

Whakarongo:

Listening to the Kāpiti Coast community social services sector
in challenging times

by

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A thesis submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of New Zealand Studies

Victoria University of Wellington

2011

Mā pango, mā whero, ka oti te mahi.

By black and by red, the work is done.

Ehara taku toa, i te toa takitahi, ko taku toa, he toa takitini.

My achievements are not mine alone, they are the achievements of many.

Abstract

This research focuses on the Kāpiti Coast District community social services sector, exploring their experience of the 2008 economic and central government social policy changes. The recession and changing social policies increased pressure on the sector, at the same time as they were responding to increased stress and uncertainty in their communities. The research became an opportunity to give voice to the Kāpiti Coast community social services sector.

The research was undertaken from a constructionist perspective, using critical inquiry and case study approaches. The research is presented in an approachable way, as it is hoped that the learning will be used by both the community sector and local government to help improve the way they work together.

After setting the scene, the methodology used to listen to the Kāpiti Coast community social services sector is explained. The focus then moves onto the sector. Next, the themes that emerged from the data collected during the research are explored. To increase understanding of these themes, a number of theoretical perspectives are used, which have been selected across a range of disciplines, drawing most strongly on the social work discipline. The voice of the participants has been given primacy at all times; which is in line with the intention of the research, which is to empower the Kāpiti Coast community social services sector. It was helpful to delve into the triangle of relationships: the community social services sector, central and local government, and understand these relationships better. The way that the Kāpiti Coast community social services sector perceives itself, and how it works together and with others, proved a very interesting area of research.

The research concludes that listening to the sector on their own terms is a way of addressing the power imbalance and an important step in improving the relationship between the sector and local government. Creating a bridge between the sectors can enable good place-based work to occur to improve social wellbeing in the Kāpiti Coast communities.

Acknowledgements

This research was achieved through the good will and enthusiasm of the Kāpiti Coast District community social services sector. My heart-felt thanks go out to those who supported and guided me during this project and those who gave their time as participants and advisors. Their willingness to share has brought tears to my eyes at times, as participants brought the experiences of their work and those they work for into the research space to enable this learning.

I want to thank the Kāpiti Coast District Council for the support which made this work possible. I want to recognise the interest that elected members and staff have shown, their desire to understand the community social services sector better and their commitment to improving social wellbeing in the Kāpiti Coast District. I would also like to acknowledge my supervisor Sandra Grey for her wisdom in guiding me through this learning. She gave me the freedom to explore this research space while insisting on academic rigour, and providing encouragement along the way.

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1. Setting the scene

Something magical happens when people work together well – a synergy, which when harnessed makes up a sum much more than the individual parts. When I started this research, I knew that what the community social services sector did was special and important to the wellbeing of our communities. I could see that the recent recession (2008) was making things harder, and that the change of government was causing uncertainty. I wanted to explore these issues in my research. In doing so, I found something even more interesting than a story of how the sector copes. This research gave me the opportunity to reconnect with the work that the sector does and a chance to amplify the voice of a sector which often does not feel heard. It is this voice that I have made central to this story – their story.

This research focused on the Kāpiti Coast District community social services sector, exploring their experience of the recent economic and social policy changes. Research participants reflected on the impacts of the recession and the changes in policy direction arising from the change in central government. In the process, it became an exploration of how they see themselves, how they see the other sectors they interact with and the way they work. This work aims to support the community social services sector, to improve social wellbeing in the Kāpiti Coast communities, and to improve local government understanding of the way the community social services sector operates. Working together the sectors can help to improve ‘...those aspects of life that we care about as a society... [that] contribute to our individual happiness, quality of life, and welfare.’¹

During the research process with the representatives of the Kāpiti Coast community social services sector, several important themes became clear. These themes have been contextualised; within theoretical understandings of social interaction including social capital and network theory, and the wider understandings of the sectors. I conclude with some suggestions for a way to support the community social services sector and Kāpiti Coast District Council to work better towards shared goals.

There are layers of learning for myself as researcher, for the community social services sector as they reflect back on what they have said, and for the Kāpiti Coast District Council. This learning began in the initial discussions with key informants, continued within the research workshops, and through the analysis and writing stages. The research journey has been a unique opportunity to interpret between two worlds. The opportunity given in the workshops to really listen to the sector was fantastic and provided learning about how to bridge between the community social services sector and council. This story provides learning for the research, participants and those interested in Kāpiti, but also is a point of comparison for other communities, councils and central government.

Before exploring the interactions from the perspective of the social service sector, it is important that I lay bare the perspectives behind the research topic and approach. Research must be underpinned by a clear understanding of the perspective from which the research topic is being approached and of the researcher’s own assumptions. Crotty² provides a useful model, which explores the relationships between

¹ Ministry for Culture and Heritage Cultural. *Wellbeing and local government report 1*, 2010, p.5

² Crotty, M. *The foundations of social research*, 1998, pp4-5

epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods and encourages critical thinking of the beliefs and assumptions behind the research. I used his model to explore my own approach. Following his model, I have identified that this research has been undertaken from a constructionist epistemological perspective. Crotty defines constructionism as a view that 'all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context.'³ This acknowledgement of the construction of meaning is important, as meaning has been created from the interaction of the research participants and the researcher. It is acknowledged that their differing perspectives have combined to construct an understanding of the experience of community social service agencies and communities. This allowed for reflection throughout the research process, which enabled the construction of knowledge.

A constructionist approach supports the need to explore the research question in as naturalistic environment as possible. In this research, the interaction between the participants themselves and also with the researcher, within the research space and context is key. The participants interact with one another and secure resources for their work based upon their beliefs about their world and their previous experiences. This interaction is influenced by their social, political, economic and historical understandings and environment. The participants have existing relationships and understandings, which they bring to the research space. It was important to acknowledge the complexity of the real life situation which I was studying.

I approached the study from a critical inquiry theoretical approach. Critical inquiry allows a spiralling process of reflection and action.⁴ In this approach research does not merely seek to understand, but to be research that challenges.⁵ This approach questions the power structures amongst those involved in the study; these are of particular significance for the community members, who use the services of the agencies and are often vulnerable and marginalised. The power structures are also pertinent to the participants who become their client's bridge to knowledge and understanding of systems within the social sector and who attempt to work within the power structures of this sector and the community. In turn, power structures are also important when the sector interacts with local and central government and within itself.

The underlying aim of the research was to empower the community and give voice to their experiences, acknowledging the impact that power inequities have on their relationships and access to resources. I tried to hand over some of the power, from myself as researcher, by allowing the sector to influence the research throughout the process including by the use of key informants. These techniques are discussed in detail in the methodology chapter.

Empowerment is congruent with a feminist emphasis on social change and social justice.⁶ The research drew on feminist research practices; particularly on reflexivity. Reflexivity is a process whereby researchers recognize, examine, and understand how

³ Crotty, M. *The foundations of social research*, 1998. p.42

⁴ Crotty p. 157

⁵ Crotty p.113

⁶ Hesse-Biber, S. (Ed.). *Handbook of feminist research*, 2007, p.11

their social background, location and assumptions affect their research practice.⁷ In addition, the design ensured that the process responded to the shifting contexts and fluid intentions of the research.⁸

Approaching this research from an interdisciplinary perspective was in keeping with its reflexive nature and gave me freedom to move and respond to the twists and turns of the research journey. I have drawn on theoretical perspectives which include economics, political science, social policy and geography, but as the research evolved, it became clear that it has drawn most heavily on social work with a community development focus.⁹ This was shaped by the heavy influence that social work practices have had on the community social services sector of which I have been a part. Drawing on social work terms and processes helped provide a common space for the research participants and researcher to work together – a perspective shared despite very varied backgrounds. The influence of social work practices can be seen in the use of the word ‘client’ by the community social services sector. This term is used often by participants, but has also become part of government contracting language.

I am not a dispassionate observer. I am still part of the communities at the heart of this case study. I am connected to the communities as a current employee of the Kāpiti Coast District Council, having worked in the community social services sector, and by being known personally to the participants.

Given these connections and the approach, I need to lay bare who I am in relation to the research. Firstly, this work rests firmly on eight years of social service work in this community and the paid and unpaid work experience prior. My first role in the Kāpiti community was as the first Strengthening Families¹⁰ Coordinator for this District. This role is uniquely placed as it supports those working with children and families to work better together for the family. It is a facilitatory role which rests on strong networking and relationship building with the sector. These relationships, built on further by my work for the Kāpiti Coast District Council in the Social Wellbeing Team, were the key to successful engagement with the sector to achieve this research. They opened doors which can be difficult to open and promoted a level of trust and good will which I did not want to put at risk.

These connections supported the research at all stages; an example during the early phases of the research was that I used my networks to seek feedback on the research methodology. I attended three key monthly networking meetings in the District for input: the Kāpiti Community Social Services and the Strengthening Families Frontline Group which meet in Paraparaumu and the Tuesday Group which meets in Ōtaki. My connected position to the sector has allowed me to bring a higher level of understanding of the process and the complex workings of the multiplicity of actors within the research area. My placement, with established relationships, enabled a level of trust and also encouraged hope that the material will benefit the community and agencies.

⁷ Hesse-Biber, S. (Ed.). *Handbook of feminist research*, 2007, p. 16

⁸ Hesse-Biber, S. (Ed.). *Handbook of feminist research*, 2007, p. 17

⁹ Munford, R & Sanders, J. *Working with families*, 2005

Munford, R & Walsh-Tapiata, W. *Community development*, 2005

¹⁰ Ministry of Social Development. *Strengthening Families*, 2010

My approach was informed by some literature on positioning of the researcher. The importance of examining my research viewpoint was informed by Gillham, who points out that a 'naturalist' researcher is not a detached scientist, but a participant observer who acknowledges their role in what they discover and can not be neutral.¹¹ The work of Tuhiwai Smith also helped me explore my role and cultural viewpoint. As an indigenous researcher she discusses the power issues involved in being the one telling the story. 'Imperialism frames the indigenous experience. It is part of our story, our version of modernity... in which indigenous languages, knowledges and cultures have been silenced or misrepresented, ridiculed or condemned in academic and popular discourses.'¹² Research and the telling of the stories of others must be approached in a respectful manner. The researcher must remember the need to reflect on, and be critical of, one's own culture, values, assumptions and beliefs and to recognise these are not the 'norm'. The researcher is reminded to consider whose stories are being privileged and whose stories are being marginalized in any representations of the 'Other'.¹³ The question of whose story is privileged is discussed further later when other theoretical approaches are introduced including participative storylines.

The insider position also brings challenges to the research, including the inclination to come to the analysis of the data with inflexible preconceived notions, the desire to skew the results towards what the readers would wish to hear and making assumptions that things are self evident.¹⁴ The reflexive nature of this research mitigated these risks. Boundaries also needed to be explored and analysed: not least when it came to the role of researcher. I needed to be aware of the separation of roles of my paid work for the Kāpiti Coast District Council and my role as researcher. This clarification had to be made for the participants as well and was restated many times in different ways. It was necessary to be mindful of any expectations or constraints that participants may have had as the Council has many roles in the community, including as a funder and gate-keeper, and is perceived by the community as a holder of power. It was necessary to acknowledge the potential impacts on the participants and, for example, to ensure that the research design minimised the potential negative impacts. Negative impacts could have included damage to the relationships within the sector and with funders. These issues are addressed in the section in the methodology chapter. Being aware of these challenges makes it possible to address them.

It is extremely unlikely that this research could be done by someone outside the community and unlikely that the opportunities to make this research meaningful would present from outside the relationship with Council. Being an insider enabled this research to be undertaken. The Council provided resources to undertake the research and an interested ear to hear the result. The research became the opportunity to create a bridge between the sectors.

When starting this research I took a number of understandings as given:

¹¹ Gillham, R. *Case study research methods*, 2000, p. 7

¹² Smith, L. *Decolonising methodologies*, 1999, p.19

¹³ Smith, L. *Decolonising methodologies*, 1999, p.217

¹⁴ Herr, K. & Anderson, G. *The action research dissertation*, 2005, p.41

Sikes, P. & Potts, A *Researching education from the inside*, 2008, p.51

- the health of the community social services sector is important as the sector provides much needed support to the community;
- local government has a legal mandate to become involved in the determination and achievement of community outcomes and therefore a strong interest in the community social services sector;
- communities are ever changing and adapting and are therefore the sector best placed to respond to changes including economic and environmental change;
- the 2008 recession has had a significant effect on the Kāpiti Coast District communities, the community social services sector and local and central government;
- in addition, changes in central government policies and personnel have magnified the level of change being experienced by all.

It was important to reflect on the understandings that this research rests upon. During the research the voices of the community social services sector confirmed they also held these assumptions, with participants commenting that ‘without [organisation X] we’d be stuffed’ and ‘It’s hard’. National sector voices also confirmed these assumptions (see Chapter Four: Their Voice). These assumptions became a good foundation for the research.

The initial research question was:

From a community perspective, what non-financial support(s) would best assist community social service agencies in Kāpiti to respond to the recent national economic and social policy changes?

The work had three objectives:

1. What is the impact of recent national economic changes and social policy changes and their implementation on community social service agencies and their communities in Kāpiti?
2. How can the Kāpiti Coast District Council and community social service agencies work together to respond to these changes?
3. What non-financial support from the Council would help?

Valuable insights on these topics were obtained while exploring these questions. However, the focus of the study shifted because of the stories of the research participants. They moved the spotlight to a different space. The story of their relationships came to the fore: the peer relationships within the community social services sector, and their perspective on the less equal relationships with central and local government. The central question became:

How can effective relationships be nurtured between the community social services sector and local government to improve social wellbeing in the Kāpiti Coast communities?

I hope this work can be used by the community social services sector and local government to promote their roles in supporting social wellbeing. Based on the findings, suggestions of a way forward are given to improve the relationship between the community social services sector and local government and to enable the sectors to work together better to attain shared goals.

This thesis has been intentionally written in an accessible style to make it readable for a wide a range of those interested in the sector. The language has been kept as straight forward as possible and in the narrative style of the sector, and footnotes have been used to reference sources rather than in-text citations. It is important that the research is useable by the community social services sector. Initial findings have already been shared with the sector (provided as Appendix 8). As requested by the sector, a document will be produced to share the key results.

