

The
Bishop's
Action
Foundation



Reflections on Collaboration

A practical reflection on successful
collaborative initiatives facilitated by the
Bishop's Action Foundation

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Collaborative Projects Reflections

The following projects are examples of collaboration which have arisen from the work of the Bishop's Action Foundation. These collaborative initiatives have resulted in multiple organisations working together to respond to community needs. These reflections are being documented for two reasons. Firstly to inform our own organisational practice through a critical reflection on our work, and secondly to communicate how we approach collaboration as a catalyst for change and within a community development framework. We hope that these reflections can then be useful to other organisations seeking to support or inspire collaborative ventures.

A Collaboration Continuum.....

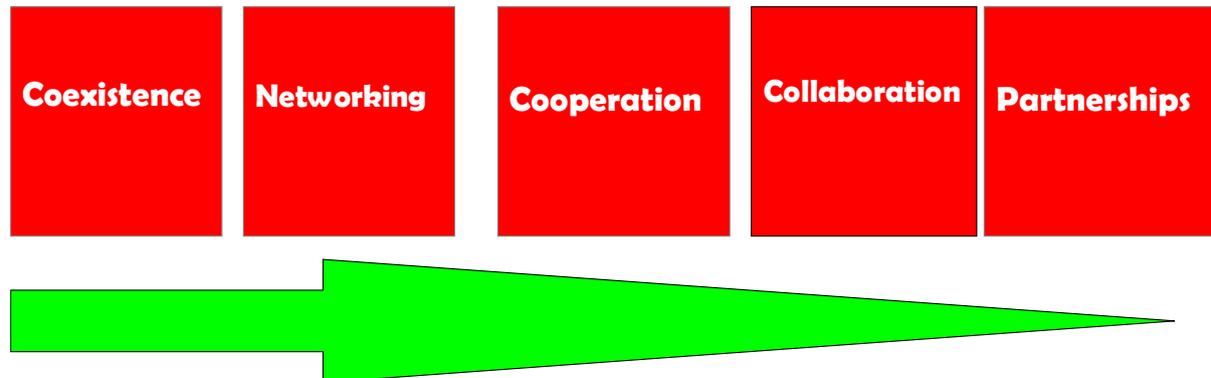


Figure 1 Tony Mayow's Model of Collaboration

The Foundation has drawn on existing conceptual models of collaboration including that suggested by Tony Mayow (see Figure 1 above) which defines a possible continuum from coexistence to cooperation and collaboration and into a full phase of partnership.

The process set out below in Figure 2 articulates the Foundation's process of collaborative development which often includes multiple organisations that collaborate both with each other and with the Foundation.

