Snapshots of our Social Landscape

Key issues, what seems to work and how philanthropic funding can help selected community needs in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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1. About this Document

This document provides a series of brief "snapshots" on a selection of current community needs and opportunities in Aotearoa New Zealand, written by experts in each field.

These snapshots were commissioned by the Todd Foundation to provide insights into some of the areas we have been funding and were included as pre-reading for our 2013 Strategic Planning. We are making them available publicly for anyone for whom they may be useful – in particular other philanthropic funders. Each snapshot summarises key issues, what seems to work and how philanthropic funding can help.

Please note that the suggestions included in these snapshots are not necessarily endorsed by either Todd Foundation or the organisations employing each of the snapshot authors; they are simply provided as "food for thought."

We welcome feedback and discussion.

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2. Community Development

Written by Megan Courtney, Inspiring Communities Development Team. Inspiring Communities' mission is catalysing, connecting and influencing positive change through effective community-led development.

Key issues

Working collaboratively to address complex community issues. Many issues can't be solved by 'single service' responses (e.g. family violence is also about poverty, parenting skills, and relationship stress). Complex issues need local involvement and long-term investment that tolerates risk and encourages creative experimentation to see what works and why.

Leadership within grassroots communities. Many agencies do things 'to' or 'for' local people, reinforcing perceptions of communities as recipients of services rather than actors/leaders.

Limited community connectedness. Connectedness is key to our wellbeing. Strong local bonds enable communities to respond to challenges and opportunities.

How can these issues best be addressed?

- Integrate community approaches into existing services and sector initiatives, (e.g. housing, environmental projects, early childhood education). Proactively involving local people to work together helps build strong relationships/networks/mutual trust, and increases capacity for locals to be actively involved in further positive local change efforts.

- Invest in 'bright spots' – local people/communities with passion and shared vision. Leadership, confidence, and trust relationships grow best through 'learning by doing together'. Seed funds can have a catalysing impact. Also, skilled community brokers and external facilitators can help communities identify and use existing resources differently.

- Bring multiple parties together to collaborate. This requires resources and time for convening, facilitating and supporting joint responses that emerge. Success relies on strong 'back-bone' organisations with capacity and capability to undertake convening functions (fund holding, bridge building, and support for individual leaders to try new things).

- Adopt planning and action frameworks that weave learnings into next steps (continuous cycles of vision, plan, act, reflect, review). This requires sufficient resourcing and time for regular reflection by multiple stakeholders stopping to ask:

what happened, why did it happen, what did we learn, what does this mean for what we do next?

Where could philanthropic funding make the most difference?

Neighbourhood strengthening. Small, visible, locally-led projects are often pre-requisites for larger initiatives. Funders could provide funds for community initiatives on the basis that these be redistributed to encourage small scale neighbourhood-building projects. This is best done as matched (co-investment by communities) seed funding, and could involve multiple local partners (businesses, local authorities, service groups).

Community-led development. Invest (long-term) in collaborative initiatives in places demonstrating community-led development principles. Ensure 'back-bone' organisations behind collaboration are effectively supported to bring and keep multiple stakeholders together, and encourage participation, innovation and action led by local people.

Catalysts and critical friends. Resource experienced community developers to assist community initiatives and provide support when things get stuck or tough. Having easy access to the wisdom and ideas of a 'neutral' outsider can make all the difference.

Are there possibilities around the margins of this topic that you think we could explore?

- Compiling a resource of great community development ideas suitable for 'scaling out' into other communities (e.g. short case studies with contacts for further information).

- Workshops/training focusing on 'how to' build community development into other Todd funding priorities and initiatives.

Useful links for further information

Seattle Neighborhood Matching Fund (http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf/)

Annie E Casey Foundation (http://www.aecf.org/ourwork/communitychange.aspx)

Collective Impact
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact/?cpgn=WP%20DL%20-%20Collective%20Impact

Constellation Governance (http://www.lcsi.smu.edu.sg/downloads/MarkSurmanFinalAug-2.pdf)

Inspiring Communities Think Piece on Community-Led Development
(http://inspiringcommunities.org.nz/think-piece-july-2012)

3. Cultural Understanding and Inclusion

Written by Joris de Bres, Race Relations Commissioner, New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2002-2013.