This thesis is structured to make the voice of the sector stand out. Many sections begin with quotes from the workshops, to ensure that the voice of the sector has primacy. There was also a conscious choice to place the discussions of literature within each section to link it closely to back to what the participants had to say. This chapter sets the scene, explaining the context within which the research takes place. Chapter Two outlines and discusses the methodology. As is necessary with a case study approach, the third chapter focuses in on the 'case': the Kāpiti Coast District and its community social services sector. Chapter Four is the central part of this work, and gives voice to the participants. The final chapter examines a way forward. The way the thesis is structured displays the constructionist approach taken and promotes layers of interpretation to build understanding of the sector's voice.

One of the triggers for this research was the 2008 recession. There was anecdotal evidence of impacts on the community and those agencies trying to help. The various swings in New Zealand's economic fortunes have impacted and continue to impact on the sector. Spokespeople for the sector report that 'children and young New Zealanders are bearing the brunt of the recession.'¹⁵

Both official statistics and the voices of the sector at a local and national level acknowledge the impact of the recession. At the time of doing this research, rising food and petrol prices across the country had pushed up inflation, with a near six per cent rise in petrol in the March quarter to an 18 month high.¹⁶ The impact of the recession has resulted in a greater call on the resources of the sector nation-wide, including within the Kāpiti Coast District. During that quarter, the Ōtaki Food Bank issued a media release saying that the pantry was nearly bare 'We gave out record numbers of food parcels over the last three months... our plea for help is urgent.'¹⁷ Participants in the study reported that there was a fantastic response to this plea.

Over the period March 2008 to March 2010, there were significant increases in unemployment in the Kāpiti Coast District. Numbers on the unemployment benefit rose from 52 in Ōtaki and 109 for the rest of the District (south) to 212 in Ōtaki and 518 in the south. Youth unemployment was particularly concerning as it rose from two in Ōtaki and 38 in the south, to 50 in Ōtaki and 198 for the south.¹⁸

The Salvation Army publication 'A Road to Recovery' (2010) assessed the state of the nation from a social point of view. While reporting that some New Zealanders were doing well, some were struggling. While the report includes some positive changes, the recession has taken a social toll: national 'unemployment is at a five-year

¹⁵ New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. *Policy Watch 19 April 2010*, 2010,

¹⁶ Dominion Post. *Rising food, petrol prices push up inflation*, 2010,

¹⁷ Ōtaki Food Bank. *Ōtaki Food Bank*, 2010, p.1

¹⁸ Ministry of Social Development. *Unemployment numbers in Kāpiti and Ōtaki*

high, gains over the previous five years in reducing child poverty have probably been lost, and there are signs of a widening income gap between the well paid and the poorly paid'.¹⁹

The workload for the community social services sector around New Zealand has risen as a result of pressures on communities. In March 2010, in Auckland the Salvation Army Community Ministries reported a 'staggering 40% increase' in demand for services, particularly budgeting services, food banks and drug and alcohol rehabilitation, compared to the same time last year.²⁰

The actual economic impact of the recession and its resulting mindset affects the decisions of central and local government and the philanthropic sector about funding to support the services. Local government has had to respond to pressures created by the recession: calls to extend services, political responses to rates rises, and increased costs of borrowing.²¹ Local government social initiatives depend on their ratepayers' ability and willingness to pay, and partnering with other funders including central government. It has become much more difficult to find funding partners.²²

As well as the pressures on the community and government sectors from the recession, social policy changes have also had an impact on the communities, although it is important to remember that economic and policy issues remain interconnected. There has been a philosophical shift, which has generated a roll out of social policy change. This began soon after the election of the National-led government in 2007.

Further information on these changes will be given as they relate to the community social services sector's story. It is the sector's story that is foremost in the thesis and so other sectors are introduced from the point of view of the community social services sector. While acknowledging that the government sectors have a different viewpoint, the purpose of this research is to give primacy to the voice of the community social services sector.

¹⁹ Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit. *A road to recovery*, 2010, p.vi

²⁰ Salvation Army. *News and stories from The Salvation Army*, 2010,

²¹ Key, J. *Speech to Local Government New Zealand*, 2009

²² Philanthropy New Zealand. *Smarter grantmaking in challenging economic times: Insights for foundation leaders*, 2009

2. How: the methodology explored

Having decided that I wanted to hear the voice of the Kāpiti Coast community social services sector, it was crucial to ensure this was done in a respectful and appropriate way that made the most of the unique opportunity created by my position as Social Wellbeing Advisor and my own history in the Kāpiti community. It was necessary to draw upon a number of different approaches to develop the best tools to conduct research in this space, including: case study, action research, strengths and place-based approaches and learning about complexity. This chapter outlines the methodologies used for this research and supports their selection with a discussion of appropriate literature; including literature on case study, strengths and place-based and action research approaches.

When looking at social interactions, case studies are a good approach and are endorsed by a number of academic writers from a range of disciplines. Gillham defines a case as 'a unit of human activity embedded in the real world, (which) can only be studied or understood in its own context, which exists here and now, that merges in with its context so that precise boundaries are difficult to draw'.²³ The magic of human interaction which is created within a community is best understood when examined within that community.

Yin points out that case study research can include a wide range of methods, from document and artefacts research, to interviews and observations.²⁴ The mixture of methods, which is possible within the case study methodology, helps delve more deeply into the topic and makes it possible to test insights from multiple sources. As Denscombe says, case studies provide a spotlight rather than a spectrum.²⁵ Using the multiple methods of data collection, I have put the spotlight on one community - the Kāpiti Coast community social services sector.

For a case study to be possible, clear boundaries are needed.²⁶ The territorial authority area (TLA) provides a useful but not perfect boundary. The boundary is easily recognisable to all levels of actors in this context: the communities, agency workers and local and central government. For this reason and because of the interest of the Kāpiti Coast District Council the TLA or District boundary has been chosen. However, boundaries are problematic for communities within the District as agency, government, Iwi and funder boundaries crisscross the District and extend beyond the District.

The case study approach allows for a process of discovery, which allowed the sector, by way of key informants and the participants themselves, to influence the research throughout the research process. Interpreting the data within its context makes it possible to look for explanations.²⁷ This inductive model supports exploration and is necessary within the real life situation where the participants and the Kāpiti Coast District Council have ongoing relationships.

²³ Gillham, R. *Case study research methods*, 2000, p.1

²⁴ Yin, R. *Case study research*, Sage, 1994, p. 9

²⁵ Denscombe, M. *The good research guide*, 2003, p. 30

²⁶ Denscombe, M. *The good research guide*, 2003, p. 38

²⁷ Gillham, R. *Case study research methods*, 2000, p.2

Case study researchers have been accused of lacking rigour and of being ‘soft’ researchers, but Yin sees this as simply sloppy research, not a fault of the methodology. There has also been criticism of the research as being an unsuitable base from which to draw generalizations. Multiple case studies can avoid this, but even a specific setting, if researched thoroughly, provides information from which to draw possible implications.²⁸ It is hoped that multiple case studies will be done in the future, however, this thesis focuses purely on the Kāpiti Coast. The case study approach allows in-depth exploration of the research topic. Gillham, with whom I agree, still sees that it is possible to develop generalisations to create theoretical propositions even though empirical frequencies can not be determined.²⁹ Another criticism or challenge of case study research is that ‘it can simply take too long and generate massive overly detailed documents.’³⁰ The detail in a story, such as that generated by this study, facilitates understanding and a structured and skilful approach will make the findings as accessible as possible.

Key informants played an important role throughout the development of the research methodology, supporting the reflexive process. I selected people who played strong connector roles in the sector and had extensive experience. They informed my selection of participants for the two workshops which generated the majority of the research data. A comprehensive description of these workshops appears later in this section. The informants either had similar roles to the participants or worked alongside the sector. They did not participate in the workshops. This allowed me to use them as touch stones for the research. They advised and challenged me during the process. They were particularly helpful while the participant group was being selected and to test the workshop programme.

An action research approach has also informed this research. Adopting an action research approach allows the research to be about more than building knowledge. The research becomes orientated towards action.³¹ The action in my research is to create a bridge between the community social services sector and local government (in the first instance), to support them to work together to increase social wellbeing in the District.

The research was also based on strengths-based principles which evolved out of the social work discipline and which sit comfortably with the feminist concern for social change and social justice. Strengths-based principles are widely used in the community social services sector and inform the way their work is done. ‘In the strengths approach, every interaction is based on principles of social justice: respect, transparency; self-determination; the sharing of resources, skills and knowledge; and recognition of people’s own strengths and resources.’³²

²⁸ Gillham, R. *Case study research methods*, 2000, p. 10

²⁹ Gillham, R. *Case study research methods*, 2000, p.2

³⁰ Gillham, R. *Case study research methods*, 2000, p.2

³¹ Reason, P. & Bradbury, H. (Eds.). *Handbook of action research*, 2006,

³² Newly Arrived Youth Support Service. *Solutions focused or strengths based approach: National Forum Handout*, 2010, p. 1

The approach used is in harmony with a recent surge in place-based work.³³ Place-based work is community-led and brings together all sectors to focus on a particular place to improve social wellbeing. Place-based work has much in common with the case study approach, however while generally informed by research it is a very pragmatic approach to working with and for a community. As part of this place-based work there is an increased interest in exploring decision-making from a local and community perspective.

A constructionist approach acknowledges the complexity of intertwining relationships and systems and that there is no simple formula for social change. This research seeks to move towards the hopeful place of 'maybe' as expressed by Eric Young in 'Getting to Maybe'.³⁴ I have resisted the urge to present the findings as the single truth but present them as an interpretation dependent on the time and place and my own understanding. Getting to maybe isn't about certainty. Change continues even while this thesis is being written, and actions by parties involved will in turn generate changes in their responses. Conclusions and recommendations in this thesis will indicate possible ways to improve the way that the community social services sector and the Kāpiti Coast District Council work together but they are only another point along the journey of these relationships. The reflexive process must continue.

The case study and action research approaches adopted were supported by a number of practices. A formal ethics process supported the ethical approach of this research. The research proposal for this research was approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee. All participants were informed about the research and signed consent forms. The ethics documents are attached as appendices.

Two workshops generated most of the live research data. A familiar workshop structure was used to set up spaces which were comfortable for participants to discuss the topic areas. The workshop size of between six and eight was guided by focus group best practice.³⁵ The small size of the group creates opportunities for participants to participate. It also makes it easier to analyse the recordings of the discussions.

To ensure a range of data, it was decided to have two workshops. I sought guidance on whether to have two District-wide workshops, which would allow an opportunity to delve more deeply into the research topic with the same group of participants or one workshop specific to Ōtaki and one for the rest of the District. I received firm direction from the Ōtaki community that they wanted one specific to Ōtaki.

I tested out the ideas and structure of the workshop on the key informants and this proved valuable. In most cases they reinforced ideas that had already been formulated. One recommendation was surprising: the importance of including a participant who held a central government community role in one of the workshops. While I saw this person as a primarily a central government employee, community members saw this person as part of their community and as a significant contributor to the sector. I tested this understanding with others and was reminded of the importance of the community determining their representatives. This person made a very valuable

³³ Inspiring Communities.

³⁴ Westley, F. Zimmerman, B. & Patton, M. *Getting to maybe*, 2007, p. xiv

³⁵ Greenbaum, T. *The handbook for focus group research*. p.4

contribution. As noted already, listening to the community throughout the research process was vital.

Many strategies were used to ensure that the participants felt comfortable, valued and listened to during the workshops. Familiarity with the values of the participants and the shared use in our work of the strengths-based practice and social work methods ensured that the approach to the workshops was respectful. It also ensured that the most was made of this valuable opportunity to hear from the community.

Having experience of workshoping with the sector made setting up the workshops easier. The techniques had been used with success and refined beforehand. The personal relationship with the participants kept the workshops grounded. Key informants supported this process. Getting feedback from multiple sources at all stages ensured that appropriate methods were chosen and that the workshops were set up as appropriately as possible.

Various techniques developed by strengths-based practitioners were used during the research such as the five column approach and scaling.³⁶ The programme design and execution were developed to balance power issues and ensure safety. Ways this was done included: using community venues, carefully explaining the process and being clear about how the material is to be used and by using a co-facilitator. The culture of the sector was taken into account during workshop design. As exhibited in networking forums, the culture is strongly oral, holistic, and largely tolerant of emotion being expressed. The space was designed to encourage oral communication and listening. Instructions were developed for the facilitators which included the researcher and a co-facilitator who is a current strengths-based practitioner and trainer. Food and drinks were provided to ensure the participants' comfort. The programme is appended as Appendix 5.

To ensure that all participants had the opportunity to be heard, multiple ways of generating and recording data were used. The programme moved from large group discussion, to smaller groups, to individual reflection, and then back into the large group. The individual reflection was an exercise which asked the respondents to think of single words or phrases that summed up the most important point. These words were then put up on a board and grouped by the participants in a facilitated exercise. This was a powerful exercise, as very strong themes emerged. This will be seen in Chapter Four: Their Voice.

Participants were asked to fill in background sheets before the workshops. This also provided individual input; the template is appended as Appendix 4. The background sheet included individual profiles, as most participants were known to each other and this material was unlikely to come up during the workshops. While some participants returned these prior to the workshops, approximately half were given to me on the day, and some were completed while waiting for the workshop session to commence. Some wanted to discuss the forms before filling them out and waited until their workshop to do this. Others filled them in at their workshop, due to time pressures. Some participants only partially filled in the background sheet or would only provide them in a hard copy. There was some resistance by one participant to giving personal

³⁶ McCashen, W. *Tools for strengths-based practice*, 2005, pp. 83-105

details, though the reasons for this were not explained. The participants were also asked to sign consent forms prior to participating in the workshops. The consent form encouraged ethical consent and made the terms of their participation clear.

The venues were an important contributor to the success of the workshops. The Paraparaumu workshop was held at the Kāpiti Women’s Centre. It is a welcoming building with a comfortable lounge, a strong community feel and all the facilities required. Interestingly, the majority of participants were male at this workshop and none of them had been to the Centre. They seemed comfortable after some initial hesitancy which arose as men are not welcome during Centre opening hours and these men had not previously been to the Centre. The Centre valued the opportunity to welcome men outside of their normal opening hours and is thanked for their support of this project.