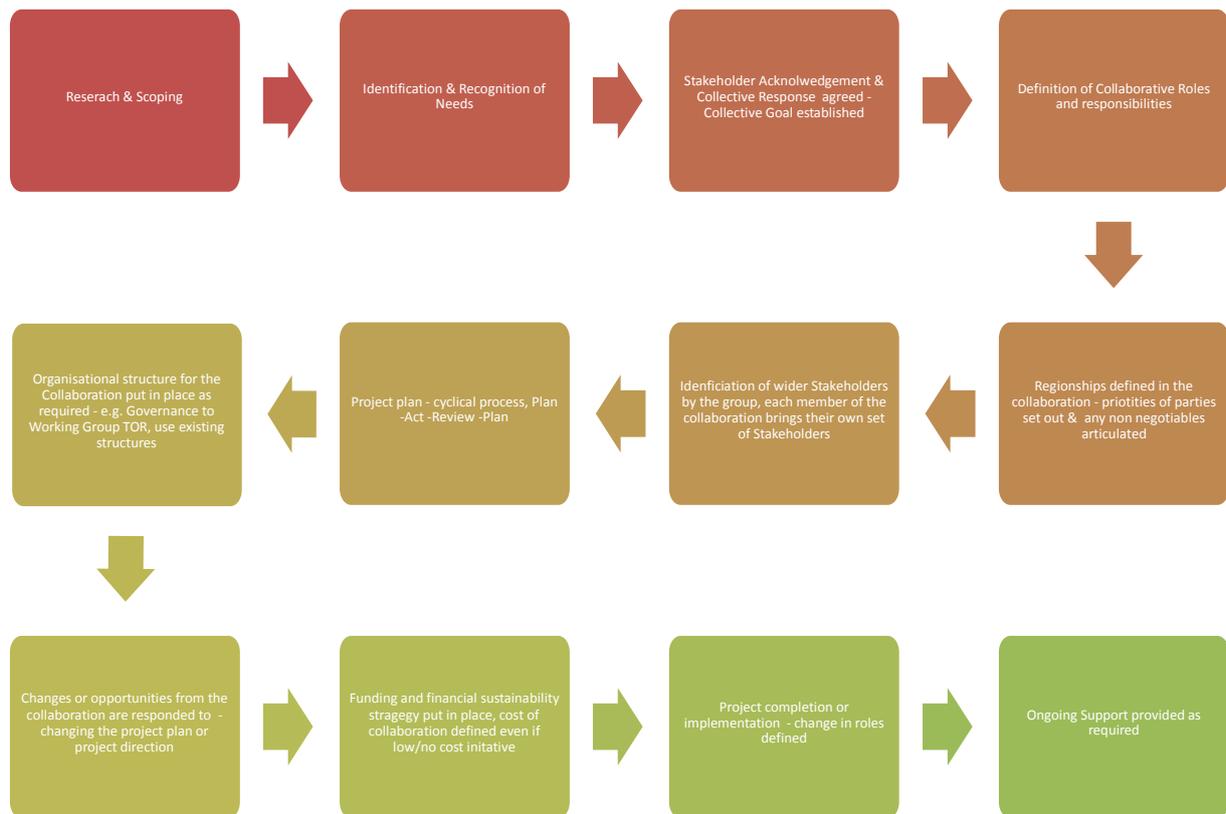


Figure 2 Collaborative Implementation Model

The phases of collaboration include:

1. Research/needs assessment/community consultation –

- a) Research undertaken involving key stakeholders, beneficiaries, funders, service providers
- b) information shared by the Foundation – reports, meetings, consultation, networking
- c) Awareness raising and advocacy around the outcomes from the research undertaken

2. The identification of a community need which is shared by multiple organisations – commonality identified

- a) Breadth of the issue shared amongst the wider community
- b) Response required is outside individual service provider’s capacity

3. Collective acknowledgement of requirement to respond

Deciding how to respond – the beginning of a strategy

- a) Immediate issue being presented
- b) Implications of not responding identified
- c) Medium and long term anticipated outcomes set out resulting from a response

- d) Community benefits of a response explored
- e) Develop a project brief

4. Definition of Collaborative Roles and Responsibilities defined

- a) Foundation as project manager/facilitator/driver/communicator/Fund raiser
- b) Funders – local, regional, national, state, trust, corporate,
- c) Community Leaders and supporters – local drivers
- d) Project plan, strategy set out -

This is a cyclical process through meetings, follow up, research and information gathering, consultation of stakeholders, identification of best practices, presenting information and enabling decisions for the way forward to be made.

5. Relationships defined in the collaborative – priorities of parties set out and non-negotiable issues articulated

This process enables the collaborative parties to:

- a) Air their views and their perspectives
- b) Conflicts of interest and biases
- c) Non-negotiable areas
- d) Agree on a way forward

6. Key stakeholders identified by the wider group

- a) Key Stakeholders – interested/affected/responsible parties

7. Project plan,

- a) Cyclical process of plan /act /review /plan

8. Organisational Structures put in place as required

- b) e.g. a Charitable Trust with a board of trustees, a project within an existing organisation, a Working Group with a Terms of Reference

9. Changes or opportunities are responded to and shared

10. Funding and financial sustainability strategy put in place

- a) Funding Strategy or fund raising undertaken
- b) cost of collaboration defined even if low/no cost initiative

11. Project completed/implemented/set up – changes in roles defined

- a) Suitable parties take control of the project or suitable implementing body
- b) Project management moves to as required or support role
- c) Project is self-sufficient in terms of management, evaluation, and funding
- d) Oversight from the collaborative parties – treated as governance in this role at this stage
- e) Information and developments shared through regular meetings or as required

12. Ongoing Support

- a) As former project manager, the Foundation provides ongoing support as required and intervention to enable the collaboration to work effectively as required
- b) Support is provided through capacity building to reduce the amount required over time.

Reflections from specific projects

The following section documents the process and learnings we have identified within five collaborative projects which we have facilitated. Each initiative was unique and had its own set of challenges and achievements. It has not been possible to document each collaborative story in-depth, but the significant factors which enabled collaboration are profiled in each case.

Taiohi Oranga – Hawera Social Services House

This project was developed to respond to a need identified by community and voluntary organisations who were struggling to provide and increase their services for the South Taranaki community due to the lack of suitable, cost effective office space. The Foundation explored the nature of this need and in the process identified a number of organisations who were interested in co-locating with other services to provide their satellite staff with co-workers, a suitable office environment, saving in overheads and a chance to enhance service delivery. The concept of having a cluster of services which did not compete for funding but were similar enough to complement each other was developed. The Hawera community had previously tried to develop a Community House so we needed to ensure this project did not run into the same obstacles.

The Foundation approached the development of the physical space collaboratively. The building space was designed by both the tenant organisations and the owners of the building, the Methodist Church. Having the ownership and buy in from the tenants from the start meant that they were active partners as well as responsible tenants. The funding for the renovation of the existing building was achieved through collaboration between the Foundation, the Methodist Church and a corporate partner in the KUPÉ Joint Venture headed by Origin Energy. The funding was received for the renovation of the building from the KUPÉ Joint Venture with the agreement that the ongoing rental income from the House was reinvested into the upkeep of the building and other social development opportunities.