Key issues

Aotearoa NZ continues to experience radical demographic change, with young Māori, Pacific and Asian populations growing rapidly and the Pākehā population ageing and diminishing. This is most dramatically illustrated by the population cohorts now coming through the school system and entering the workforce, particularly in the Auckland and Northland education region, where Pākehā students comprise around 40 per cent, and Māori, Pacific and Asian students around 20 per cent each. Three key issues relating to this change are:

Diversity: recognising and affirming the different cultural identities of young people so that they are confident in their own identity and able to succeed and contribute to society.

Equality: ensuring that all young people are able to enjoy equal opportunities and outcomes in areas such as education, health, employment and involvement in society.

Harmony: building bridges between young people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and fostering harmonious relations.

To promote diversity without also addressing equality and harmony risks undermining social cohesion.

How can these issues best be addressed?

Many government and community initiatives address diversity and equality, but few focus on inter-cultural understanding and relationships. Building bridges between people from different communities requires projects and structures of a bilateral or multilateral nature. Examples of the former include the recent Taniwha and Dragon Festival at Orākei Marae in Auckland, or the inaugural Māori-Hindu conference in Rotorua. An example of the latter is the annual three week Southern Cross multi-ethnic course organised by Outward Bound, which brings together equal numbers of Māori, Pacific, Asian and Pākehā participants. Such projects have the potential to challenge organisations to tailor their programmes to include people from more diverse communities.

A second issue concerns community languages. Language provides access to services, and to culture and identity. Aotearoa NZ lags behind many similar societies in catering for people whose first language is not English, and in fostering a multilingual society. The Government provides extensive funding for te reo Māori through the Māori

Language Commission and the education system. It has also recently approved a Pacific Languages Framework, although this places responsibility for maintaining Pacific Languages primarily on Pacific communities themselves. There is no framework for community languages, and many communities struggle to provide community schools and classes in their own languages.

Where could philanthropic funding make the most difference?

Funders could be a catalyst for intercultural understanding and inclusion by inviting proposals that specifically engage people or organisations from different ethnic or cultural communities, or that promise to achieve participation by people from diverse communities in existing or proposed programmes. A focus on projects involving young people working together, e.g. for environmental or social outcomes, would also be desirable.

As noted above, there is a funding gap in relation to community languages, including both Pacific and ethnic minority languages. Funders could invite proposals that build capacity or promise to develop successful models for delivering community language education by communities in partnership with education institutions and others.

Useful links for further information

Outward Bound: Southern Cross, Connecting Kiwi Cultures (http://www.outwardbound.co.nz/our-courses/community-courses/southern-cross-connecting-kiwi-cultures)

Media story: Taniwha and Dragon Festival (http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/8605292/Taniwha-meets-the-Dragon-at-festival)

Royal Society of New Zealand (2013), Languages in Aotearoa New Zealand (http://www.royalsociety.org.nz/media/Languages-in-Aotearoa-New-Zealand.pdf)

Community Languages Association of NZ: Building Capability in the Community Languages Sector (http://www.clanz.co.nz/index.html)

Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs: Pacific Languages Framework (http://www.mpia.govt.nz/pacific-languages-framework/)

4. Disabilities and their impact on Children and Young People

Written by Rachel Noble, Chief Executive, Disabled Persons Assembly. Rachel convenes an Education for All working group promoting implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as ratified by Aotearoa NZ in 2008.

Key issues

Ensuring that children and young people with disabilities have the confidence to express their views on all matters affecting them whether it be in school, home or the local community. Their ability to express their view will equate with the ability of non-disabled children of similar age and maturity.

Promoting the concept that mainstreaming is not about a disabled child going into a setting and having to 'fit in' or be 'special' with 'aides' taking responsibility for their inclusion. It is about everyone within the environment making sure the environmental and attitudinal barriers do not exist, and the ability to make reasonable accommodations (adaptations) to make it work for everyone present (such as Deaf Aotearoa's Magnet programme for youth).