The Ōtaki workshop was held at Taaringaroa. This is a lovely Art Deco building adjacent to Raukawa Marae and used by Raukawa to provide information and support. The view out of the windows is of the Marae Atea and the inside of the lounge has wonderful carvings. There is a strong community feel in this building and all participants had been there many times and felt comfortable. Ngati Raukawa are thanked for the use of this building.

Materials were displayed in the venues as props to spark the discussion. These included large photos of the community and information sheets on the community. The photos were probably not necessary as the participants did not need to be reminded of their community as this was central to their work and never far from their minds, particularly as the venues had such a strong community feel. The participants were however very interested in the demographic profiles and unemployment statistics as they validated their experience and would be useful for their advocacy work.

In summary, a variety of materials was used and generated by the workshop process. Most of these materials are included as appendices. The materials and tools included:

<p>Materials taken into the research space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the background sheets and consent forms which were drafted and distributed with the intention that they be handed in prior to the workshops • posters of local statistics and photos which were placed on the walls of the room used • ground rules and programme for the workshops • Kāpiti Coast Choosing Futures Community Plan 2009 Draft, District Demographics, Statistics, Photos 	<p>Information gathering tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • audio recordings of the workshops • large sheets of paper filled in by sub-groups of the participants • large sheets of paper filled in by the facilitator running that part of the session • post-its (small sticky pieces of paper) filled in during a workshop exercise
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It is important to ensure that the analysis stage of the research is of the highest quality;³⁷ it is a process of both science and creation.³⁸ The analysis was time consuming and challenging. A large amount of data was generated during the research process and recorded in a variety of ways. In order to allow for analysis of the key themes which emerged from the conversations with the research participants the workshops were recorded. This made it possible to listen back to the conversations and confirm the key themes which emerged. This thematic analysis process was facilitated by entering key statements/ideas into an excel table and seeing where there was repeated use of words, phrases, and concepts. This process allowed the identification of tensions. The data could then be explored to find explanations. Added to this, workshop participants were involved in recording their ‘consensus’ decisions on the key challenges facing the sector by writing these on large sheets of paper during the workshops. Individual participants also contributed to analysis of the key themes by writing on postits. Given the research was action driven and about voice, it was important that the facilitation and record keeping processes allowed the participants to confirm the themes by identifying what was important to them. This also gave the participants a stronger role in the research.

Another set of information drawn from the workshops was the descriptions of the participants from the background sheets, including important details such as gender, age, ethnicity, experience which they brought to their work and their roles.

The participants were selected from a subset of the community sector, referred to in this research as the community social services sector. The term refers to those non-profit organisations which focus on providing social support to the community. This means that agencies primarily within other sectors such as education, health or justice which receive direct central government funding were not involved in this research. However, boundaries could not be hard and fast. Kāpiti is a relatively small District with a relatively small number of community social service organisations. Some organisations provide cross-sectoral services; social service and health and/or education. These were not excluded due to their importance in the community and the perception of the community that they are not an arm of central government; even though most receive central government funding. Distinctions at times are very blurred, but all the organisations are non-profit or not-for-profit – terms which are used interchangeably.³⁹

The participants were experienced and passionate people. All have senior paid or unpaid roles in key community social service agencies. They were selected from across the sector, including those working with young, older, disabled, women and Māori. There were 13 participants across the two workshops which spanned 21 organisations. The participants held a range of the roles including: Volunteer, Secretary, Chairperson, Manager, Co-ordinator, Minister, Board member, Governance member, JP, Mentor, Chaplain, Driver, and National Executive member. The information on their background sheets showed that, for the week just prior to the

³⁷ Yin, R. *Case study research*, 2009, p.160

³⁸ Hardy, M. A. & Bryman, A. *Handbook of data analysis*, 2009, p.vii

³⁹ Tennant, M. Sanders, J. O’Brien, M. & Castle, C. *Defining the non-profit sector in new Zealand*, 2006, p.1

workshops, they worked more than 183 paid and 223 unpaid hours; a total of 406 hours. I would argue these numbers understate their contribution as some were on call for additional hours and others on a stipend during that week.

Of the 13 participants, six were male and seven were female. The even gender balance was probably achieved because I targeted senior and experienced participants. The sector is dominated by women,⁴⁰ but less so in the managerial and governance levels. It is also difficult to be specific about the age structure of the group as three participants did not fill in this section. However, again because experience was important to this research, the participants tended to be older. One participant was in the 75 plus age group, four participants in the 65 to 74 age group, two in the 55 to 64 and three in the 45 to 54 group.

The background form asked for the number of years of their relevant experience for their current community social services work. The average years experience was 18. This probably understates their experience as they seemed to define 'relevant' fairly tightly as they mentioned during the workshops experience that they brought to their roles that was not listed in their background forms.

The majority of participants identified as New Zealander, European or Pakeha. Two participants mentioned their Māori ancestry. One identified as Australian. Because of the number who identified as New Zealanders, it is difficult to come to firm conclusions, but the ethnic mix seemed largely representational of the ethnic mix of the District and this will be discussed later.

The decision to become involved in a research workshop appeared to be very dependent on the participant's relationship with the researcher and/or their relationship with the key informant. Participants, first and foremost, came to the research as individuals, rather than representing a particular organisation, and changed 'hats' fairly regularly inside the discussions. Even, when they overtly stated that they spoke for a particular group, some later noticed that they had changed hats '*now I'm wearing another hat*'. It was clear to the facilitators, from the participants' responses, that because the motivation for working in the community is personal, attempting to speak from the point of view of wearing only one hat was not possible. I would say that the participants tend to approach their work in a holistic way, which is highly valued in the group, and this was reflected in their contribution to the workshops.

The most significant challenge was to ensure that the Māori social services sector was represented. In fact, no participants specifically represented these organisations. As noted in the Local Services Mapping Action Plan,⁴¹ kaupapa Māori services are inadequate in the District; very few services exist and they are under pressure. The wider community social services sector does provide services to Māori and has people in paid and unpaid positions who identify as Māori. This is not the same as providing kaupapa Māori services. However, tikanga Māori has had a significant impact on the way the general sector works.⁴² The community social services sector in the District is small; for further information see Chapter Three. The number of kaupapa Māori

⁴⁰ New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Organisations. (2007). NGOIT, 2007, p.2

⁴¹ Kāpiti Coast District Council. *Kāpiti Coast Action Plan 2007*, 2007, p.18

⁴² Tennant, M. Sanders, J. O'Brien, M. & Castle, C. *Defining the non-profit sector in new Zealand*, 2006,

senior workers is even smaller. Although sympathetic, I do not think that those invited were able to prioritise taking part in this research above other demands. As a consequence, this study reflects a general view of the sector and cannot be said to reflect the specifically kaupapa Māori part of the sector.

Interpreting and analysing the volume of data collected was challenging. During transcription it was occasionally difficult to identify some voices from the audio recordings, particularly as the style of the workshops encouraged participation and movement. This risk was mitigated by asking participants to summarise their thoughts on large sheets and the discussions were also documented by the facilitator. Prior to running the workshops, it was identified that there would need to be more than one facilitator. The active nature of the workshops, unlike with focus groups or interviews, meant a second facilitator was needed. The participants split into two groups at times. A second facilitator meant that both groups could be facilitated at the same time. During large group sessions whoever was taking the secondary role could take notes. Having two facilitators supported good listening which was key to this research. Being able to debrief after the workshop sessions was a valuable part of the reflexive process.

Both I and the co-facilitator were experienced in conducting workshops, with a history of work within communities. The second facilitator was from outside the District, which helped provide an alternative view and interpretation. At times, this lack of local knowledge required participants to state explicitly what the rest of us were taking for granted, including the community politics. Having a second facilitator was invaluable and helped mitigate some of the potential challenges of researching as an insider. Her assistance is greatly appreciated and her social work experience was particularly valuable.

In the debriefing sessions after the workshops, a number of points struck the facilitators about the workshops. As facilitators, we expressed admiration for the strengths of the participants and the degree of networking apparent. The participants engaged with the process with enthusiasm; expressing a high level of trust. The level of commitment and emotional investment in the communities by the participants was obvious. The workshops had an easy relaxed style and participants used a conversational style, appearing very comfortable in their groups.

Having a workshop specifically for Ōtaki as well as Paraparaumu was a good decision. From the facilitators' point of view, the two workshops had a different feel and to some extent content. The Ōtaki workshop had a more personal feel, influenced by the workshop group make up, the different culture of that community and fewer ex public servants. The use of a Karakia felt more appropriate in Ōtaki. It is likely that this is because it is more common in that community and the group included more participants who talked about their connection to the Church.

The workshops gave an insight into what is a very complex story of interweaving relationships and roles. This made analysing the large amount of data generated challenging. In writing up their story I have tried to reveal the interweaving threads of the relationships, both inside the sector and reaching out to local and central government. The telling of their story was made easier by the remarkable level of consensus within the workshops - *'Oh that should be at the top' 'Yeah that's right'*.

From this point on, the voice of the participants is brought to the fore – italics make it clear when their voices are being used.

Participants did not want to be identified. There appeared to be two reasons: one arising from a general culture within the sector of humility, and the second from their dependence on funders which they did wish to be seen as criticising. Participants were assured that their individual voices would not be identified. Although every effort has been made to make it difficult for individuals to be identified outside the room, it is not possible to give an assurance that they would be completely unidentifiable. No quotes have been directly attributed to any participant.

There was significant consensus across both workshops which made using a composite voice to report findings appropriate. This technique makes individual voices less identifiable. At times, attention is drawn to the outlier voice as it adds to our understanding, but it is the collective voice which is most helpful and is the focus of the story.

A summary of the initial analysis of the data collected was presented back to the sector in the way that the participants requested, attached as Appendix 8. This was an important part of the reflexive approach and ensured that the developing storyline retold was coherent for the community. It was presented to the three major networking group monthly meetings. There was resounding endorsement from the networking groups when they were asked whether the presentation was accurate. They were also asked if their experience had been overstated by the participants or myself as researcher – there was emphatic denial. They exhibited strong body language when responding, which was quite striking: nodding heads in agreement that it was accurate and shaking them in unison when saying the picture has not been overstated.

3. About Kāpiti: the land, its people and its community social services sector

In keeping with the case study approach, it is important to have an understanding of the context: the Kāpiti Coast District, its communities and the Kāpiti Coast community social services sector.

The Kāpiti Coast District covers 40 kilometres of coastal plain and is located 50 minutes drive north of Wellington, New Zealand. Described by the Kāpiti Coast District Council on their website, the District is ‘a string of pearls spanning Paekākāriki, Raumati, Paraparaumu, Waikanae, Peka Peka, Te Horo and Ōtaki’.⁴³ This topography leads to distinct communities and these perceptions of separateness and uniqueness affect the communities’ responses to social needs. It also leads to lower service provision as individually the communities do not qualify for many services. The topography makes access to services more difficult, both between the communities and travelling outside the District for services.

The estimated population of the Kāpiti Coast District was 48,900 as at 30 June 2009. The Kāpiti Coast population is increasing faster than most places in New Zealand. If the communities were combined together they would almost be considered a city – only marginally smaller than Porirua. However, the various communities see themselves as distinct. The District has a median age of 44.3 years which is noticeably older than the national median age of 35.9 years. While the District is known for its older population, it also has a significant younger population; proportionately not much less than the national average. It has a significant dip in population aged between 20 and 39.⁴⁴ Both the old and the young tend to require more services.⁴⁵ The perception of Kāpiti as a retirement community has often masked the needs of the younger population. However, this older population, particularly the newly retired, provides a great recruiting ground for volunteers for the community social services organisations.⁴⁶

The 2006, Census showed that the Kāpiti Coast District is less ethnically diverse than the country as a whole. At the 2006 census, a very large number of the District’s residents identified themselves as European or as New Zealanders. Māori were close to their national representation (15% nationally.) The Tangata Whenua of the District are: Te Ati Awa ki Whakarongotai, Ngati Toa Rangatira, and Ngati Raukawa including their whānau and hapu. The Asian ethnic group and Pacific Peoples each accounted for just 2% (compared with a national 9% and 7% respectively). Other smaller ethnic groups (Middle Eastern, Latin American, African) were practically non-existent in the District.⁴⁷

Information on the size, scope, and activities of the community social services sector is predominantly found in work done by the various arms of the Ministry of Social Development. In 2006 the Ministry of Social Development conducted a Local

⁴³ Kāpiti Coast District Council. *Our District*, 2010,

⁴⁴ Kāpiti Coast District Council. *Our District*, 2010,

⁴⁵ Kāpiti Health Hub Project, *Meeting the future health needs of Kāpiti*, p.1

⁴⁶ Age Concern. *Volunteers are vital*, 2010,

⁴⁷ Kāpiti Coast District Council. *Our District*, 2010,

Services Mapping exercise in Kāpiti in partnership with the local community sector. This cross-sectoral process was designed to improve the development, planning, delivery and funding of social services to families and communities.⁴⁸ The Kāpiti Local Services Mapping Project identified a number of community strengths:

- overwhelming agreement that community agencies in Kāpiti work well together with very good communication and referral processes between agencies;
- a great deal of local knowledge about current, available services;
- a high level of professional competency; collaboration, co-operation and networking is common within the community, with a range of established networks operating across the district;
- committed, experienced people work within the Kāpiti community;
- there is a great sense of community spirit, with a number of volunteer services, and that Kāpiti is a caring community.⁴⁹

This process also identified five priority areas of concern:

- access to mental health and alcohol and other drug services;
- transport to services;
- support services that strengthen parent and child relationships,
- additional kaupapa Māori services, and
- emergency housing.⁵⁰

There have been varying levels of progress in addressing these concerns. Residents still face challenges in accessing services as many of the support services for Kāpiti are delivered in different parts of the District, or completely outside the District.⁵¹ There are frequent cross-boundary issues as the north and south of the District often source services from different cities. Services are provided to the District from Wellington, Lower Hutt, Porirua, Levin and Palmerston North and for a minority of services even further afield. Those services provided within the District are largely sited in Paraparaumu and Ōtaki.