The collaborative partnerships were facilitated by the Foundation. The funding partnership of the Foundation, The Methodist Church and the KUPE Partners was brought together through the brokerage of the Foundation. The operational partners were four anchor tenants with the Foundation facilitating their input and engagement with the use, design, layout and set up of the building so that it met their combined needs. The Foundation has organised a series of collaboration workshops for tenant organisations which have enabled the tenants to build an effective collaborative working relationship. Expecting organisations to be able to co-locate and immediately succeed in collaborative relationships would be a mistake, intentional work is needed to build the collaborative environment.

A community process led to the naming of the building as Taiohi Oranga Hawera Social Services House. Together with the gifting of the building from the Church to the Community and Voluntary Sector this has enabled the House to become a community owned space. The result has seen organisations who share a common space, who refer clients to each other's services, who share professional standards for the treatment of their clients and who proactively and naturally work together rather than co-exist as they had done previously.

Stratford Community House

Stratford Community House was a collaborative initiative developed by the Foundation. The Foundation managed a large number of participating organisations and facilitated progress towards the key milestones which included:

- Establishing the need – scoping research and development of a viable business case
- Community Consultation and seeking permission to continue this initiative – getting their mandate
- The development of the Charitable Trust,
- The Lease Agreement for the Land – which was gifted by the Anglican Church,
- The various Funding Agreements and
- The Implementation of the Project to the end of the House build and set up
- The management of tenancies.

The role of the Foundation was to manage and balance the needs of the various stakeholders and enable their participation in the project without over compromising the needs of any one Stakeholder Group. The layer of stakeholders was three fold:

- Primary stakeholders – Landowner Taranaki Anglican Trust Board, Local Anglican Parish of Stratford, Bishop's Action Foundation and Bishop, District Council and Mayor;
- Funders – Diocese of Waikato, Taranaki Electricity Trust, Department of Internal Affairs, TSB Community Trust;
- User Groups – Community and Voluntary Organisations – 20 key organisations who signed letters of intention of use for the building

In addition to this, the Foundation supported the creation of a new dedicated Charitable Trust to sustain the community house into the future. Currently, the House is up and running, it is financially stable and breaking even in terms of running costs and the role of the Foundation is lessening to a point where the Trust will manage the Community House independently.

This collaboration has demonstrated the benefit of building a sustainability strategy into the planning from very early on in the process. This sustainability is not just financial, but is focused on the ongoing oversight and management of the project.

E-TOWN

ETOWN is a collaborative project which is mainly between the Anglican Parish of Eltham, the Eltham Community, and various service providers who agreed to be part of the ETOWN Youth Health and Development service. This initiative was facilitated by the Foundation through stakeholder engagement meetings which sought to identify how best organisations could work together in Central Taranaki to support youth wellbeing. The result of this meeting was an acceptance that ‘something’ had to be done, but that no agency around the table was willing to take leadership or create a collaborative response to the needs identified. What came out of this meeting was the permission from these agencies to create a new response to youth wellbeing. This was strategic because previous to this youth was a very political issue, and was owned by various gatekeepers. Through this meeting, their reluctance to cooperate was evident and the community gave a clear mandate for another organisation to “try”.

Once it was clear that there was a gap BAF and the Regional Dean for Central Taranaki worked to frame up a response to Youth Development in Eltham. Through research undertaken by Waves Youth Health Service in New Plymouth, leadership from Youth Transition Services and the backing from Te Tihi PHO (with access to a youth health nurse) a proposal was presented to the Eltham Community. A community meeting was held confirming the community’s mandate to develop a response to the needs of youth in Eltham. From this meeting the ETOWN Management Committee was formed and eight months later ETOWN opened once a week to start with.

This collaboration has now become familiarly known as ETOWN, where the space is intentionally available for use and open for agencies and services to serve the Eltham community. Partnerships have developed amongst local organisations now and links with regional service providers is growing. The culture developed by the ETOWN management committee that ETOWN relies on collaboration, on seizing opportunities and working for the benefit of the community first and then itself has contributed to its success and growth. The ETOWN Management Committee, now three years on, are preparing to become a Charitable Trust to achieve autonomy and grow the potential of this initiative with the ongoing support of the Foundation in a project support role.

Kete Centre (New Families/Whanau Centre) to 2013

The Kete Centre is a wide ranging collaboration including large agencies (MSD and Taranaki District Health Board), Community Organisations (Plunket, Barnardos), Maori providers (Tui Ora) and local legal and accounting representatives. The Foundation is providing facilitation and project management support to this collaborative initiative.

Well Child and family service providers have acknowledged they require further support to address the breadth and complexity of problems some new families and whanau experience. Service providers acknowledge that their current service models address the majority of mainstream families/whanau issues, but cannot support families/whanau which have multiple and complex needs which require specialist intervention and intensive service provision and care.

The Kete Centre will provide residential and day stay facilities for families which are referred from family service, health professionals, GPs, CYF, and individual referrals. This centre will support families and whanau with the coordination of existing specialist services, social welfare, and GPs which will come to the centre to provide care required. In addition support with bonding and attachment and maternal health will be central to the care provided for all families/whanau, including access to information around infant brain development and the stages of infant growth highlighting the damage of actions which may cause physical, emotional or psychological effects.

