

SOCIAL INNOVATION AND OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT

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What is Social Innovation?

Innovation has been defined in various ways within the literature. However, common properties can be found within these various definitions including “being new, bringing about change, and having multiple stages” (Baregheh, Rowley, & Sambrook, 2009). The social context and interactions that happen within the process itself are important. The literature that looks at the development of innovation from a business viewpoint considers the main purpose of this process as competing and differentiating their business successfully in their marketplace (Baregheh, Rowley, & Sambrook, 2009, p. 1334). On the other hand, for philanthropic and non-for-profit organisations the aim of innovation is for a greater social goal, rather than for the business itself.

In a study of a health-IT innovation development process in the Auckland region, innovation was associated with the properties of “newness; change; providing values; having vision and innovators; ambiguity; and cost” (Safari Mehr, 2016). The purpose of undertaking an innovative development process to implement either a business or social vision is the same – to solve a problem. The vision can provide value to the end-users while incurring costs for the provider. The innovators are those who contribute to the development of a basic idea into something tangible. Hence, organisations and teams can evaluate their projects against these properties to check if they can be considered as innovations.

“Carrying either a business or social vision, innovation is to solve a problem.”

Social innovation is also a term that sometimes refers broadly to a special type of innovation that addresses unmet social needs (Mulgan, Ali, & Sanders, 2007). Some authors refer to it as a new ‘buzz word’ and others have highlighted the value behind it (Pol & Ville, 2009). Social innovation is to address those innovations that are not designed from a business point of view but to improve human living conditions (Poll & Ville, 2009). *Business innovations* are basically intended to make or increase profit, and can be either technological or organisational. However, *social innovations* are designed to improve quality and/or quantity of life for their targeted population.

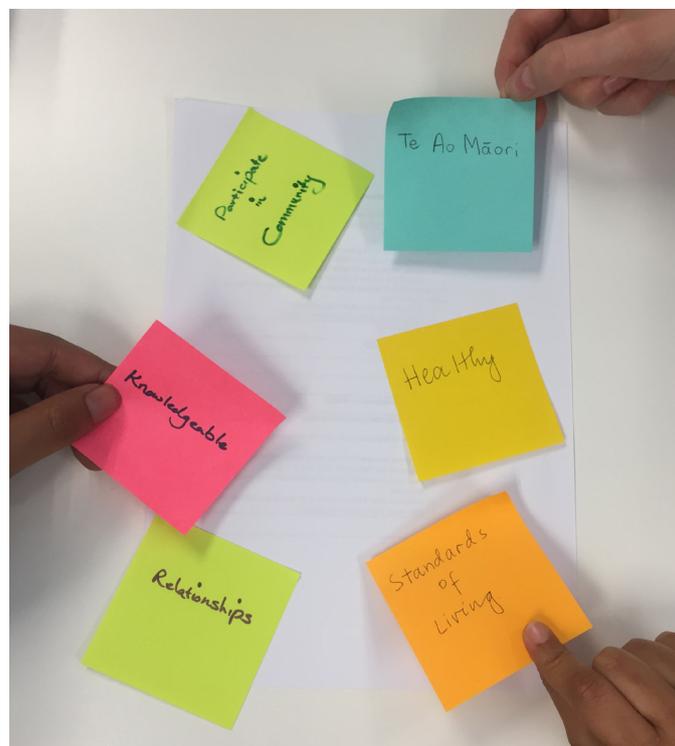
This raises the question of how can we be truly innovative in the social sphere – or – do we have enough ingredients to make potent innovation?



Innovation through Outcomes Measurement within the Wai Research Team

The Outcome Measurement Team focuses on measurements of success from a whānau point of view. In order to see if our work qualifies as being an innovation, we tell the story of working within this small team, which is part of the wider Wai Research team within Wai-Atamai, and compare it with the properties of innovation described in the previous section.

Outcomes measurement is usually defined from an organisational perspective: How are we doing financially? What is the adoption rate of our services or products? Are we improving patients' hospitalisation rates? However, Te Whānau o Waipareira has taken a ground-up approach in defining what needs to be measured as outcomes of organisational services, which covers a range of health, education, justice and social services (Te Whānau o Waipareira, 2017).



This new approach is undertaken along with a new funding model called 'commissioning for outcomes', which emphasises clarifying the desired outcomes as the basis of funding services and measuring success to re-allocate funding accordingly (Te Pou Matakana, 2015). In order to draw a baseline for the desired outcomes of whānau, they have been asked to indicate their concerns and goals in their life, from across the country (Durie, Cooper, Grennell, Snively, & Tuaine, 2009). The result of this call for public opinion was collected through 22 hui and was analysed along with other sources of data from literature and health and social service providers to generate an evidence-based report. This report informed the creation of an outcomes framework developed by Sir Mason Durie (Te Pou Matakana, 2014). As a Whānau Ora service provider the Whānau Ora Outcomes Framework was adopted by our organisation and has been used across our outcomes measurement projects. Therefore, the process of defining success and measuring outcomes based on what whānau, our clients, think is a new approach among health and social service providers. This is the first check point that defines our work as an innovation process (Damanpour, 1991).