To increase understanding of the sector, I will talk about the community social services sector generally; continuing to interweave the participants' voice with the secondary data available on the non-profit sector.

3.1 The Community Social Services Sector

People like us

The members of the sector see themselves as belonging to a collective '*people like us*' - of being special in some way, the kind of people who get involved, who help out.

The most accessible and well known literature, which has contributed to the sector reflecting on itself, is the work done by John Hopkins University and the Office for

⁴⁸ Ministry of Social Development. *Kāpiti Coast Community Report 2006*, 2006, p.2

⁴⁹ Ministry of Social Development. *Kāpiti Coast Community Report 2006*, 2006, p.34

⁵⁰ Ministry of Social Development. *Kāpiti Coast Community Report 2006*, 2006, p.48

⁵¹ Ministry of Social Development. *Kāpiti Coast Community Report 2006*, 2006, p.12

the Community and Voluntary Sector. A range of studies, including a bibliography, a comparative perspective and work to define the sector has been undertaken. The non-profit sector is described as being one of the largest in the world in proportional terms. It is also one of the most distinctive, at least for a country with a significant Anglo-Saxon heritage.⁵²

The John Hopkins studies are helpful in understanding the wider sector to which the Kāpiti Coast community social services sector belongs. The characteristics of the non profit organisations are seen as being organised, private, self governing, not profit distributing, and non compulsory.⁵³ In 'Defining the Non-Profit Sector', the John Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project acknowledges that there is no one agreed term; rather a number of terms are commonly used to refer to all or part of it.⁵⁴

Dalley and Tennant observe that New Zealand's voluntary sector has seldom been subject to close historical scrutiny, beyond some variable histories of individual organisations, and biographies of workers in the field.⁵⁵ They find Lord Beveridge's concept of a 'mixed economy of welfare' and 'welfare frontiers' useful in describing the moving frontier of welfare between volunteerism and the state. Voluntarist and statutory agencies were in a constant relationship within the mixed economy with the mix varying over time.⁵⁶

The work done in the sector is carried out by those in both paid and unpaid roles. There is a strong volunteering culture in New Zealand - the census records two thirds of men and women undertaking unpaid work. Those aged between 34 and 75 years are most engaged in voluntary work.⁵⁷ In 2008, 75% of New Zealanders aged 10 and over supported the community and voluntary sector. This support was by giving time or money by ad hoc or committed donating, or by buying products.⁵⁸

The values and beliefs held by the all the sectors (community, central and local government and philanthropic) have influenced the choice of work undertaken and the way the work has been done. Historically, churches have played a significant part and continue to: '*our Churches are a strength in our community*'. They, along with other community organisations, have provided critical appraisal of government policy which has contributed to the inter-sectoral discussions.⁵⁹

An historical perspective gives context to what is happening in Kāpiti, including the values and beliefs brought to the work. In 'Past Judgement', Tennant has worked with Dalley to examine social policy in New Zealand and the importance of the concept of 'judgement'. Attitudes to those being helped have a significant impact on the way help is or is not delivered. That historically, those requiring help have been labelled as

⁵² Sanders, J. O'Brien, M. Tennant, M. Wojciech, S. & Salamon, L. *New Zealand non-profit sector in comparative perspective*, 2008, p. 32

⁵³ Sanders, J. O'Brien, M. Tennant, M. Wojciech, S. & Salamon, L. *New Zealand non-profit sector in comparative perspective*, 2008, p.5

⁵⁴ Tennant, M. Sanders, J. O'Brien, M. & Castle, C. *Defining the non-profit sector*, 2006, p.1

⁵⁵ Dalley, B. & Tennant, M. (Eds.). *Past judgement*, 2004, p. 39

⁵⁶ Dalley, B. & Tennant, M. (Eds.). *Past judgement*, 2004, p.39

⁵⁷ Statistics New Zealand. *Facts for international volunteer day*, 2009, 2010,

⁵⁸ Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector. *How do New Zealanders Give*, 2010

⁵⁹ New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. *Policy Watch 19 April 2010*, 2010

‘loafers’, ‘degenerates’ and ‘brazen-face beggars of the female sex’⁶⁰ draws attention to the beliefs and power relationships that contextualise the sectors. This kind of language with its implicit ‘power over’ continues to be used in different forms. Currently language used to describe beneficiaries also carries with it judgement. A recent example is that of the Minister of Social Development, Paula Bennett – the Dominion Post headline, the ‘Dream’s over Bennett tells unemployed’... for those who cannot show an honest attempt to find work after a year⁶¹ has its echoes in the past. This labelling contributes to the need seen by the community social services sector to advocate for their communities - ‘*I can advocate for them, they come in and they don’t know their entitlements*’.

There are many parts to the story of power in the sector. These include the role of women and Māori. Margaret Tennant observed that historically the voluntary sector was seen as the most appropriate female domain, especially where face-to-face service delivery was involved.⁶² Inherently, this sent a message that it was somehow to be taken less seriously than the other actors in this space. This message has been consistent. The sector is still:

- largely underpaid,
- has a risk of burn out,
- has a deep sense of commitment, and is
- affected by the complexities of working for volunteer governance groups and working alongside unpaid staff.⁶³

The passion and over-work is often referred to as the ‘love factor’;⁶⁴ this was certainly acknowledged by the Kāpiti participants, who spoke about the ‘*generosity of love*’. Paid employees in the community social services sector (including the participants) generally work many more hours than they are paid for, for love, making the line between paid and unpaid work unclear.

In describing the sector, it is important to be aware of the impact of Māori needs as a result of colonialism and the impact of Māori culture on the sector. The John Hopkins comparative research, noted the unique feature of the place of Māori organisations within the sector. The need for greater Māori autonomy and control over the delivery of services to Māori had and has significant impact on the shape of the sector.⁶⁵ There are considerable issues of power within the sector which the organisations within the sector have grappled with over time.

Cultural differences in understanding, as fundamental to the sector as the concept of volunteerism, have challenged the sector. The concept of volunteering is European in origin and does not sit comfortably with Māori culture and values.⁶⁶ Māori, it has been suggested, are Treaty partners, their relationship with the crown in this area, as in many others, tied up with broader constitutional and political issues.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Dalley, B. & Tennant, M. (Eds.). *Past judgement*, 2004, p. 7

⁶¹ Dominion Post. *Dream’s over Bennett tells unemployed*, 2010,

⁶² Tennant, M. *The fabric of welfare*, 2007, p. 16

⁶³ New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Organisations. (2006). *Employment in our sector*, 2006, p.4

⁶⁴ New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Organisations. (2006). *Employment in our sector*, 2006, p.4

⁶⁵ Dalley, B. & Tennant, M. (Eds.). *Past judgement*, 2004, p.53

⁶⁶ Robinson, D. & Williams, T. *Social capital and voluntary activity*, 2001,

⁶⁷ Dalley, B. & Tennant, M. (Eds.). *Past judgement*, 2004, p.54

In the social sector, it is more challenging to engage Iwi as resources are scarce and under strain: the Executive of Te Runanga O Ati Awa Ki Whakarongotai has had struggles with governance, which have negatively impacted on local health and social service delivery.⁶⁸ It was also problematic to engage Raukawa and Ngati Toa as their tribal boundaries cross the District and their operations are largely based out of the area. The Kāpiti Coast District has an identified lack of Kaupapa Māori services highlighted in the Local Services Mapping Project.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ The Observer. *New Executive as inquiry continues*, 2010, p.3

⁶⁹ Ministry of Social Development. *Kāpiti Coast Community Report 2006*, 2006,

4. Their voice

Having talked about how I went about this research and set out the boundaries of the sector and community, I now move on to the themes that emerged during the workshops. During the workshop discussions the major themes that emerged were:

- the impacts of economic and government policy change on the sector and their communities
- the magic of the way they work together to support these communities
- just how important volunteers are to do this work
- the stress and pressure that they are experiencing and their concern for the future, and
- where central and local government fit in to this picture.

As we come to each part of the story, I will punctuate it with direct references from the workshops and, as necessary, draw on existing theoretical and empirical literature to contextualise and provide deeper understanding of the story.

4.1 Change

Nothing has changed much, its just constant change

The trigger for this research was the impact of both change in the economy and in government policy. During the workshops, it became clear that the community social services sector was very aware of the impacts of economic and political changes on themselves and their communities. Changes in the economy were discussed in Chapter One: Setting the Scene. This section gives the participants' views of those changes. The sector's view on the changes in government policy direction is also given in this section and is contextualised by examining the literature.

I had initially intended to deal with the impacts of economic and social policy changes separately, and also to examine their effects on the community and community agencies separately. However, as they see themselves as part of their community they rarely separated out the impacts on themselves, those that use their services and their communities. It was also not possible for participants to separate out the impacts resulting from economic and policy changes as they were being experienced simultaneously. So, this section records what the participants saw in March 2010 and their reflections when looking back to March 2008. It is important to note that these workshops were held prior to the 2010 budget announcements but post the recession, and to sum up with one participant's comment; '*compared to now, 2008 wasn't so bad*'. A continuum exercise was used. Participants were asked to rate the level of social wellbeing in their communities and of their sector twice: in March 2008 and March 2010. They rated social wellbeing on a scale of 1 to 10; 1 being the worst social wellbeing could be and 10 being the best. They physically placed themselves along a line to demonstrate their rating of social wellbeing, which they then explained to each other. On average, ratings moved downwards from a score of 5 for 2008 to 4.3 for 2010. One participant's ratings seemed strongly out of kilter with the others and with this removed, the average changed to 4.8 in 2008, moving down to 3.2 in 2010. This variation emphasises that this scaling is indicative only, but it is clear in the stories that were told that wellbeing noticeably declined overall during the two year period.

In their work, the participants encountered increasing signs of distress: increased unemployment, crime, relationship breakdowns, mental health concerns, drug and alcohol abuse, gambling and debt, and family violence: *'people are struggling more'*. Price rises were affecting all community members and some beneficiaries were experiencing a tightening of their entitlements, resulting in an increased presence of loan sharks and debt: *'debts are a shocker'*. They noted that youth were becoming increasingly disenfranchised by unemployment and that the increased stress this placed on families was leading to youth being thrown out of home. Foodbank use was increasing and as one participant noted: *'we had our first 2000 and something food parcels'*.

In addition to what was happening in their communities, there were impacts on their organisations which included: increased time on compliance and fundraising, the pressure to do more with less, frustration and some anxiety, higher levels of uncertainty and above all increases in workload. The impact of workload is explored further in the section 'Its Hard' in this chapter.

Almost simultaneously, the participants from the community social services sector noted that they were experiencing changes resulting from central government social policy changes. The twin pressures from both the community and from government meant almost continual change.

Participants commented on the impacts of social policy change from the previous Labour-led Government (1999 to 2008) as well as the more recent National-led Government. Some policies from the previous government were still being implemented, showing that it takes time for the implications of policy decisions to filter through the community. The changes from the Labour-led Government were reported on favourably by the participants and included: increased access to subsidised childcare hours, parental leave and the impact of the relatively new non-asset procedure. The increase in Police staffing in Ōtaki was also viewed as being very positive. Although increased staffing has resulted in a higher rate of reported crime, there was strong agreement that the community was gaining confidence in the Police's ability to respond and *'that's a good thing'*. There was also agreement that, at the time of the workshops, there were lower numbers of young people on the streets at night.

The participants reported on the negative impacts of the more recent policy decisions by the National-led Government including: ACE (Adult Community Education) funding cuts, the reduced access to transport (particularly in Ōtaki), reductions of funding by CYF (Child Youth and Family Services) and in the health sector, and high levels of uncertainty across the sector. Funding is also explored further in the section 'Its Hard' later in this chapter.

I realised during the workshops that it was hard to know whether comments made by the participants on policy decisions were influenced by the media. The current issues recently in the media were raised, such as the ACE funding cuts and health changes. It must be noted that some participants may have been involved in drawing media attention to these topics. In addition, the participants may also have been trying to

influence Council during the workshops given that the participants knew that I was employed in by the Council.

The participants' responses confirmed that the community sector was operating in a changing environment, influenced by economic and political change. Swings in policy, including the current pressure to return to core services, were ideologically driven. This means it is important at this point to look at some of the social policy literature examining the political setting for the community and voluntary sector. There has been extensive academic discussion of neo-liberalism and its impact on communities, an example of this is Cheyne, O'Brien and Belgrave.⁷⁰ The storylines of the Kāpiti participants highlight the need to examine the way more market approaches have entrenched a contractual framework which encourages competition instead of collaboration. This philosophy changes the relationships between sectors and has impacted on the not-for-profit sector.⁷¹ In particular, it increases the compliance costs of the sector.

New Zealand has a high level of volunteer engagement, but this research and the wider research notes the strain of administering contracts and the impact of regulation and pressures towards professionalisation. Dalley and Tennant describe the building up of a sense of resentment and lack of trust throughout the 1990s as the model of competition for funding through tendering and contracting processes became established.⁷² In addition state sector reform had distanced policy advisors and government decision-makers from community organisations, while also subjecting these groups to increased operational scrutiny. Work was done post 1999 to repair damage to relationships but it seems that changes occurring since the re-election of a National-led government are damaging the relationships: '*well I saw the change in government and I thought – here we go*'. This is explored further in the section '*Them ... central government*'.