The Kete Centre process involves liaison with a reference group of providers supporting families and whanau with children 0-12months. This group developed out of a collaborative process looking at developing a model of care for the centre. The development of this model of care involved over 10 stakeholder agencies and was supported by the Foundation. When the model of care was developed the providers identified the benefit of their meeting together and sharing information. This cooperation led to better relationships between agencies and their decision to transition from a group developing a specific model of care into an ongoing collaborative working group with a broader focus of families and whanau with children 0-12 months.

What was significant for this collaboration was the process which led to the decision to become a working group. Sharing working cases and seeking collective contributions to case management became the primary goal of the group. This working group will continue to collaborate and intends to document and model its collaboration to use for practical learning and better case management into the future.

Kete Centre (New Families/Whanau Centre) from 2014 - Pilot

By the end of 2013 the exciting collaborative initiative had been in development for over four years, but had not yet succeeded in reaching an implementation stage. It was identified that the initiative was simply too large (and costly) to achieve support within the current tight financial environment. As a consequence, and with the support and leadership of MSD and the Bishop's Action Foundation, it was agreed that a scaled back pilot of the initiative could provide the evidence base required to achieve funding for the full initiative.

The collaborating organisations were re-engaged during the first half of 2014 in a design process that produced the basis of a 21 month pilot programme as a 'proof of concept' initiative. In this design process the original concept of the Kete were re-explored with parents and agencies through a number of workshops.

The pilot proposal was submitted to MSD in July 2014 with the aim of achieving a lead funder from which other funding and support could be leveraged into the initiative.

Emergency Management – Collaborative Service Continuity Joint Agreement

A further example of a collaborative initiative facilitated by the Foundation is the development of a Shared Collaborative Services Continuity Joint Agreement amongst the Disability Services Provider agencies which provide services for people who live in the community.

This collaborative agreement took over 18 months from the initial concept to signing a Memorandum of Understanding binding the organisations to work together, share resources and share staff and information in the event services are disrupted by a civil emergency.

The key to this, and any collaborative venture, was to share the overall vision for the initiative and to have agencies who owned the goals of the agreement themselves for their own respective reasons. This enabled the contract holding bodies of Access Ability and the TDHB to buy in, and also individual service providers to take the leadership and commit to the agreement.

This collaboration was a useful example to reinforce a key message – collaboration works when the individual parties focus on the communities they are seeking to benefit, not on their own survival or their own ‘patch’.

Collaborative Approach to Capacity Building

We facilitated the development of a collaborative approach to the provision of capacity building support for community organisations within Taranaki through the development of the Taranaki Capacity Building Incubator.

The Incubator is a vibrant connection point for the leading regional capacity building organisations. The Incubator creates a dynamic environment within which the knowledge, learning and thought leadership of these organisations is pooled. Through this pooling of experience new ideas are generated that lead to further capacity building innovations that build more resilient and sustainable community organisations and support better outcomes for communities.

VISION: Stronger and more sustainable community organisations

MISSION: To connect regional capacity building organisations in a dynamic environment that enables knowledge and learning to be shared and fosters leading edge innovation.

AIM: Through the Incubator participants develop new ideas to enhance capacity building for community organisations and access peer support to help them take initiatives from concept to reality.

Incubator Outcomes:

The Incubator builds on existing capacity building work being undertaken in the region. New outcomes include:

- Creation of a pool of learning and knowledge about community sector capacity building needs allowing these needs to be discussed and responded to;
- A tangible and accessible community sector knowledge base that could support government, local government and other agency connection to the sector;

- Active peer mentoring and best-practice sharing;
- A connected, comprehensive and stepped learning programme that will support organisations at a number of levels from basic introductions through to advanced practice;
- Organisations that demonstrate particular expertise will be nurtured to be peer based supporters of other organisations;
- Region-wide mentoring programme for community organisations;
- Improved coordination and communication through active collaboration;
- Stronger community based organisations delivering sustainable outcomes to communities;
- Development of shared infrastructure including a regional capacity building online portal providing access to resources, mentors and support;
- A platform for connecting to national initiatives;
- A deliberate space for the creation of new ideas.

The current Wheelhouse and Incubator partners include; TSB Community Trust, The Bishop’s Action Foundation, New Plymouth District Council, Stratford District Council, South Taranaki District Council, Sport Taranaki, Tui Ora, Implement and Associates, and the Department of Internal Affairs and Te Puni Kokiri Taranaki regional offices.

The Wheelhouse

The Wheelhouse is one of the first projects of the Taranaki Capacity Building Incubator.

The Wheelhouse www.wheelhouse.org.nz is an online portal providing free access to information, assistance and resources to help strengthen Taranaki community groups. Launched in March 2014 it has received a positive response and is being well utilised by organisations and individuals seeking information, support and learning opportunities. Resources that would otherwise be offered in isolation are now available regionally and beyond via the portal. Collective skills and effort are being shared for community benefit.