Properties of our Innovation

The overall aim for outcomes measurement projects in our team is derived from Te Pou Matakana's (TPM) overall aim, to make sure: "whānau in the North Island will enjoy good health, experience economic wellbeing, be knowledgeable and well informed, be culturally secure, resilient, self-managing and able to participate fully in Te Ao Maori and in wider society" (Te Pou Matakana, 2014, p. 2). It indicates the focus of our work and how we measure success, which is to solve health, economic, social and cultural problems of whānau, rather than measuring organisational profit or competitive advantages in the market. This is an example of a social value creation process that is solving a problem through innovation, i.e. can be called social innovation.

The first ingredient (i.e. property) for our innovation is ready then, which is aiming to solve a problem.

An outcomes measurement approach requires the development of tools to measure outcomes, based on the frameworks previously mentioned. It is required to collect data and analyse it to measure changes in a whānau situation (whānau outcomes). Our team has supported the development of outcomes measurement tools for different TPM programmes including Collective Impact, Kaiārahi and Whānau Direct. This is an iterative development process as the analysis of data can lead to refinement of the tools; moreover, changes in organisational policies and strategies would require revisiting these measurement tools and strategies.

In developing measures, we follow our social vision. Meaning that instead of focusing on the financial requirements or measuring outputs that might not provide any value for whānau or our service users, we aim to measure outcomes for whānau. Outcomes are about changes in knowledge, awareness, capacity, situation or behaviour of people as a result of using an organisation's products or services. To measure success for whānau and see the impact of our services on their lives, we need to think about measuring the outcomes rather than the outputs of our activities. This was one of our support activities across TPM's programmes regarding the development of logic models for their programme, which included defining all the activities, outputs, and medium-term to long-term outcomes that lead to the expected impact on whānau lives.

The Outcomes Measurement Team provided workshops to develop the capabilities of Whānau Ora providers in the North Island toward analysis and design of logic models for their current initiatives and therefore enabling them to define their path toward reaching long-term goals or whānau aspirations. This work was part of our team's contribution in disseminating learnings from our experience toward mitigation of ambiguity, which is another property of innovative processes.

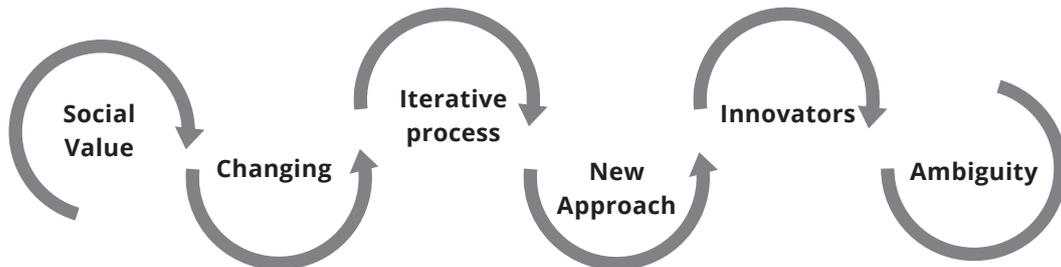
"Change is a pivotal part of our work, as we want to see and capture the change in whānau outcomes."

In our attempt to move away from outputs and trying to connect outcomes to the final aim for whānau, we have benefited from the Social Return on Investment (SROI) tool/framework developed by Roberts Enterprise Development Fund (REDF). This framework defines how to measure social impact/value of social innovations rather than just focusing on financial return on investment. Being aware of the fact that not every aspect of health and wellbeing outcomes can be measured easily, we have followed the SROI approach to let whānau inform us about the value and impact of our services for them. In this measurement approach, the usual economic evaluations are combined with qualitative analysis to capture both socio-economic and environmental outcomes/impacts (Banke-Thomas, Madaj, Charles, & Van den Broek, 2015). The result is a ratio that indicates how much value was created from each dollar spent on the intervention/service that is under evaluation. This framework allows us to measure the changes relevant to whānau.



“Change is a pivotal part of our work, as we want to see and capture the change in whānau outcomes. This is the other property (ingredient) of our innovative work.”

Unpredictability is always part of our work as innovations are often chaotic and change is always ongoing until it is embedded as part of normal work (status quo). For instance, data collection can



be seen as a continuous process that goes through refinement cycles based on our requirements analysis. The requirements are also not predefined as whānau perceptions of their priorities might change; moreover, our understanding of the existing resources, priorities and policies also change. The important point is to learn from the experience while we are developing our innovative tools and measures so that the whole movement is toward the overall vision. So, the next ingredient for our innovation is this iterative process.

Challenges

Similar to many other innovative projects, we have experienced challenges. But these challenges should be accepted as part of an innovation development process. From a leadership point of view, it is important to keep an eye on these challenges so that they do not become big conflicts that stifle innovation (Safari Mehr, 2016). These are some of the challenges for the Outcomes Measurement Team:

- Getting everyone on the same page, while ambiguity is an unavoidable property of innovation.
- Being able to feedback what has been learnt through data analysis, even if it is not what was expected. Finding out what does not work and the reason behind it, is a valuable learning experience that happens in most innovation development processes.
- Keeping up with the limitations of resources especially in not-for-profit organisations like ours, and where budgets are not fairly allocated in the health system.
- Doing business as usual and innovation development at the same time is another big challenge, as each requires a different model of work. As a small team in an innovative organisation, we need to manage finding new ways to respond to the changes required for measuring whānau outcomes while collaborating with internal and external stakeholders that requires following the existing rules and/or procedures.



At the end, it is all about whānau and all of us from different teams are passionate about making real changes in whānau lives. Therefore, whatever it takes and no matter what the challenges are, we all feel better when we feel positive outcomes are on the way.

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