According to the Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisation the sector has responded well to the recession: 'one thing seems clear - our sector in general has handled the downturn well, it has responded to the challenges, proving resilience, innovation, and collaboration really do work.'⁷³ The sector currently monitors its own wellbeing with a 2-month survey run by the New Zealand Council of Social Services. The sector is adapting as always in response to government change, an example is the adaptation to respond to local government restructuring: 'In Auckland, a fledgling body, the Auckland Community Development Alliance, is taking shape, with the aim of ensuring a strong voice for the sector and for communities in all the changes, and we are learning how to communicate and organise on a regional basis.'⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Cheyne, C. O'Brien, M & Belgrave, M. *Social policy in Aotearoa New Zealand*, 2008, p.80

⁷¹ Cheyne, C. O'Brien, M & Belgrave, M. *Social policy in Aotearoa New Zealand*, 2008, p.209

⁷² Dalley, B. & Tennant, M. (Eds.). *Past judgement*, 2004, p. 53

⁷³ New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Organisations. *New year resolution*, 2010,

⁷⁴ New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Organisations. *New year resolution*, 2010,

4.2 How we do it – the magic

Amazing community resources Community mobilization
Don't realise how strong Generosity of love
Generosity of our community I don't like talk fests
Hugely intelligent people who commit an enormous amount of time and energy
I can immediately tap into our network
Make things happen NGOs are pretty resilient
Passion otherwise wouldn't do it Still community minded
We've got a very strong community-minded people
Networking its networking
Strength of our community it's often hidden and quiet
I don't think people realise just how strong and immediate ... tap into the networks

The way that the community social services sector works together to service their community was a dominant theme for the participants at all stages of the research. The sector is proud of the way they work together as a community, of their personal relationships with their colleagues, and of the strong community spirit. This connectedness was seen by participants as allowing the sector to function well and respond to change.

Participants highlighted the importance of networking, trust and relationships. Workshop participants largely knew each other and had developed personal relationships. There was a sense of fun and familiarity in the workshops with joking and personal information shared: *'that's a busy lady over there always running'*; *'there's my sparring partner'*. These relationships are important for getting the work done; an example shows how the relationship facilitates the work: *'I've talked with her, I've met her a few times I'm happy to refer to her'*. The relationships build trust.

The generosity of communities in responding to needs was one facet of this connectedness which was discussed by the workshop participants; particularly in Ōtaki, where participants noted that the survival of vulnerable community members was supported by the *'generosity of our community'*. The Ōtaki group made significantly more comments on the way the community works together and had a strong sense of being part of the Ōtaki community. The participants all see networking as a powerful tool to respond to challenges, noting that *'the strength of our community is often hidden'*. Networking was described as strong and immediate and volunteer and paid workers as having good local knowledge. Participants still see the sector as strong, with a proviso of *'if they can hang in there'*.

There was some discussion about apathy being a problem in Paraparaumu, but this was not a widely held view. There was agreement on the need to enhance and build on the community spirit. This is described as *'often hidden and quiet'*, while acknowledging that *'we've got amazing community resources'*. There was comment about Kāpiti not duplicating services and that workers know each other well and

operate on a personal basis – knowing who they are referring clients to and what they do.

Existing literature supports the participants' stories about the importance of networks, trust and relationships. The personal nature of relationships in the community social services sector is perhaps best understood by exploring the concept of social capital. Interest in the concept of social capital in New Zealand (in particular in the New Zealand government and community sectors) was stimulated through the visit in 1996 of Professor Robert Putnam, who addressed a number of meetings organised by the Institute of Policy Studies.⁷⁵ Putnam describes social capital as 'networks of repeated social interaction which reinforce social norms, especially trust' and that these networks enable people to act together to meet shared objectives effectively.⁷⁶ This certainly was the feeling of research participants: '*It's the way business is done*'.

The literature on social capital has expanded rapidly and although the concept remains somewhat abstract and unsettled, a variety of studies suggest that its effects can be pervasive and potentially important for public policy;⁷⁷ informing the way governments can intervene to improve social wellbeing. The key features of social capital are norms, networks and trust. The Productivity Commission in Canberra,⁷⁸ noted that social capital is contentious, hard to measure, and not always positive. What is broadly agreed is that; social norms and/or social networks are key elements of social capital; and that trust is part of social capital, or at least a close proxy for it. The literature suggests that social capital may generate benefits for society in four main ways:

- 'by reducing transaction costs;
- by facilitating the dissemination of knowledge and innovation;
- by promoting cooperation and/or socially-minded behaviour; and
- through individual benefits and associated social spin-offs.'⁷⁹

The Productivity Commission noted some of the policy ideas that have been aimed at enhancing social capital: OECD efforts to support family structures and parenting practices; education including civics; community participation and volunteering; and urban design and housing.⁸⁰ It also explored the role of government which includes devolving decision making and withdrawing or reasserting/increasing government functions.⁸¹

Network theory also sheds some additional light on the comments that participants make on the interactions between those working in the sector. '*Networking, its networking*': networking is extremely important to the participants. Dollery and Wallis describe these interactions as repeated expression games, successful interaction rituals.⁸² These interactions create trust and hope. Dollery and Wallis see local authorities as having a role in building these networks and providing transformational

⁷⁵ Robinson, D. (Ed.). *Social capital and policy development*, 1997, p.1

⁷⁶ Robinson, D. (Ed.). *Social capital and policy development*, 1997, p.1-2

⁷⁷ Productivity Commission. *Social capital*, 2003, p.iii

⁷⁸ Productivity Commission. *Social capital*, 2003, p.iii

⁷⁹ Productivity Commission. *Social capital*, 2003, p.23

⁸⁰ Productivity Commission. *Social capital*, 2003, p.71-6

⁸¹ Productivity Commission. *Social capital*, 2003, p. 78

⁸² Dollery, B. & Wallis, J. *The political economy of local government*, 2001, p.224

leadership skills to bring these potentially conflicting groups together in the pursuit of a shared vision for the development of their community.⁸³ Trust and relationship building were seen by the Kāpiti community as vital to effective collaboration. These values and skills are strong in the community sector, but infrequently reach out past the sector to those with resources and power to make substantial change.

The importance of greater understanding of the structures and connections is highlighted in academic literature. As Moloney, Smith and Stoker argue, institutional design and the political opportunity structure are critical variables in social capital analysis.⁸⁴ The formal structures, informal relations and political context of the local authority affect the ability of different associations to engage with political elite for a number of reasons, including the level of political and bridging skills held by both government and the community sector. This reinforces the call of the community social services sector for government to listen. It also makes it important to continue to nurture relationships on an ongoing basis and not just sporadically as often happens.

Political science literature on networking also aids understanding. Marsh and Rhodes are concerned with how networks affect policy outcomes. They use the policy network concept to provide a model of interest group intermediation. Networks involve relationships in which resources are exchanged with power dependence as a central feature.⁸⁵ The distribution and type of resources within a network explain the relative power of its members, whether individuals or organisations. The different patterns of resource-dependence explain some of the differences between policy networks. Marsh and Rhodes maintain that 'it is not possible to explain either the membership or the outcomes of policy networks outside the context of a theory of power, or the relation between the state and civil society; networks are characterised by consistent structured privilege which needs to be explained to enable an understanding of policy outcomes.'⁸⁶

This need to bridge between groups forms DeFilippis' critique of social capital. He considers social capital too individualistic, that it overstates the role of non-government organisations and that it sees social capital as primarily normatively good.⁸⁷ He sees the problem as that the development of social capital does not necessarily bridge the community being 'developed' to resources, in fact it can make the community more insular – a risk for tight communities such as those on the Kāpiti Coast. Communities are outcomes, not actors. They are, however, outcomes that affect and constrain future possibilities ... they are also outcomes of a complex set of power-laden relationships – both internally, within the communities, and externally, between actors in the communities and the rest of the world.⁸⁸ This is where bridging becomes essential for communities to access resources.

DeFilippis argues that there is a need to create social networks that allow individuals to realise capital, while simultaneously allowing these networks to realise power

⁸³ Dollery, B. & Wallis, J. *The political economy of local government*, 2001, p.224

⁸⁴ Maloney, W. Smith, & G. Stoker, G. *Social capital and urban governance*, 2000, p.817

⁸⁵ Marsh, D. & Stoker, G. (Eds.). *Theory and methods in political science*, 1995, p.292

⁸⁶ Marsh, D. & Stoker, G. (Eds.). *Theory and methods in political science*, 1995, p.293

⁸⁷ DeFilippis, J. *The myth of social capital in community development*, 2001, p.787

⁸⁸ DeFilippis, J. *The myth of social capital in community development*, 2001, p. 789

needed to attract and control capital. He gives examples of community land trusts, mutual housing associations and microenterprise lending circles.⁸⁹ In other words there is a need to use the social capital model plus other tools. We must use a contextual approach.⁹⁰

The voices of the community social services sector reinforced the need for this bridging and their understanding of the role of power. They were asking to be listened to, with the purpose of obtaining support to do their work. How bridging or linking to resources can occur is a central question for this thesis and listening in the space of the party with less power, in this case the community social services sector, seems to be a key.

Bridging and other forms of social capital which require high trust have been damaged by government policies. In Robinson's⁹¹ collection of essays, Mike Riddell (NZ Council of Christian Social Services) restates the damage done to social capital by the neo-liberal/New Public Management contracting model which has pushed the sector into a service delivery model at the cost of community development. He notes that competitive tendering may appear to produce efficiencies for the funder, but it does so at the cost of social trust and social cohesion and at the cost of a comprehensive and integrated approach to what are often complex and multi-faceted issues.⁹²

Participants supported this with their concern about the impact of the contracting environment and the 'top down' approach on services and relationships. The competitive top down framework imposed on the sector is an example of the power issues which have been discussed in the literature. I would argue that the social capital concept is a useful construct from which to examine the community social services sector, local and central government sector relationships, as long it is used in conjunction with an awareness of the impact of power inequalities.

4.3 Volunteers are vital

Volunteering is a challenge in itself

*Three of us work for, I don't know, about three week's solid doing all the reports
I'm getting older each year and for some reason it's mirrored ... we're not getting
replenished*

*A lot of people that have been volunteering for a long time have died off. The oldies
are all dying*

Sort of people who volunteer ...it's just, it's all the same people

Lack of volunteers for a start ... yes, lack of volunteers

We never have a problem getting volunteers

People keen in volunteering to do the practical work

*There's a passion for certain things, you know, people are involved in voluntary
services, there's a passion there*

Most organisations try to recognise volunteers in some way

Without the [community organisation X] we'd be stuffed

⁸⁹ DeFilippis, J. *The myth of social capital in community development*, 2001, p.801

⁹⁰ Maloney, W. Smith, & G. Stoker, G. *Social capital and urban governance*, 2000, p.816

⁹¹ Robinson, D. (Ed.). *Social capital and policy development*, 1997,

⁹² Robinson, D. (Ed.). *Social capital and policy development*, 1997, p.28

*We put all this effort into youth for them to move out of our community ... they're lost
until perhaps they're fifty or forty or sixty when they come back
Finances making it more difficult to volunteer*

The importance of volunteers and their contribution to their communities was a strong theme: it was often expressed by research participants. The participants noted that *'without [community organisation X] we'd be stuffed'*. This section talks about the demand for volunteers, what volunteering offers and how it needs to adapt to the changing environment.

Understanding volunteering is important in understanding the community social services sector. The workshops occurred in the lead up to the opening of a new Volunteer Centre⁹³ which may have influenced the conversations, although, the establishment of the Kāpiti Volunteer Centre was itself a response to strong community demand for the service.⁹⁴ Discussions about volunteering were very similar in both workshops, with the exception that discussion about Volunteer Kāpiti was limited to the Paraparaumu workshop, probably because that is where it is sited. The breadth of volunteering is supported by the work done by the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector: more than one million New Zealanders are involved in some form of voluntary work in their communities.⁹⁵ Their work enhances communities, culture, the environment, the economy, and individual wellbeing.

This individual gain was discussed in the workshops when the participants talked about their own experience of volunteering and why they chose to volunteer. I *'wanted to get involved'*, *'volunteering is a challenge in itself'*. They all have extensive volunteer experience, many volunteering for significant numbers of hours each week. An example of the time given was the time put into a compliance activity: *'three of us worked for three weeks solid doing reports'*. There was discussion about the increased need for volunteers as the Government pushed more work out into the community. In a government briefing paper to the incoming Minister in 2008, the Minister was advised that the demand for volunteers seems to exceed supply in some organisations and that the nature of volunteering and who volunteers is changing.⁹⁶

The type of work that volunteers do was also seen as important. There seems to be willingness of volunteers to do front line work with clients and practical tasks, with one participant observing that *'we never have a problem getting volunteers'*. However, there are difficulties in filling some volunteer roles, including for sports club roles. What is missing is a pool of those prepared to come on committees and do the increased compliance and fundraising work. As one participant noted *'it's not that exciting, you're writing funding applications'*. Participants noted that the compliance work required by government has increased the work that is generally seen as boring.

There was also deep concern about the ageing volunteer workforce, with the repeated observation that *'our oldies/goodies are dying'*. The research participants noted the importance of encouraging younger volunteers so that the much valued older

⁹³ The Observer. Help link gets thumbs-up

⁹⁴ Kāpiti Coast District Council. Older persons' forums Kāpiti 2008

⁹⁵ Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector. *About volunteering*, 2010

⁹⁶ Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector. *Briefing to the incoming minister*, 2008, p.14

volunteers could retire; stopping the tide of younger residents leaving the Kāpiti District and of finding ways to entice them to stay and contribute.

The groups also noted financial barriers to people volunteering and a need to meet volunteer costs including travel cost to get to the work. Organisations with larger volunteer workforces seemed to have systems in place to support volunteers: well defined roles and roles which clearly fitted into the paid and unpaid work structures.

A related issue is when community members want to donate items rather than time. There was a discussion about giving away or selling items that were donated. While some organisations run shops to fund their work and receive donations for these, some donors prefer to give their donated goods direct to an organisation which will pass on the item to some one in need. There was some cynicism about corporate volunteering; commenting that they were only happy to go where it is nice and comfortable and not, for instance, to clean out an elderly person's house who is unable to care for herself properly. The interface of the sector with the private sector is touched on briefly later.