Access to activities to promote the full development of human dignity and self-worth, including: development of personality, talents and creativity via peer support and mentoring, plus disability inclusive/responsive awareness programmes within the environment.

How can these issues best be addressed?

- Overall, the approach outlined above is vital to enable mainstreaming/inclusion, and the elimination of attitudinal and environmental barriers. The ability for young people to be aware of others like themselves is important for the development of a positive self-identity in order to be able to give informed views on matters affecting themselves.

- Families/whānau to have access to resources to enable them to see their child/young person flourish with dignity and worth.

- Enabling children and young people to meet others with a range of disabilities (children, young people, adults), allowing them to see that others share their experiences and perspectives on the world, and that they also share in the adoption of useful strategies. This can enable them to understand how they are each productive contributors to the world and to learn how others articulate their views and needs in an appropriate manner.

Where could philanthropic funding make the most difference?

Programmes and activities that promote:

- awareness raising and responsiveness to eliminate attitudinal and environmental barriers,

- positive self-identity and the ability to present an informed view,

- families/whānau becoming aware of how they can enhance attitudes towards self-worth and dignity and also 'hear' the view being expressed.

Important for all ages:

- Care needs to be taken to ensure that the programme or activity is one that will be effective – Disabled Persons Organisations (governed by and for disabled people) can assist with this.

Are there possibilities around the margins of this topic that you think we could explore?

It would be good to explore how philanthropic funders can 'check' that proposals received do match with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and to identify potential providers.

Useful links for further information

Magnet programme (Deaf Aotearoa) (http://magnet.org.nz/)

5. Early Childhood and Children's Education

Written by Nicola Meek, an independent education consultant working with community and sector organisations to raise student achievement.

Key issues

Participation in *quality* early childhood education. This can improve education, health, employment and other outcomes for children and families but these benefits only result from participation in *quality* early childhood education (ECE).

Supporting parents to support children as learners. Students do best in later learning if they have had both a highly effective ECE service and a high-quality early years home learning environment, delivering:

- *High expectations*. Families with high educational expectations have the most positive effects on their children's achievement.

- *Literacy and oral language skills*. Students who are regularly read to during their early years have an average advantage of more than one year of schooling over others.

- *Parental engagement with early childhood education professionals*. Both the OECD and the Education Review Office (ERO) highlight the need for greater parental involvement in designing and delivering learning opportunities. ERO found little specific attention is paid by ECE centres to the requirement to support families in their role of raising children.

Supporting families of Māori and Pasifika students to engage in early childhood education. Fewer Māori and Pasifika than European children participate in ECE. Only 10% of ECE services have built effective and culturally responsive partnerships with whānau in which there is reciprocal sharing of expertise and whānau involvement in goal setting and decision making.

How can these issues best be addressed?

Government is resourcing increased participation in ECE but increased participation alone will not raise achievement. Similar attention needs to be paid to parent and whānau involvement: programmes that have strong parental connections are more effective than those that do not. Many services support parents to raise children but most are not focused on setting appropriate expectations and foundations for learning. A strategy that links early childhood educators' knowledge with parents, and parents' perspectives and aspirations with educators, has the potential to increase achievement and equitable outcomes for all learners.

Where could philanthropic funding make the most difference?

While government delivers its strategies to increase participation in early childhood education, philanthropic funders could prioritise programmes that:

- support parents to help children develop literacy and oral language skills,

- support parents to be effective partners with early childhood educators and services,

- support tangata whenua Māori, and Pasifika - the largest group not participating in ECE - to develop culturally responsive programmes with their local ECE services and staff.

Are there possibilities around the margins of this topic that you think we could explore?

The report, *Solutions to Child Poverty in New Zealand: Evidence for action*, signaled the potential for expanding and evaluating ECEs as community hubs. The report suggests that government partner with Boards of Trustees and principals in low-decile ECE centres to facilitate this. Evaluating the effectiveness of ECE community hubs might identify ways to increase parents' capacity to support children's early learning.