The name ‘Wheelhouse’ refers to the location of the steering wheel of a ship. It’s where the crew come to discuss where they are going, what they need to do to get there and any problems they may need to consider. It’s also where plans are kept and navigation resources are used. Occasionally ships approach unknown waters. At this time often a pilot will help to guide them through. Like a Wheelhouse; an aim of the website is to empower groups to make a difference in our communities and encourage important conversations about direction, or like a pilot; to provide assistance to the crew for a short time.

Features and resources currently available via The Wheelhouse include a regional training calendar, access to training subsidies, community mentoring, ICT support, free digital tools, funding information and a regional community group directory. Enabling group interaction via social networking will be explored in future.

Another helpful community resource linked to through the site is the NZ Navigator; an innovative online assessment tool to help groups identify their strengths and weaknesses; the product of an independent collaborative effort www.nznavigator.org.nz.

Both the Capacity Building Incubator and its first major initiative, The Wheelhouse, have demonstrated that collaborations with multiple parties seeking to achieve long-term change can be highly effective. Factors that are key to the success of such initiatives include:

- Clarity about the common link between parties. This link does not have to be a specific project initially. In the case of the Incubator a specific initiative (The Wheelhouse) was born from a collaboration that was based on a common focus (capacity building);
- Leadership is important. Our experience showed that identifying one party whom all other parties would respect and that could commit to continuing to drive the collaborative process ensured that momentum was maintained;
- That said, the commitment of the parties around the table was essential. In our experience this commitment comes initially from individuals within organisations, but it is important as the collaboration continues to achieve organisational commitment to the collaboration, otherwise the future is compromised as committed individuals move on.

Great Fathers

Great Fathers is a community led initiative inspired by the vision of Dave Owens. It aims to enhance understanding of and support for the role of fathers around the birth and first 3 years of a new child's life.

The Foundation supported Dave to develop his vision into a robust movement for change and to identify essential partners. This process was essential in the first two years of Great fathers life because the initiative had to work with a number of existing players who were strident defenders of the space within which they operated and inherently suspicious of new players.

By adopting an intentionally collaborative approach Great Fathers was able to identify its specific niche and how its specialised focus could add value to the aims of the existing players. Great Fathers is now working collaboratively with Parents Centre, Plunket, Barnardos, The College of Midwives, Maori providers, SKIP and other national fathering organisations.

The strength of the Great Fathers vision and the depth of collaborative partnerships resulted in Great Fathers being accepted as one of five 'partners' by the Todd Foundation and being awarded a five year funding agreement in 2011.

Tutaki - Central Taranaki Youth Services Collaboration

Three youth focused organizations in and around Stratford made the decision to explore a collaborative approach to create a more robust and connected youth service for the town and provide a facility for the youth of Stratford and surrounding districts. This process eventually led to the three entities deciding to establish a new and single legal structure within which to provide development and support to young people.

The Foundation assisted with the explorative discussions and was then able to support the development of a new deed and the establishment of a new legal entity. This then led to the development of a strategic plan setting out a structure for the new board to follow over the coming years.

The Foundation provided both expertise and a neutral partner in the process that was able to help manage the various stakeholders and ensure continual progress towards the agreed outcomes. As with other collaborations noted above this process was successful because the various players prioritised what was in the best interest of the area's young people, not their own patch or survival.

Taranaki Health Trusts

Across Taranaki there are Health Trusts that are primary health care focused, providing a range of services, resources and facilities in the communities they serve. Due to the changing health care environment the Health Trusts have evolved and grown over the years. Some Health Trusts have become the owners of multi-million dollar primary health care business's employing staff and others the owners of multi-million dollar health and social services facilities. This has all occurred in isolation with the Health Trusts not sharing or learning from each other.

The Foundation is currently facilitating meetings that have allowed for the sharing of knowledge and the sharing of resources. Some of the Health Trusts are now considering the potential to collaborate with initiatives sharing services and resources.

By creating a network of health trusts the Foundation has created an environment that supports continuing collaborative discussions and is leading to additional joint activities such as a focus on ongoing opportunities for combined governance training and more specific up-skilling of Trustees across the various health trusts.

Taranaki Sustainability Hub

During 2012 the Bishop's Action Foundation facilitated a series of conversations with around 30 different agencies and community organisations with a common interest in sustainability. The aim of the conversations was to identify ways that sustainability could be responded to collaboratively across Taranaki and in such a way that change could be achieved across the majority of households and businesses. The outcome of the process was the Taranaki Sustainability Hub which is defined as follows:

A network of professionals across sectors and across the region working together and working within their organisations to facilitate sustainability in Taranaki.

The Sustainability Hub will achieve better connection, alignment, and collective working.

- A list of the network members, with their areas of expertise and interest, will be available on the Hive Environment Centre website www.hivetaranaki.co.nz.
- People are able to draw on the network to form small groups that address specific sustainability issues.
- Members are encouraged to call for expertise, share opportunities, and form small groups to address specific sustainability issues.
- Members are encouraged to share success stories with the network.

The Sustainability Hub recognises that to achieve wide-spread behaviour change, a holistic or multi-pronged approach is needed:

- Educating people about why change is important and helping them make changes.
- Changing the physical environment or infrastructure or service to induce change.
- Using regulatory approaches to regulate behaviour, where appropriate.