Having a variety of ways to contribute, including with time, goods or money is important, as not everyone can contribute time. This is acknowledged by government in the work of the Generosity Project which aims to encourage giving and volunteering.⁹⁷

4.4 It's hard – funding, workload, and stress

*a whole lot of funding is being withdrawn
the government philosophy of cutting costs is the difficulty for all organisations, all
ours raise funds
compared to now, 2008 wasn't a bad year
chasing the same money ... dollar is being spread
pressures on the charitable dollar lowering interest rates
we're taking clients with no funding, we're losing \$5000 per month
double whammy for our older peoplecollapse of the financial institutions ...
financial stresses and strains ... no stability, hopping around
I think we really do as much as we can, people like us do*

This section talks about the pressures that the participants were experiencing. In 2010 when the workshops were held, the community social services sector participants identified pressures on two fronts: client numbers were increasing, due to more difficult economic times, at the same time as the agencies were facing funding pressures. Most organisations were finding it more difficult to access funding as 'a whole lot of funding is being withdrawn' and 'the government philosophy of cutting costs is the difficulty for all organisations, all ours raise funds'. In fact, reflecting back made the participants nostalgic: 'compared to now 2008 wasn't a bad year'. Pressures on funding, increased workload and stress were key messages from the workshops. These stressors have an impact on the ability of the sector to put energy in towards creating a bridge between themselves and government.

⁹⁷ Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector. *Briefing to the incoming minister*, 2008, p.18

Gaps in Government funding are impacting on community organisations as they take clients without government funding and this has a number of negative impacts:

'we're losing \$5000 per month'.

'The service has grown significantly but the government funding has not'.

'[We're all] chasing the same money, pathways to partnership, dollar is being spread, ... pressures on the charitable dollar' The organisations are under pressure to 'do more with less' and 'the availability of funds ... changed dramatically over the last twelve months'.

Comments like these received numerous murmurs of agreement. In fact, security of funding is a prime motivator for fear for the future and is explored further within the section: 'We're worried'. When individuals were asked for single words or phrases, funding-related words were a significant number (a full list of these words is set out at the end of this section).

There was concern about '*slashing one funding stream*' and the failure to replace with it from another funding stream. Examples given were ACC sexual abuse counselling and home help provided by the District Health Boards.

There was one exception to the repeated concerns about funding. One organisation represented had been finding it easier at the time to access funding. Funders had become much more sympathetic and in one case even given the organisation more money than it had asked for. This was probably an expression of the funder's understanding of the primacy of food in wellbeing.

Increased work to meet compliance demands and seek new funding is having an affect on the workload of community organisations and the type of work for which the organisation is trying to source volunteer hours (as was discussed earlier). There is a resulting increase in workload on the few who have both the skills and the willingness to volunteer for this work.

The pressure of workload stood out very strongly, in fact, when asked for single words to describe the impact on community organisations, 'workload' and related words were the most frequently given by participants. Participants see themselves as picking up '*government work*' - work which the government either did directly or contracted out to community organisations and now no longer funds. The work load is compounded by work being devolved to NGOs by multiple government departments which do not coordinate with each other. An example given was of additional government departments recommending advice seekers to go to the Citizens Advice Bureau, but not providing training or funding for the Bureau for this service.

The participants were clear, their sector is being asked to do the same service with less funding, or have an increased workload without the budget to support it. The increase in workload is leading to increased '*stress*'; another word repeatedly selected by research participants as describing their sector. This workload was leading to concern: '*I think we really do as much as we can, people like us do, if you know what I mean and I mean its try and get more people involved who will do what we are doing*'.

There is concern about volunteer exhaustion or burnout. '*We've got hugely intelligent people who commit an enormous amount of time and energy but I don't want to burn*

out'. Vibrant Churches and other community organisations which actively support the community become known as places to go for help. This causes strain on these well-known organisations. The same issue was reported for organisations such as the Police. Once confidence has been achieved, people come to them with non-policing issues as well. Effective organisations and people risk burn out.

During the workshop discussions, words such as 'stressful', 'struggle', 'despondent', and 'fear' were used by participants in relation to their feelings about the sector. Those in paid employment were conscious of their dependence on central government noting this 'creates fear'. Some expressed that there was 'a lot less hope'. These statements were balanced by admiration for the community and the way it functions which has already been discussed. One of the most powerful moments in the workshops was the individual exercise – the box below has the words or phrases that the participants selected when asked to reflect about their organisations and communities.

Making do * *Argh!!!* * *Asked for more* * *Client* * *increases* * *Coping mechanisms* * *Finance* * *Finance* * *Finance* \$ * *Funding* * *Funding* * *Funding cuts* * *Funding-loss* * *Generosity of people* * *Increased demand* * *Lack of volunteers* * *Less resources* * *Money* * *Overworked* * *People* * *People* * *Re-focus core services* * *Resolving techniques* * *Security* * *Shortage funds* * *Stress* * *Stress* * *Stress* * *Super Grans* * *Uncertainty* * *WINZ not informing clients* * *Workload* * *Workload* * *Workload* * *Workloads* * *Work-volume*

They had some faith in the resilience of the sector: 'it's going to be hard work but ... the feeling of the people in those organisations is still community-minded. In this area we're got a very strong community-minded people'. There is belief in the resilience of the sector but workshop participants were still clearly concerned for the immediate future of their communities and services.

4.5 We're worried

It worries me Hurting

Impact to come, there is going to be big change in the next year or so ...18 months just after the next election probably

Fear ... employment depends on funding ...not secure at all, we just feel like the money is not going to come through

Helplessness of what people are going through at the moment

You see what's happening ... we know it's going to get worse - the impact

As a community organisation, it hasn't hit us yet and it will probably be next year that it will, we will feel the crunch ... we're still here we're still doing well - its tougher, funding is tougher, we have to cut corners and that sort of thing, but I don't see it as doom and gloom

Unless something improves fairly shortly, there will be a few of them that will go to the wall, and they're services we can't really do without

Volunteers not being replenished ... I feel I'm getting older and it's mirrored in a lot of other people who are part of the group

The stressors discussed in the previous section generated emotional responses often reflected in the words 'hurting' and 'fear'. Fear for the future and worry about their

organisations and their communities was a strong theme in the two workshops. There was concern about the impact of reduced resources and increased demand. This concern was not just about their ability to get the work done but also on how it would affect the way they would work together: *'people were starting to work together, with health, with youth'*.

The perspective of the participants was greatly influenced by their previous experience - they were all old enough and experienced enough to have been in the sector through at least one economic swing and political swing and reflected this by saying: *'here we go again'*. The perception of wellbeing in the sector showed a significant negative swing as mentioned earlier in this thesis.

While seeing the sector as resilient, there was concern about the capacity of the sector to survive, given their expectations that things would get worse.

'Struggling for finance and unless something improves fairly shortly there will be a few of them that will go to the wall and they're services that we can't really do without'.

Some expressed this as helplessness. *'Helplessness of what people are going through at the moment'*.

During the workshops it was clear that the community sector had flattened the impact of what they perceived as negative policy changes by creative responses to keep new services: *'it is so critical once you start these things'*. But they felt that they had a limited ability to continue to do this. More funding and workload pressure could mean losing services. The community services sector is asking for help, but, given the strong sense of a division between "them and us" it will take a strong effort from both sides to make the connection or bridge work.

4.6 Them and us

*We're the poor cousin, poor relations; I've said for years, we're frustrated
They've cut ACC and I see that as a big disadvantage for this community
WINZ won't tell you unless...
Asking us to take them at younger ages
Heard nothing back ... thank you for your report ... slightly less than you had last
year
Don't touch my silo
From our point of view ... staff get so concerned about where their futures are that
you go in there to talk to someone and they're not bloody interested they're more
concerned (about their own jobs)*

As discussed previously, there was a strong sense of a shared community between the participants – a sense of an 'Us'. The concept of the participative storyline is helpful in exploring what participants had to say.⁹⁸ The dominant storyline legitimises who are the key players and thereby assigns who is 'in' and who is 'out'. Using this understanding, participants were selected based on recommendations from the network groups and key informants and using a snowballing technique, as well as

⁹⁸ Hendriks, C. *Participatory storylines and their influence on deliberative forums*, 2005, p.8

using my knowledge of the sector. This allowed the participant group make-up to reflect the community social service sector's view of who were 'in'. This authenticity legitimises the outcomes of the research making the research meaningful to the community and useful to the Council.

The understanding of the context in which people work in the community social service sector, and those whom they help, is influenced by these beliefs and power relationships. As demonstrated in the section 'The Community Social Services Sector - People like us' in the previous chapter, there is a strong perception of a collective 'Us'. What this almost inevitably leads to are various manifestations of 'Them' or 'Other', such as central and local government. These 'others' are discussed in the following sections. There are clear frustrations with the 'other' in all its manifestations. The frustration of not being heard was a common theme in the workshops and in networking forums. Community social service organisations have something to say on behalf of their community.

While the dialogue accentuates the divisions, they are not always as rigid as they would appear. Many volunteers are ex public servants. One interchange about retiring and becoming a volunteer illustrates this:

'There was a collective sigh from clients when I retired' as a public servant and the quick response 'I for one want to dispute that'.

The participants were clear that the swing back towards neo-liberalism is placing strain again on the relationships, which is explored further in the next section 'Them ... central government'.

Again, I found that setting the participants' story lines in existing theorising and empirical literature aided understanding. Wallis and Dollery point out that leadership is important in non-profit organisations.⁹⁹ There is a tension between managing the dependence on government funding and retaining independence to enable advocacy or voice and to determine the sector's own direction. Leadership greatly affects the ability of the sector to advocate and to engage in partnership with all levels of government. Historically, issues of autonomy and the relationship between the state and the sector remain active and critical for the sector'.¹⁰⁰ It is clear from the comments of participants above that these issues remain today. It is optimal that these parties work together to help achieve each other's desired outcomes, but current funding and contractual approaches make this difficult to achieve.¹⁰¹ Tensions have occurred and continue to occur around the distribution of funding and the means of accounting for expenditure.¹⁰² These tensions have been exacerbated by recessions.¹⁰³ The stresses reported at the workshops and the power imbalance undoubtedly make it harder.

⁹⁹ Wallis, J & Dollery, B. *Leadership and economic theories of non-profit organisation*, 2002,

¹⁰⁰ Tennant, M. O'Brien, M. & Sanders, J. *The history of the non-profit sector in New Zealand*, 2008, p.33

¹⁰¹ Sanders, J. O'Brien, M. Tennant, M. Wojciech, S. & Salamon, L. *New Zealand non-profit sector in comparative perspective*, 2008, p. 33

¹⁰² Tennant, M. *The fabric of welfare*, 2007, p.9

¹⁰³ Tennant, M. *The fabric of welfare*, 2007, p.110

While there are disadvantages to the sector's current position, the power to act is celebrated by Fran Hoover, President, NZFVWO here:

'What I noticed most powerfully was the ability we have in this sector to just DO something. To take action. To be self-motivating and direct authors of our own organisational destiny. To see a need and choose to meet it – or not. We certainly don't have the resources to take all the action we'd like, but we don't have to ask anyone's permission'.¹⁰⁴

It was interesting that there was no discussion of a division along cultural lines – Māori Pakeha. To some extent this could be explained by the integration of the sector and a very strong identification of belonging to a place rather than a culture. I do not think this is the only explanation – it may not have been a safe topic to explore in a mixed ethnicity space.

Understanding how the sector sees itself provides clues for both central and local government when they want to engage. As you will see from the following discussions, engagement has been problematic – and it is important to learn from past and present experience.

4.7 Them ... Central Government

Instead of voting for a politician next time, I'm going to vote for who's going to make the real fight for the justice issues in this community
It's about self promotion Top down instead of bottom up
Want politicians to get off their bum and come and look
We get frustrated because we always get left out
No consistency, obviously as governments change - different ideology
It was election year, we were promised all sorts of things
Well I saw the change of government and I thought - here we go
Withdrawing funding from one part of government but not replacing it elsewhere
No consistency ... it's arbitrary... we get different responses
There is not good understanding within the community and among people in the community of the government system and the way the government system works and it raises the need for advocacy groups to be available to represent the interests of citizens
Government policies that sound good when they're presented, but they're not matched by their delivery ... don't really think through to what the consequences are going to be
Role in provision of housing

This section focuses on central government and contextualises the participants' voice within the literature available. There was a strong level of distrust shown at the workshops towards all forms of government – government was definitely 'them' as against 'us'. This was targeted more towards elected politicians than the paid staff. There were levels of suspicion attached to interactions with both local and central government and observations that the system was becoming 'more top down than bottom up'. One participant expressed the hope 'that government stops imposing stuff

¹⁰⁴ New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Organisations. *Federation focus*, 2006, p. 14

on people they don't want'. Work and Income was the sole agency whose staff were specifically referred to. Both workshop groups reported problems with Work and Income staff not informing beneficiaries of their full entitlement. It needs to be noted that this agency has the highest profile in the District.

As there are not many senior representatives of central government in the Kāpiti Coast District, it can be difficult for the Kāpiti Coast community social services sector to influence government policies or their implementation. Few central government services are based in the District; exceptions are Work and Income, Child Youth and Family and Group Special Education. There is a perception expressed at Strengthening Families Frontline Agency Meetings that this leads to a lack of advocacy for the District. On the other hand, Kāpiti is advantaged by being close to the Capital, as invited central government find it easy to visit, or even already live here. But this does not necessarily translate into resources being allocated to the District. It is assumed, that being close to the capital, residents will travel for services. Transport to services is a major issue, for the sector and the community, particularly from Ōtaki.

I assert that the workshops highlight that the sector observed the change of government in 2008 and tried to anticipate the impact of it. Within Kāpiti, undocumented discussions were taking place about the likely impacts of social policy change. This is supported by a New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services commentator, who noted the low rankings within Cabinet of the social services portfolios; with the Social Development Minister Paula Bennett and Housing Minister Phil Heatley ranked 16th and 17th, while Community and Voluntary Sector Minister Tariana Turia is outside Cabinet.¹⁰⁵ Within the political construct of central government there are clearly issues of power as well.

What the workshops illustrate was that power issues are in the way of creating an improved relationship to work on all of these strategies cooperatively. While the government creates the structures and determines the representation of the other party/parties, it inhibits the confidence and buy-in of the sector. This dictates the language with which the community sector responds which has a strong flavour of 'them' and 'us': we will '*fight all the things, we don't let anybody rob us*'. It is not all oppositional as there are clear attempts to nurture the relationship from all sides.