Useful links for further information

http://www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Priorities-for-Children-s-Learning-in-Early-Childhood-Services-May-2013

http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/competent-children-competent-learners

http://www.occ.org.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/10511/130703_FINAL_WP_Parents_family_and_whānau_contributions.pdf

http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/NEW%20ZEALAND%20policy%20profile%20-%20published%203-8-2012.pdf

http://www.taskforce.ece.govt.nz/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Final_Report_ECE_Taskforce.pdf

6. Environment and Conservation

Written by Jo Breese. Jo is a self-employed consultant, previously CEO of WWF New Zealand and a member of the NZ Conservation Authority

Key issues

Conservation of our oceans. Over the last decade, no progress has been made with establishing a coherent network of marine protected areas (MPAs) across the Exclusive Economic Zone despite proven ecological and economic benefits that flow from MPAs.

Predator Free New Zealand (PFNZ). This is a collaborative initiative to pursue Sir Paul Callaghan's vision of eradicating predators from the Aotearoa NZ mainland. Sustained pest control is currently only carried out on a small fraction of our public conservation land.

Keeping the environment at the fore of political and economic thinking. We need solutions for economic development that embed our perceived green image, through an outcome-focused, all-encompassing approach with business creating innovative products and services, financial success, responsible use of resources and concern for community well-being.

How can these issues best be addressed?

MPAs: through multi-stakeholder dialogue, NGOs, the fishing industry, iwi and DoC could work together to design and agree on a network of MPAs. Stakeholder collaborations can yield robust results (e.g. Land and Water Forum and the Forest Accord)*.*

PFNZ: defined geographical units could become predator-free over a 20-50 year period (e.g. Stewart Island, Antipodes Island, Northland, Banks Peninsula etc.). This requires the development of new tools, along with support for this innovation and its implementation.

Political/economic thinking: attention could be drawn to business innovations that show green business models and green entrepreneurship in all sectors.

Where could philanthropic funding make the most difference?

- Invest in an outcome-focussed dialogue process that brings the parties in the MPA space together. Currently there is renewed interest in this politically, and industry wants to position itself differently. There is a renewed chance of success.

- Support the development and implementation of Predator Free NZ by:

    a) investing in a paid leader to drive/co-ordinate the initiative.

    b) investing in the development of innovative sustainable new technologies/tools that support predator eradication at scale (including trials) over five years.

c) facilitating funding for demonstration initiatives over longer time frames, e.g. a 15-25 year programme, including human resource as well as eradication tools.

- Support green entrepreneurship initiatives with a view to learning from them. Promote demonstrations/pilots that can be successfully communicated. Consider a green entrepreneur challenge/award or accelerator/incubator approach.

Are there possibilities around the margins of this topic that you think we could explore?

- Invest in partnerships/institutions (or individuals) and capabilities with the potential for, or that already lead, innovation in sustainable outcomes. Work with the organisation to decide where they can lever the most change and invest in the building of the institution's (or individual's) capacity to raise money, innovate and then replicate to scale up the innovation. Invest over time as environmental outcomes are not quick to achieve.

- If investing in policy analysis as part of a change/gain process, include an advocacy component so that the analysis sees the light of day and is more widely understood.

- Be bold – pick winners, and transform at scale.

Several organisational leaders consulted expressed willingness to discuss their ideas further especially on the possibilities in the margins.

Useful links for further information:

http://www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/envwellbeing/environmental-issues.html

7. Talented and Gifted Students

Written by Tracy Riley, Associate Professor at Massey University, Chair of giftEDnz: the Professional Association for Gifted Education and a Trustee on the Board for Gifted Kids.

Key issues

Ongoing professional development for teachers. Our teacher education programmes virtually ignore gifted learners and schools' provisions are mainly 'add-on' approaches to the regular classroom. Current professional development is limited in access and reach due to constraints in the approach taken by the Ministry of Education. Underlying this issue is a general misunderstanding and lack of awareness of giftedness across Aotearoa NZ.

An evidence base to support practices. With limited research into effectiveness, including classroom-based practical inquiry, it is difficult to determine what works for gifted learners. What little evidence is available seldom reaches teachers. A gap exists between out-of-school opportunities, including how parents might intervene, and what teachers in centres and schools acknowledge, recognise and accept as effective.