The Sustainability Hub process successfully engaged local authorities, government agencies, community organisations and individuals. It succeeded because it identified not only a common area

of focus among the participants, but supported them to identify common changes that they all wanted to achieve. The Hub also maintained a realism around what was practical so that achievements were genuinely possible. This has maintained commitment and energy within the Hub participants.

Adult & Community Education (ACE) in Taranaki

ACE is supported in Taranaki by three organisations – ACE Taranaki, Maori ACE Taranaki and Pacifica ACE Taranaki. The three organisations approached the Bishop’s Action Foundation to support them to explore how they could best enhance their inter-organisation collaboration. We found that while the three organisations had a common focus – adult & community education – they all had very different expectations of how they wanted to respond, with a significant reasons being their unique target audiences and the cultural factors these included.

Rather than look at building a complete collaboration we therefore supported the three organisations to discuss areas of common ground and to identify possible initiatives that they could do together. The outcome was the creation of a new community access initiative that would be supported and resourced by all three organisations with ACE Taranaki as a lead and fund holding partner. The new community access initiative was framed up as follows:

Vision: To make Taranaki a region where access to ACE opportunities is not restricted by wealth, culture, status or location.

Purpose: To enable communities across Taranaki to provide ACE courses that respond to their community needs.

Objectives:

- To increase the number of: Maori; Pasifica and other learners who have left Secondary School with little or no qualifications;
- To provide an accessible source of funding to enable communities to be active respondents to their own ACE needs and opportunities;
- To be a simple funding source that broadens access to ACE courses;
- To provide a collaborative funding opportunity that is open to all peoples across Taranaki.

A key lesson from this process was the importance of exploring collaboration within realistic parameters. If we had continued to try and develop a wide ranging collaboration that tried to blend the three organisations across all that they did we would have failed, but working with them to identify a manageable initiative based on common ground has led to a new initiative that will see access to adult & community education enhanced.

Taranaki Programme & Service Hub

A number of the programmes and services we support require ongoing oversight and management. The concept of the Keystone Services Hub emerged from the need within the organisation to define a consistent and collaborative approach to servicing the needs of these programmes and services.

We have also identified that there are a significant number of start-up initiatives either being developed by individuals or within existing organisations that have as their focus the needs of families, young people or children.

We have an opportunity to work with these start-up projects through Keystone Services for an agreed time-frame. Keystone Services will enable the unique programmes to be tested / piloted, but will remove the immediate need to establish structures at governance and management level.

Within this approach Keystone Services can offer a range of supports and services to these emerging initiatives depending on their needs.

Keystone Services can therefore offer two platforms of support.

Firstly, start-up support for emerging programmes and services and secondly, a long-term home for established programmes or services which align with the core aims of the Foundation and are better supported through Keystone Services than by another organisation or an entity in their own right.

Criteria for initiatives wishing to join Keystone Services:

- ❖ The initiative’s purpose must align with BAF’s broad objectives;
- ❖ The initiative has a clear purpose, key objectives and a plan of action;
- ❖ The initiative can evidence a need for the services in the community;
- ❖ The support needs of the initiative can be met by one of the functions within Keystone Services;
- ❖ The initiative can cover the minimum service fee where this applies;
- ❖ If the initiative is not part of a legal entity it will need a definable structure and clear lines of responsibility;
- ❖ The initiative must be willing to sign the Memorandum of Understanding and commit to the terms of Keystone Services

Advantages to Participating Initiatives

<p>Governance (in progress)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight for pilot initiatives including establishing steering groups, appropriate processes and running meetings; • Support to transition to longer-term governance / entity structures; 	<p>Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direction / strategic planning from pilot to fully fledged initiative; • Policy development and review; • Developing longer-term organisational culture; • Establishing effective relationships; • Building collaboration;
<p>Financial Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Account policy and process; 	<p>Human Resources</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal accounting service for pilot initiatives including financial reporting for small entities • Developing longer-term and sustainable funding strategies; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment of staff for pilot projects (employers agent role); • Payroll
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<p>Risk Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying relevant risks for pilot and beyond; • Developing risk monitoring processes; • Strategic risk mitigation 	<p>Compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting on pilot activity to demonstrate impact; • Keeping up with national and regional policy and legislative developments;
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<p>Administration</p>	
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- Printing and resource development;
- High level administrative services for smaller entities

The Hub is working to achieve a range of collaborative outcomes including:

- Connected and collaborative programme delivery
- Ability to share resources, experience and skills
- Families experiencing programmes focused on unique local context, but benefiting from collaborative strengths
- More sustainable delivery providing stability for families seeking support
- More effective delivery as programmes share experiences
- More effective use of resources

Initially we worked with a small range of services / programmes to enable the collaborative structure to be tested, but then began to extend this once the Hub’s structure and systems were operating effectively.

Taranaki Youth Hub

WAVES trust in New Plymouth developed a youth hub project to enable it to facilitate other organisations focused on vulnerable young people and their families to achieve their outcomes. The Bishop’s Action Foundation worked alongside WAVES to support the achievement of a successful collaborative model.