The sector with the most power tries to dictate the rules of engagement. The renewed philosophical swing at central government level towards NPM (new public management) as a guiding principle of state sector governance and the accentuation of neo-liberal values in social and public policy have heightened the impact again on social movement and interest group advocacy. Government has attempted to sideline the 'role of the sector as legitimate carriers of the will of the public'.¹⁰⁶ The work that was done in the late 1990s and early this century which emphasised 'inclusion', 'partnership', 'networks' and 'stakeholder involvement' in policy development which indicated a greater acceptance of interest groups is now being negated by a move towards centralisation. It is pointed out in 'The history of the non-profit sector in New Zealand' that 'many issues for the non-profit sector in Aotearoa New Zealand are

¹⁰⁵ New Zealand Council of Social Services. *Seeking the middle ground*, 2009, p. 3

¹⁰⁶ Grey, S. (2009). *Women politics and protest*, 2009, p.51

deeply grounded in the past, especially the relationship with government'¹⁰⁷ - memories are long.

There are however opportunities for engagement between the sectors which can generate positive outcomes. Roger Blakely and Dianna Suggate from the Department of Internal Affairs in Robinson (Ed.) argue that central government can create conditions in which the development of social capital within communities is either hindered or supported, including: by adjusting the legal framework within which communities operate, and by providing local resourcing.¹⁰⁸ Participants reinforced this with their rejection of the 'top down' approach and call for local resourcing and autonomy.

New Zealand has long been described as a welfare state,¹⁰⁹ and central government is still the major provider of social services. Central government is able to set many of the rules for the other sectors (community, local government and private). It creates the legal framework including for that registering of charities, which in turn supports or reduces the sector's ability to source funding. An interesting recent demonstration of central government power was the de-registration of the New Zealand Council of Women with the Charities Commission due to its advocacy role.¹¹⁰ This kind of action is perceived an attempt to control and a devaluing of the advocacy role. How much the 'network governance' model has focused on the 'management' of the NGO sector, rather than the fostering of open public debate during this period, is questioned by Grey.¹¹¹

There have been numerous policy announcements since the change to a National-led Government in 2008 which have brought with them uncertainty. As discussed by the participants, these policies have resulted in funding being withdrawn or redirected in the social service sector. These changes have been both a response to the recession and motivated by a philosophical shift. A move back to centralisation is evidenced in the regionalisation of organisations, such as the Primary Health Organisations which have disbanded local governance structures. Three significant policy rollouts which affect funding are: Whanau Ora, Kia Tutahi and the Community Response Model.

Hartvelt observed in the Dominion Post, that the Government cut a 'swath through the budgets of health, social development and Maōri affairs to redirect money into a bold Maōri-based welfare initiative' – Whanau Ora.¹¹² He continues, this is 'laudable, but we still know nothing about the nitty-gritty ... [this policy will] ... devolve and redeploy funding from the health, social welfare and Maōri affairs ministries into community organisations.' The Hon. Tariana Turia is quoted as saying 'by building on the strengths of the entire whanau, it will require agencies to work together in better smarter ways to support whanau and families'.¹¹³ Minister of Finance Bill English stated that 'it is clear from results in recent years that traditional approaches

¹⁰⁷ Tennant, M. O'Brien, M. & Sanders, J. *The history of the non-profit sector in New Zealand*, 2008, p.33

¹⁰⁸ Robinson, D. (Ed.). *Social capital and policy development*, 1997, p.80

¹⁰⁹ Sinclair, K. *A history of New Zealand*, 1959,

¹¹⁰ ANGOA. *Community and voluntary sector roundtable agenda 8 September 2010*, 2010,

¹¹¹ Grey, S. (2009). *Women politics and protest*, 2009, p.51

¹¹² Hartvelt, J. *English gives cautious blessing to whanau ora launch*, 2010,

¹¹³ New Zealand Government. *Government welcomes Whanau Ora report 8 April 2010*, 2010,

to helping families in need have not worked well ... and taxpayers are not getting the best value for money'.¹¹⁴ These comments typify the differing priorities of the Māori Party and National and pressures that are being exerted on the sector. These assertions about the way the community social services sector works and its effectiveness are disputed – at a community sector national level and locally by the participants: Kāpiti social services do work together well.

A draft relationship agreement between Government and the Community and Voluntary Sector: *Kia Tutahi – Standing Together*, has been circulated for comment. A series of meetings have been held to discuss its implementation. It is interesting to note that both the agreement and the Whanau Ora policy above have not had transparent processes to appoint their Steering Groups. Nominations were sought from the community or sub sections but decisions were made by Government. This again highlights the recurring theme of power relationships. There is concern in the Kāpiti community sector that these policies are not building on the Labour-led government work to improve the partnership. It is also interesting to note that to date (2010) the role of local government in these policies has been slight to non-existent.

Minister Turia also recently launched the Community Response Model promising communities 'a real say'. 'The new model recognises that local people understand their communities best. This gives them an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and develop local solutions to fit their community's needs.'¹¹⁵ A number of forums will be set up around the country to make recommendations on how Family and Community Services' funding is allocated. How the forum membership and processes are implemented will be of interest to the 'community' – there has been no publicised nomination process at all for the membership.

Due to the power inequality and the ability of central government to dictate the process for resource allocation, it is of little surprise that the community sector and government have very differing views on these policies and its partnership. The Government announced the '2010 Budget as good news for the Services Sector'.¹¹⁶ 'Despite the tight fiscal environment, the high regard the Government has for the community and voluntary sector has been shown by almost all the uncommitted Pathways to Partnership money being kept in the sector'.¹¹⁷ The Community and Voluntary Sector does not appear to have the same faith or indeed to feel valued: the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services observes that the make-up of the Welfare Working Group which will look at benefits, reflects government's business-type interests.¹¹⁸ Comment in *Policy Watch* on the Prime Minister's Statement to Parliament was on the discussion being 'a lot about economic growth and a bit of beneficiary bashing'. An Alternative Working Group has been established with a significantly smaller budget to provide an alternative voice.

There has been much unease about the Relationship Agreement, with ANGOA (Association of Non-Governmental Organisations of Aotearoa) expressing strong

¹¹⁴ New Zealand Government. *Government welcomes Whanau Ora report 8 April 2010*, 2010,

¹¹⁵ Ministry of Social Development. *Community response model*, 2010,

¹¹⁶ Ministry of Social Development. *E-news from Family and Community Services 20 May 2010*, 2010,

¹¹⁷ Ministry of Social Development. *E-news from Family and Community Services 20 May 2010*, 2010,

¹¹⁸ New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. *Policy Watch 19 April 2010*, 2010,

disappointment.¹¹⁹ It is clear that the sector and Government have different priorities and viewpoints.¹²⁰ This has led to a recurrent theme of frustration with government processes, of 'here we go again,' 'déjà vu', and reluctant and cynical engagement as the community sector does not feel heard. It takes significant levels of trust to ensure quality engagement and this has been eroded over time. As supported by this research, personal relationships are required to build trust. It is easier to create good relationships between individuals than sectors. These central government initiatives serve as a back drop to any attempts by local government to engage with the community social services sector.

4.8 Them ... Local Government

*Get off your bum and come and see Ōtaki we get left out
 Mayor - come and sit on the corner ...
 I'd like to see an environment in which some of the divisiveness (is reduced) ... (there
 is more) unity ... less fragmented
 Sympathetic Council ... laughter... pipe dream
 We don't really need the Council; the staff do a good job
 Want council events officer
 Role in youth networking ... in liaising, email Panui*

I now examine the relationship between the community social services sector and local government, the context in which local government operates, and the challenges for relationship building. The community social services and local government sectors want to improve the relationship: in the words of one participant to move to a place 'where divisiveness is reduced'.

There were positive comments about local government putting resources into roles that facilitated communication with the sector. The 'liaison' role, which helps community social services agencies navigate their way through their interactions with the Council, was appreciated by some as the role has 'made life so much simpler for me ... there is someone I can call when I've got an issue that I want council, and that's relatively new to have accessibility [to this kind of help] ... council staff rather than the councillors'. The participants' views on elected officials and staff and their respective roles did not demonstrate a high level of collective understanding of how the local government system works. The workshops show that steps need to be taken to make political processes and bureaucracy more understandable.

There were conflicting opinions, with some reporting positively on local government actions and some being emphatically negative - some saw Council as sympathetic while others didn't. There was a repeated call for Council to know what's going on for the community social services sector, for Council to 'listen to community groups and give them assistance occasionally'.

As a Council staff member I am aware that the view from within Council is quite different, although with some acknowledgement of the challenges. As with central government, politicians and staff in local authorities are generally motivated to work

¹¹⁹ ANGOA. *Community and voluntary sector roundtable discussion notes 4 July, 2010*,

¹²⁰ New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services. *Policy Watch 22 February 2010, 2010*,

to their best for their communities. There were more positive comments about the Council than about central government.

Local government is curiously positioned between the community sector and central government by those who participated in this research. This is evidenced in many ways including; the community social services sector has expectations that local government will advocate on its behalf to central government; central government channels resources through local government and uses local government as a conduit; and local government seeks to fulfil its legal obligations by influencing central government and communicating with the community sector. The community social services sector is frustrated by the difficulties caused by central government service boundaries which make working together and accessing resources more difficult, and has little faith that the community or local government can do anything about it: '*good luck, been tried before*'.

While the community sector sees both levels of government as powerful in relation to itself, there are interesting power dynamics between central and local government. These occur at political and bureaucratic levels – local government does not see itself as powerful in relation to central government. Locally, the Kāpiti Coast District Council has found it hard to engage with central government. This is partly due to the Kāpiti Coast District's needs being overshadowed by Porirua and Levin as evidenced by resource distribution.¹²¹ It is also because there are very few senior central government managers in the District which becomes obvious when the make up the Strengthening Families Local Management Group is examined.

It is helpful to examine the legal context and the literature surrounding local government. Central government provides the legislative framework within which local government operates. The Local Government Act 2002 provides the general framework and powers under which New Zealand's 85 democratically elected and accountable local authorities operate. The purpose of the act as stated 'recognises that local authorities are able to provide community governance at the local level and make a significant contribution to social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being'.¹²² Beyond the Local Government Act, local government responds to and receives direction from central government. A relevant example is when gaps in social services become apparent in the District, the community exerts pressure on local government to fill them. This is evidenced in submissions to the Annual Plan.¹²³

Cheyne observes that during the Labour coalition governments (1999 to 2008) there was a strong commitment to strengthening local government. Local government was given power to promote community wellbeing and broaden the focus from the 'three Rs' rats (public health), rubbish, and roads.¹²⁴ Local authorities are required to address how they work together with other territorial and regional organisations, central government, and nongovernmental organisations to further their Community Outcomes and priorities'.¹²⁵ Cheyne points out that the effectiveness of this engagement has been variable around the country. One factor in its success or

¹²¹ Kāpiti Coast District Council. *Kāpiti Coast Action Plan 2007*, 2007,

¹²² New Zealand Government. *Local government act 2002*, 2010,

¹²³ Kāpiti Coast District Council. *Submissions*, 2009

¹²⁴ Cheyne, C. *Empowerment of local government in New Zealand*, 2008, p.36

¹²⁵ Cheyne, C. *Empowerment of local government in New Zealand*, 2008, p.37

otherwise has been the varying degrees of engagement by various central government agencies.

Tennant observes that, in New Zealand, local government has only come belatedly into social service provision.¹²⁶ It is interesting how little local government is mentioned in this and similar works. With this relatively recent move into social service provision and the speed of change, local government is still grappling with its role and responsibility for social wellbeing. Mike Reid describes these tensions between local government's role in service delivery and its role in governance and leadership – as steering rather than rowing.¹²⁷

As an employee of Local Government New Zealand, Reid's analysis is a welcome addition to a sparse academic discussion of the social role of local government. He points out that the pace of change in the twentieth century is likely to puzzle and intrigue future historians. Defining what is a core service for local government has swung like a pendulum; with a tighter definition in the late 1990s, to a spring time of partnership between central and local government to efforts, to retighten the role with the new National government. Mike Reid observes that a partnership on the terms of one of the partners means that the other has to bend to fit.¹²⁸ It is an interesting echo which, like current voluntary and community sector partnership discussions with central government, questions the nature of a true partnership.

Recently, local government has also been under the central government spotlight and affected by the recession. Central government is signalling policy changes in the role of local government, including changes to the Local Government Act (2002), which is its legal mandate to promote social wellbeing. Throughout 2010 the changes in the structure of Auckland local government are being viewed as a precursor for further changes outside of Auckland.

The Minister of Local Government Rodney Hyde, in his speech to SOLGM (New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers) on 21 June 2010, noted that the last 12 months have been significant for Local Government reform. He reflected on the work of creating a Super City in Auckland: 'With a focus on reducing rate increases, cutting wasteful spending and pet projects, ensuring that Councils focus on core activities and have clear, transparent and accountable decision-making processes.'¹²⁹ In an earlier speech entitled 'Illuminating local government – a brighter future for commercial ratepayers',¹³⁰ he expresses his pride at reducing inefficient regulation and reducing costs. It is interesting that this portfolio has been given to a Minister outside Cabinet who is leader of the ACT Party, recognised as the most right wing party in parliament. There is a strong business focus to his work, underpinned by neo-liberal ideology.