Identification of, and opportunities for, gifted learners of diversity. Amongst the gifted population there continue to be groups that are under-identified and provided with limited opportunities to develop their abilities. These include Māori and Pasifika learners, those from rural areas, gifted girls, and gifted learners with disabilities.

How can these issues best be addressed?

Increasing awareness and acceptance of gifted and talented learners is fundamentally the only way to address these issues. Lack of acknowledgement and recognition by teachers is at the heart of the issues the field faces, but this extends to policy makers and government leaders, Ministry of Education officials, leaders in all domains and communities (including early childhood centres, schools, and tertiary institutions), and your average Kiwi on the street. Importantly, where there *is* acknowledgement and awareness in teachers, there is often a lack of support (e.g. time, resources, funding, professional development, evidence base) and, not surprisingly, this leads to inadequate provision for gifted and talented learners.

Where could philanthropic funding make the most difference?

- An awareness raising campaign to help raise public understandings and to profile gifted New Zealanders.

- Evidence-based identification and provision, particularly interventions addressing diverse learners.

- Sharing and dissemination of effective practice, including between providers and within communities (including homes).

- Scholarships for advanced professional development to support opportunities for leaders in gifted education to develop a depth, breadth and range of skills.

Are there possibilities around the margins of this topic that you think we could explore?

Initiatives that focus on personalising learning based in individual differences, referred to as differentiation, should recognise and support the needs of gifted and talented learners. Opportunities to embed gifted and talented education in special or inclusive education might be one solution. The gifted community is small and works in isolation of general and special education, but 'working together more' could positively change this.

Useful links for further information

In order to create this snapshot, I consulted with the gifted community using social media (not identifying the Todd Foundation). The Facebook conversation (https://www.facebook.com/groups/gifted.contacts/permalink/431425746893885/) and tki Mailing List discussion thread (http://gifted.tki.org.nz/sympa/archive/gifted/2013-07/msg00038.html) provide rich perspectives from parents and teachers. The Ministry of Education website (http://gifted.tki.org.nz/for-schools-and-teachers) is the most relevant source of NZ-driven information on gifted and talented.

8. Youth Education, Training, Employment and Transitions

Written by Jane Higgins. Jane has 20 years' experience in research with young people, including the projects: In Transition: How the children of the economic reforms craft identities at the child-adult border *(Royal Society Marsden Fund, 2004-07) and* Education-employment linkages for young people *(MBIE, 2008-12).*

Key issues

Enabling all young people to see themselves as learners and to remain engaged in learning throughout their schooling, further education and employment. Young people's engagement with education is closely related to whether and how they see themselves as learners. Some lose this sense at school but rediscover it in effective alternative education environments.

Enabling successful transitions (building effective pathways through education and into employment) for young people who are disabled, those who have been in CYFs care, and those who have been in and out of school. For those whose education has been disrupted, intensive support is required to assist in the crafting of effective transition pathways. This support is not always available either because resources are not available, or because their needs are not adequately recognised or understood.

Creating opportunities for quality work experience for young people. This involves building networks between education/training institutions and employers. It also involves fostering a culture among employers in which the training of young people is seen as a valued investment in the local and national economies. Work experience is a vital aspect of successful engagement with employment but quality work experience is commonly difficult for young people to access in New Zealand.

How can these issues best be addressed?

- Ideally, schools provide environments in which all young people come to see themselves as learners, but this doesn't always happen. Some young people's lives are highly complex and they need intensive, individually tailored support. Alternative education (AE) providers offering wrap-around support and accessible learning often provide the best chance for these young people to re-engage with learning. Best practice for AE is well established in Aotearoa NZ among many AE providers.

- The provision of quality work experience becomes possible where education/training institutions build effective networks and partnerships with local employers. Priority 1 INSTEP (Industry and Schools Training and Enterprise Partnership), instigated by the Western Bay of Plenty region's economic development organisation, is an excellent (rare) example of long term success in this area.

Where could philanthropic funding make the most difference?

- AE in Aotearoa NZ manages to do a lot with few resources. Funding assistance for curriculum and other resources and for tutor professional development would be valued.