WAVES is now fully operational as a Regional Youth Hub focused on vulnerable or at risk young people. The Hub is operating with an established Charter that provides an overarching framework within which partners work within and alongside WAVES to respond to the needs of youth/Rangatahi within the region. WAVES has a completed strategic plan providing direction for the next 5 year period.

- WAVES has secured the backing of regional funders and a range of regional service delivery partners;
- The organisation has identified that the added value it brings is providing a youth focused Hub within which (a) existing youth focused services can access young people and deliver services; (b) existing service providers can connect and explore collaboration and (c) new and innovative initiatives can be inspired and co-created.
- It is this exciting blend of connecting what is happening now and inspiring what could be that has been the greatest learning from the WAVES experience;
- Building a common structure that is cohesive, yet agile, has been a key success factor.

A range of regional partners including the YMCA, Tui Ora, Tu Tama o Wahine and Seasons Taranaki are participating in the WAVES Hub.

This initiative demonstrates that developing new service provision is not always the answer to issues and problems, often greater connection and collaboration between existing players and an openness to doing things differently together can be more effective.

Kindergarten Taranaki

The North and South Taranaki Kindergarten Associations had identified that for a more effective and sustainable future they needed to combine into a new and single entity. The new entity eventually emerged as Kindergarten Taranaki.

The process was overseen by the Boards of the two original entities with leadership provided by the two Chairs. The Chairs were able to access support from the national Kindergarten Association. However, the Bishop's Action Foundation was able to provide neutral expertise to support the Chairs to navigate the complex pathway from two independent entities to the creation of one, new, single entity.

Our role included advice on process as well as facilitation of a number of conversations with internal and external stakeholders. Our effectiveness in this role was enhanced by our experience of facilitating collaborative processes and enabling multiple parties to find common ground and keep focused on the outcomes being sought.

This process was an interesting example of collaboration being a process that can be effective within an existing entity as well as between entirely separate entities.

Migrant Connections Taranaki

Migrant Connections Taranaki emerged as a fledgling initiative following Immigration New Zealand's decision in 2014 to replace its Settlement Support model with a new approach targeting migrant employees within their first two years.

Migrant Connections Taranaki was founded by the former Settlement Support Coordinator because of a perceived need for migrant employees and, equally importantly, the families of migrant employees to be supported beyond their initial two years.

The Bishop's action Foundation agreed to support the initial piloting of the initiative including the establishment of critical partnerships and an evaluation model.

By the end of 2014 Migrant Connections Taranaki had partnered with the Taranaki Community Law service who agreed to host the Coordinator. Community Law had identified that they saw a number of migrants so the synergy of hosting this initiative made sense.

In addition, a partnership was formed with the regional Citizens Advice Bureau so that the work of Migrant Connections added value to their initial years employee focused migrant support role.

Alongside these collaborative partners Migrant Connections Taranaki has also been able to develop effective relationships with major regional employers who continue to engage migrants and who acknowledge that their migrant workers and their families still require community based support beyond their first two years in an area.

The pilot initiative is being evaluated in terms of user numbers and user feedback with a view to offering a pilot report at the end of 12 months in June 2015.

The ability of the Bishop's Action Foundation to provide a well-respected, but neutral, support role for this emerging collaboration was important because we were able to convene partnership conversations as well as offer management and administration support to the pilot project.

New Horizons

This project aims to provide an early intervention strategy to assist disaffected and/or vulnerable young people between the ages of 12 – 15, with a particular focus on rangatahi.

The initiative uses a focus on mentorship within a workshop environment to engage young people and create an opportunity for both learning and connection to viable regional career pathways. To achieve this the initiative connects young people with positive male role models/supervisors who come from local businesses.

The Bishop's Action Foundation is providing support to the founder of the initiative to enable a collaborative pilot to be undertaken that will test the effectiveness of this approach.

At the time of writing a partnership has been confirmed with Devon Intermediate School who will provide a workshop facility and also the cohort of young people for the pilot. Fulton Hogan have agreed to provide technical oversight and help to source materials for the project, this relationship has been further reinforced by the commitment of Taranaki Futures (a regional collaborative of employers and educators) and the regional Chamber of Commerce given the longer-term career / employment outcomes embedded within the initiative.

Once again the ability of the Bishop's Action Foundation to provide a well-respected, but neutral, support role for this emerging collaboration was important. In this instance our credibility enabled the founder of this idea to advance partnership discussion more quickly. We were also able to offer practical management and administration support to enable a pilot to be developed without the need to establish a new and fully-fledged organisational structure.

Both Migrant Connections Taranaki and New Horizons demonstrate that collaboration does not always need to be inspired by established entities with significant track records. In both these cases committed individuals within communities have been the inspiration for the collaborative approach to a community need. However, what has been helpful is the role of the Bishop's Action Foundation as a neutral back-bone that can provide accountability alongside support for the development of collaborative relationships and pilot programmes.

Social Housing

In partnership with WISE Better Homes, Community Housing Action Trust and Guild Research we have begun to explore innovative approaches to social housing need within rural / provincial New Zealand using Taranaki as our focus.

