement within the initiative
- developing a plan for sustained funding for CI over the long-term
- “championing” the use of evidence, best practice, and evaluating CI
- advancing equity for Māori
- guiding the regional collectives to develop specific goals, metrics, and implementation strategies based on the Five Conditions and TPM Outcome Domains
- continuing to invest in research/evaluation relevant to strategy development

Throughout its development TPM have made significant investment in research and evaluation to ensure the initiative had strong, evidence-based foundations. This included working with leading academics and acknowledged experts in the field of Whānau Ora, health, education, employment and across many other fields as well as cross sector development and collaboration. The research support arm of Te Pou Matakana, Wai-Research⁹, has also produced a number of research and evaluation related outputs.

Going forward, TPM have commissioned the services of Social Ventures Australia to provide practitioner training in Social Return on Investment (SROI)¹⁰ and CI. An experienced evaluator has also been employed to support the TPM CI initiative, particularly in terms of ensuring, informing and promoting best practice amongst the TPM Whānau Ora partners. While a formative and process evaluation have been conducted on the CI initiative at a national level, future plans include more regionally and locally-based evaluation activities and an outcome evaluation of the TPM CI initiative.

⁹ Wai-Research undertakes a research programme that supports Te Pou Matakana and Te Whānau o Waipareira Trust to evidence the best outcomes for whānau. The priority for the research programme is to drive innovation that empowers whānau to prosper. Wai-Research publications can be found at the following link <http://www.tepoumatakana.com/research.html>

¹⁰ Social Return on Investment (SROI) is an internationally recognised framework for understanding, measuring and valuing social, economic and environmental outcomes

Conclusion

Although the TPM CI initiative remains in a developmental phase, there are a number of key learnings that have emerged. For example, TPM have ensured there are mechanisms in place that support and highlight the relationship between culture and well-being, and that any measure of outcomes advances Māori equity. As with any new initiative, sub-optimal outcomes might be detected as part of the measurement process, however, as an organisation and a collective, it could be argued that TPM are well positioned—as a kaupapa Māori based organisation working with other kaupapa Māori organisations—to address the needs of Māori families and to mitigate the impact of these types of outcomes. To conclude, this paper argues that Māori cultural values and practices—and significant social, cultural and political gains over many years—provide a strong foundation for the TPM Collective Impact initiative to achieve positive outcomes for whānau.