- Work experience: Funders could investigate successful examples of education-industry partnership, such as INSTEP, and identify how to facilitate similar models elsewhere. More challenging, but of long-term importance, is to consider how to build a culture among employers in which providing training and quality work experience is seen as a valued contribution and investment, rather than simply a cost.

Useful links for further information

Alternative education (http://www.alted.org.nz & http://alternativeeducation.tki.org.nz)

Children and young people with high and complex needs (http://www.hcn.govt.nz/index.html)

Work experience: Priority One INSTEP (http://www.priorityone.co.nz/instep) (Note: Tindall funds into the successful Otorohanga youth programme http://www.otorohanga.co.nz/youth-programmes.html and a version of that model now getting underway in Auckland: http://www.youthconnections.co.nz).

Research links: The NZ Council for Educational Research (http://www.nzcer.org.nz) particularly work by Dr. Karen Vaughan; the Education Employment Linkages Research Group (http://www.eel.org.nz) and the Youth Pathways and Transitions Research at Massey University: (http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/departments/centres-research/resilience-research/resilience-research_home.cfm)

9. Vulnerable Families

Written by Deborah Morris-Travers, Manager, Every Child Counts. This coalition, driven by UNICEF, Save the Children, Barnardos, Plunket and Mana Ririki, works to increase the status and wellbeing of Aotearoa NZ children.

Key issues

Poverty marginalises families, impacting on mental and physical health, education and family relationships. Policies must respond to the needs of families to ensure adequate income, quality housing, access to health and education, flexible workplace policies, a society that is connected and secure, and a country that values and nurtures its children.

Communities have fragmented and parents are not well supported. Community-led development can play an important role in building up assets to lift people out of poverty, by engaging parents in solutions that work for them.

Systems change and political will: The government's Vulnerable Children's Action Plan is working to improve systems that respond to 30,000 of the most vulnerable children, but this will not prevent children becoming vulnerable in the first place. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is rarely used in policy development; Child Impact Assessments occur haphazardly; and there is no cross-party agreement on fundamental policies for families.

How can these issues best be addressed?

- *Political and public advocacy for children.* This increases awareness of the challenges that families face through, e.g. telling stories and ensuring that children's voices are included, reaching unexpected audiences (e.g. business), effectively communicating the evidence.

- *Community-led development.* Drawing on local strengths to develop local solutions often has a positive and immediate effect on families. Community-led development can create connected communities that better support parents (e.g. the Sustainable Livelihood Framework). It is important to collect and disseminate information about successes.

- *Education* is a circuit-breaker for poverty. Education begins at home, so it is vital that new parents are aware of simple ways to teach their children. They need to have opportunities to continue their own education too (maternal education levels are a key predictor of child wellbeing). Family learning and literacy are key to creating a culture of education at home.

Where could philanthropic funding make the most difference?

- The early years of a child's life offer our most important opportunity to ensure healthy physical, mental and emotional development. Initiatives supporting parents and communities to invest in the youngest children ought to be a priority, although the teen years can also be a time of family vulnerability.

- Reaching the hard-to-reach is a priority. Kaupapa Māori and Pasifika organisations – or mainstream organisations that work effectively with vulnerable families – need support.

- A focus on sole parents and teen parents is worthwhile.

- Mobile early childhood education is a new development with potential to reach families not currently engaged. Co-locating services also shows potential, with health, education, social and community services available in places where children and families are.

Are there possibilities around the margins of this topic that you think we could explore?

- There are good international models of social housing but Aotearoa NZ hasn't yet developed a culture of social housing (e.g. local housing associations). More work needs to be done on this.

- The impact of child advocacy can be increased by telling stories in ways that resonate with a variety of audiences and have the ability to reach unexpected audiences.

- Collective impact initiatives involve having a shared vision of what we need to achieve, and understanding everyone's contribution to achieving it.

Useful links for further information

Every Child Counts – For every child a healthy home (www.everychildcounts.org.nz/news/for-every-child-a-healthy-home-housing/)

The Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty (http://www.occ.org.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/10150/Child_Poverty_Report_Web.pdf)

Inspiring Communities – community-led development: (http://inspiringcommunities.org.nz)

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework: (http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/vc/Sustainable_Livelihoods.pdf)