We have identified that there is significant resource already being applied to social housing responses / initiatives for families who qualify for government support and the housing register. However, there appears to be a large number of low income families who do not qualify for this support, but for whom rentals are prohibitively expensive and for whom home ownership is not currently viable.

We are therefore actively exploring social housing options for families who sit just above the threshold for government support / housing register, but for whom rents are unaffordable and viable pathways to home ownership do not exist. Our aim is to work towards providing pathways to affordable, sustainable, healthy housing ownership for these low income families in Taranaki.

The collaborative group we are working with want to resource a scoping study that will add detail on two areas (a) the number of low income families in the target group we have identified across Taranaki and (b) national and international approaches to social housing that might suit a project working with this group.

Within this initiative we have identified how collaboration can enhance responses to needs when it allows for different expertise to be focused on a common problem. Within our collaborative we have social housing knowledge, research expertise, and project management skills. This provides an effective mix to enable the group to identify new and workable responses to a social need.

North Taranaki Urban Collaboration

Given our position we have the opportunity to play a leading and facilitative role in redefining the way that social services are delivered across the New Plymouth and North Taranaki urban areas by Anglican Parishes.

At present a number of Parishes are replicating structures and initiatives by singularly approaching the identification of needs and the resourcing of responses for their local areas. This initiative will see the Bishop's Action Foundation work across these organisations to facilitate a process whereby collaboration and partnership can be the key driver. This will represent an opportunity to enhance internal collaboration between the Parishes, but also to enhance their external collaboration with existing community and agency providers.

Outcomes will include:

- Better use of available resources;
- Collaborative relationships to identify and respond to needs;
- Families experiencing programmes focused on unique local context, but benefiting from collaborative strengths

- An exploration of how faith based entities can impact local communities from a collaborative approach to social service delivery.

Partners to this initiative are the Anglican Parishes of West New Plymouth, Fitzroy New Plymouth, Waitara, Bell Block / Lepperton and Inglewood.

Parihaka Collaborative Community Hub

This project is future focused, looking at the current and projected needs of Maori living in or associating with Parihaka and the needs of service providers seeking to deliver services to Maori within and around the Parihaka community.

The initiative will focus on developing a collaborative community hub at Parihaka that achieves a wide range of outcomes for Maori within Parihaka and throughout the coastal Taranaki area. The Hub / Centre will provide collaborative facilities for education, social service and community groups and will enable a collaborative approach to shared infrastructure including essential administration support, this will in turn add value to the work these organisations undertake for this community.

The Foundation is providing technical (IT) project management and facilitation through its ICT Gateway social enterprise to support the genesis of this initiative.

The perceived benefits of developing the collaborative community hub include:

- Increased access for Maori within Parihaka and surrounding coastal Taranaki community members to education and social services;
- Access to collaborative office space and facilities for education and social service providers wanting to support this community;
- Access to collaborative office space and facilities for Iwi;
- A flexible and agile mixture of tenancy options (full time, part time, casual);
- A venue for meetings, education and/or training sessions;
- Accommodation for organisations who need to provide services at Parihaka but lack the facilities to do so;
- Collaborative administration services such as faxing, printing, photocopying, internet.
- Administration support to respond to a decrease in volunteer numbers

Collaborative Partners are Parihaka Papakainga Trust, Tui Ora Ltd, Te Reo o Taranaki, Te Wananga o Aotearoa, Computers in Homes, Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki, Community Providers, Civil Defence.

Conclusion

The examples of collaboration above are all different in their level of complexity, the reasons that catalyzed collaboration and the roles the Foundation assumed alongside and amongst the collaborative partners. What is consistent is the commitment to addressing a community need, sharing ownership of an issue and finding common ground between organisations and the importance of identifying the 'back bone' of the collaboration – the partner (or partners) who will be active in moving things forward with the mandate of the wider group.

In most cases the Foundation provided a neutral partner in the process which allowed for more open and robust conversations because the Foundation had nothing to gain except helping the collaborating groups to reach their goals. This neutrality also enabled us to be an effective back bone to many of the collaborative initiatives.

We also identified that for the Foundation to foster and develop collaboration it must be a true partner, which requires bringing resources, time and expertise to each initiative. Equally, all partners within a collaboration must be clear about what they bring to the table, not just focused on what they want to gain from being at the table.

Commitment to long term partnerships is the key to ensuring collaborative projects are successful as this allows the collaborating organisations to drive the timeframe and define the intended outcomes.

Above all else the essential elements of successful collaboration are:

- Identify common ground
- Accept that collaboration may only focus on a part or parts of what participant organisations do, that is ok
- Be realistic about what the collaboration will achieve and how long it might take, but try and identify some quick wins to keep people interested
- Starting small with the aim of growing over time
- Listening more than contributing to begin with
- Allowing a neutral facilitator to lead the process
- Identifying the back bone for the collaboration – who will be the key driver
- Begin with conversation and build from there
- Remember collaboration isn't always the right answer
- Acknowledge that common sense is often more important than 'experts'!