There has been much discussion about the potential impacts of this change in role and some opposition. This is summarised in the SOLGM Submission on the Local Government Amendment Bill. SOLGM asserts that there is no systematic evidence

¹²⁶ Tennant, M. *The fabric of welfare*, 2007, p.16

¹²⁷ Drage, J. (Ed.). *Empowering Communities*, 2002, p.307

¹²⁸ Drage, J. (Ed.). *Empowering Communities*, 2002, p.336

¹²⁹ Hyde, R. *Speech to 2010 Local Government Chief Executives' Forum*, 2010,

¹³⁰ Hyde, R. *Illuminating local government*, 2009,

that the range of local government activity has expanded since 2002. Over the past ten years, key local government input costs have increased about fifty percent faster than the rate of inflation. While there are areas of agreement between SOLGM and the Government on removing unnecessary operational detail on the long term plan, SOLGM asserts that the Bill is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of why rates are increasing. SOLGM opposes the 'Core Services Clause' which is unsupported by anything other than anecdote and philosophical 'world view'.¹³¹

The Kāpiti Coast District Council also submitted on the Bill, expressing its deep concern at the short time period set aside for submission in an extremely busy time of the year. The Council stated that Councils are responsible to their communities and should be free to make decisions affecting them in a form that is appropriate to their different circumstances. The Council further stated that it believes that a high level of informed and constructive community engagement with decision-making can only strengthen communities and democratic institutions. While the Council welcomed some of the more technical changes suggested, it considered that there are a number of significant changes which signal a reduced emphasis on and respect for local democracy. The change seen as most likely to impact on the community social services sector is the clause defining core services, which the Kāpiti Coast District Council asked be removed from the Bill.¹³²

A proponent of place-based work, Reid in Robinson (Ed.) points out the importance of the 'local' nature of social capital – it is built up in neighbourhoods and by a sense of community identity. Local government, itself 'local', is ideally placed and has a significant role to play in helping generate social capital. He sees local government, as distinguished from government departments, by its comprehensive nature and as 'government' at a local level, by its multidimensional character. While all councils share a similar 'core' of activities, the range and importance given to each depends on community preference and desire, with resulting diversity and difference.¹³³ This has a strong affinity to the community's perspective, which does not generally compartmentalise. He notes the fragmentation of government-funded services and the need to achieve greater collaboration at a community level. This is echoed in the participants' frustrations with boundary issues, desire for leadership from the council and less divisiveness. He discusses the importance of community governance, leadership and empowerment, issues which have resonance in the community sector.

Reid refers to one of the principles within the Royal Commission on Social Policy of subsidiarity 'no organisation should be bigger than necessary, and nothing should be done by a larger and higher social unit that can be done effectively by a lower and smaller unit' (April report, Vol.11, p806).¹³⁴ It is important to note the swing towards a more centralist philosophy apparent in the creation of larger 'local' authorities with its establishment of the Auckland Super City. These are significant power issues which relate to self-determination.

¹³¹ Society of Local Government Managers. *Local Government Act 2002 Amendment Bill Submission June 2010*, 2010,

¹³² Kāpiti Coast District Council. *Submission – Local government 2002 Amendment Bill*, 2010,

¹³³ Robinson, D. (Ed.). *Social capital and policy development*, 1997, p.109-10

¹³⁴ Robinson, D. (Ed.). *Social capital and policy development*, 1997, p.117

Wallis and Dollery have similar views. They see local government as ‘an area-specific resource’ that can take on the role of an ‘enabling authority ... that can open up political opportunity structure and establish relations of trust with previously excluded groups and organisations in order to positively contribute to the formation of social capital with their communities’.¹³⁵ They encourage local government to avoid treating the community social services sector as just a service provider and recognise the distinctiveness of the community social services sector, including its voluntary nature, membership structures, the freedom of these associations and their primary accountability to their own members rather than purchasing contractually specified outputs from the voluntary organisations concerned.¹³⁶ The structure and placement of local government provides opportunities to work with the community social services sector. These writers identify the opportunity that local government has to make change. This research has given the Kāpiti Coast community social services sector an opportunity to highlight some work that needs doing. This makes it necessary to explore some of the constraints on local government’s ability to respond.

Cheyne points out that the empowerment of local authorities has been a ‘double edged sword’¹³⁷ for local government in New Zealand. Tight fiscal settings and under-investment in public infrastructure, when combined with raised public expectations resulting from the Community Outcomes process, have made it very uncomfortable. These raised expectations and financial constraint make it challenging for local government to respond to the needs of the community and the community social services sector. Unrealistic expectations can lead to frustration in the relationship between local government and the community sector.

There are also challenges for local government which result from differing cultures. The dominant local government culture is masculine and Pakeha which makes it challenging to engage with Maōri and with the predominantly feminine culture of the community social services sector.

Ross discusses the difficulties for Maōri on the Kāpiti Coast. The ART participants (the three local Kāpiti Coast District Iwi: Te Ati Awa Ki Whakarongotai, Raukawa and Ngati Toa Ki Rangitira) acknowledge the recognisable structures in place that do facilitate the consultation process,¹³⁸ which include Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti, and Aratahi at the regional level, but note that they tend to be at the one off consultation process. Ross’s work is of particular interest because this kind of academic critique of local government is rare and his work was specific to the region surrounding the case study. Te Whakaminenga has recently celebrated its 10 year anniversary¹³⁹ and is in the process of working through an agreed work programme which includes joint projects such as the Marae restoration. These projects have promoted goodwill between the parties in a relationship which has fluctuated during its existence.

While Iwi have only been peripherally involved in this research to this point, partially due to their capacity to become involved, they are still a key actor in this space and attempts should be made to include them in further work.

¹³⁵ Wallis, J & Dollery, B. *Local government capacity and social capital*, 2002, p.12

¹³⁶ Wallis, J & Dollery, B. *Local government capacity and social capital*, 2002, p.12

¹³⁷ Cheyne, C. *Empowerment of local government in New Zealand*, 2008, p.39

¹³⁸ Ross, M. *Local authority consultation with Maōri*, 2007, p. 66

¹³⁹ Mitchell, S. & J. The history of Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti

Drage discusses the involvement of women in local government. This is of interest as women in strategic roles often provide a bridge to the community social services sector. In the case of elected members, Drage notes that the proportion of women dropped to 29 per cent in 2007. There has however been a 52% increase in women in management positions over the 10 year period to 2006. These tend to be at the lower levels as only four of the 85 local authorities had a woman Chief Executive.¹⁴⁰ She points out that career structures in New Zealand's local governments have been dominated by engineers and financial accountants and these, as well as the Chief Executive, were still seen as male jobs'.¹⁴¹

This culture becomes important for inter-sectoral relationships as research has found that women city managers are more likely to incorporate citizen input, facilitate communication, and encourage citizens to be a part of the decision-making process.¹⁴²

The prioritisation of the three Rs by both central and local government, with the vast majority of local government budgets being directed at these functions, has put resourcing for the 'softer' activities under pressure. These resourcing decisions are made within a culture which is dominated by largely masculine occupations such as engineering and accounting. These occupations also have very different communication styles which hamper communication with the community sector. It is helpful to be mindful of this masculine culture in comparison to the largely feminine community social services sector culture.

Power is a significant factor in how all the parties see each other. In exploring the role of local government in building social capital, Warner endorses the need for local government to share power; it must share autonomy with citizens, shifting its emphasis from controller, regulator and provider to new roles as catalyst, convener and facilitator. Participatory management represents a major organisational innovation for hierarchical, professionalised government structures and non-profit community organisations may play key roles in facilitating new collaborative community-government partnerships.¹⁴³ The opportunities that can occur through effective work between the community social services sector and local government are exciting. The community social services sector is expert at working within and for the community and in building social capital within the community.

Inside the Kāpiti Coast District, the community social services sector lacks some of the skills, knowledge and opportunity to bridge outside the sector to effectively access resources apart from those needed immediately for clients. This is largely due to the fact that the community organisations are small and focussed on the front line. The Kāpiti Coast District Council is also relatively small and the Social Wellbeing Team newly formed. The resources put into this role by local government are influenced by the rate take of the Council which is determined by the size of the population and business activity. It is worth noting that the Kāpiti Coast is a district rather than a city and there is a relatively low business rate take.¹⁴⁴ Both sectors face constraints.

¹⁴⁰ Drage, J. *Women and local government, 2009*, p.161-2

¹⁴¹ Drage, J. *Women and local government, 2009*, p.173

¹⁴² Drage, J. *Women and local government, 2009*, p.175-6

¹⁴³ Warner, M. *Building social capital*, 2001, p.189

¹⁴⁴ Kāpiti Coast District Council. Annual plan 2010/2011, 2010, p.17

Effective partnering with the local authority expands the political opportunity structure – the ability to mobilise resources external to the sector. The political context is key and in this case it is important to note that, in general, the Kāpiti Coast District is well known for being politically active. There were over 4000 submissions to the recent Land Transport Agency consultation on the routing of the Road of National Significance through Kāpiti (note this is nearly one for every ten people in Kāpiti). The Kāpiti Coast District Council actively engages with the community; the most recent Long Term Council Community Plan process resulted in over 1000 submissions. Relative to other communities, there is an expectation within the community at large of engagement, and that this engagement will make a difference. Tarrow argues that this perception of opportunity is important.¹⁴⁵

This work explores effective ways for the Council to support the community social services sector. Around the country, the local government and the community social services sectors can and do work together to influence central government. Both sectors see themselves as voices for the community. Both work on influencing social policy and therefore to improving social wellbeing. One example can be seen in the Citizens Advice Bureaux Annual Report ‘Part of our responsiveness to community need is exerting a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally’. Around the country, Bureaux are generally housed by local government and/or, as in Kāpiti, have a contract with their local authority.

The 2009 NZCOSS Report into Local Body Relationships¹⁴⁶ documented a wide range of relationships between Councils of Social Services and local authorities. It reported that a key factor in the success of Community Outcomes processes is the presence of local authority community development staff and elected members who recognise and support the contribution of the community and voluntary sector. The engagement processes and resources of local authorities are a key determinant of the success of their responses to community-driven processes.

The size and resourcing of the Councils have an impact on the tools available to them. The Ashburton District Council, in partnership with ASHCOSS (the Ashburton Council of Social Services) developed a survey project to get a ‘finger on the pulse’ regarding the effects of the declining economic climate.¹⁴⁷ The survey documented the increase in demand for services and resulting pressure on social services. The survey was done quarterly starting in July 2009, initially with good levels of cooperation and input from the sector. In June 2010, an email advised that the survey would discontinue as the low response rate no longer warranted the work that went into producing the report and running the survey.¹⁴⁸ This experience illustrates the difficulty of researching in and working with a sector under strain.

¹⁴⁵ Tarrow, S. *Power in movement second edition*, 1998,

¹⁴⁶ New Zealand Council of Social Services. *Report into Local Body Relationships*, 2009,

¹⁴⁷ Scott, J. *Ashburton Social Sector Project Brief*, 2009,

¹⁴⁸ Scott, J. *Taking the Pulse*, 2010,

Porirua City Council (adjacent to the Kāpiti Coast District Council) took a snapshot of how community organisations in Porirua City were faring in 2009.¹⁴⁹ It had a particular interest in the influence of the economic climate and also attempted to capture the impacts of government policy, carefully noting in its purpose that it was not intended to be a political statement.¹⁵⁰ This statement draws attention to the role of a local authority as spokesperson for a community which can be a political minefield. The stock-take found that both the economic climate and government policy changes were having an impact on the city's organisations. It noted that these organisations provide the 'social infrastructure' that supports residents and businesses in times of change and shrinking resources.¹⁵¹

A third example is a conference held on the North Shore in Auckland called 'Passing Go'. It explored the potential effects of local government reform and sought to contribute to the debate regarding the role of local government, community agencies and those working with social issues in the region during a time of uncertainty.¹⁵² The conference programme referenced the work of the Royal Commission on Social Policy, the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector, Ministry of Social Development and researchers.

The Kāpiti Coast District Council is interested in working with the community social services sector to respond to change. Support for this research is part of their response. Creating safe spaces to communicate and build relationships is possible – I was greatly encouraged when a participant said '*I've never been a scribe before this is my first time ever*' - the participant felt safe enough to take a risk.

Them – the others, the philanthropic sector and the private sector

There are another couple of actors in this space who need to be acknowledged but are not the focus of this work. They are the philanthropic and private sectors.

Most funders have had their income reduced and had to rethink their approach to funding the community social services sector. Philanthropy New Zealand (PNZ) has encouraged funders to be creative in the ways that they support the community. PNZ wants to influence the funders to maintain their support for recipients despite the economic pressures that they are experiencing as a result of the recession, and to explore creative ways of continuing their support in these difficult times.¹⁵³

Philanthropic organisations publish their funds distribution at least annually. It is difficult to be clear about the level of funding coming into the District as a significant proportion of funds goes to national and regional organisations. The impacts of funders are not always positive; a Social Impact Statement¹⁵⁴ on class 4 gambling

¹⁴⁹ Porirua Porirua City Council. *Porirua City Council Community Organisations Stocktake August 2009*, 2009,

¹⁵⁰ Porirua City Council. *Porirua City Council Community Organisations Stocktake August 2009*, 2009, p.2

¹⁵¹ Porirua City Council. *Porirua City Council Community Organisations Stocktake August 2009*, 2009, p.2

¹⁵² North Shore City Council. *Conference programme Passing Go*, 2010,

¹⁵³ Philanthropy New Zealand. *Smarter grantmaking in challenging economic times: Insights for foundation leaders*, 2009

¹⁵⁴ Kāpiti Coast District Council adoption of gambling policy 2007

(pokie machine gambling) which provides community funding observes that the impact of problem gambling is likely to be significant in lower socio-economic areas such as Ōtaki.

It is likely that the Kāpiti Coast District is receiving less than the national average of the funding returned to the District. In 2009 the Department of Internal Affairs approached the Council and acknowledged that the District was not receiving its share and wanted to improve the number of good quality applications it received.

There is often quite a strong interface between the private and community sectors. The private sector is a potential source of funds. It also frequently operates in the same space as the community sector: private companies provide many social services, including disability equipment and advice, medical services, and elderly care. These companies can be run from similar motivations to those of the community sector and at times work collaboratively with the sector but are businesses and as such operate with a fundamentally different driver – profit.

5. A Way Forward

Given the complex environment in which the sectors interact, it is time to look at what would help them work together better. This section makes suggestions about the way forward drawing on the strengths of the sectors, whilst acknowledging the challenges of working in this environment. In keeping with the constructionist approach suggestions are tentative rather than definitive; they are about 'getting to maybe'.¹⁵⁵

The participants made suggestions about what would be helpful actions by local and central government. Some suggestions were made during general discussions and some when the participants' attention was directed to the topic. Surprisingly, there were not many suggestions of what the council should do, and of those suggestions made there was little cohesion. Their focus was very much within their own sector and on their communities. They also did not often separately comment on central and local government – 'government' tended to be conflated. Suggestions made for the way ahead are tentative, which is as it should be for a reflexive process which acknowledges the complexity of this research space. I have focused on learning for local government, although I suggest that most of this learning is transferable to central government.

5.1 What would help

Listening
Leadership
Liaison
Network facilitation
Volunteers
Less compliance costs
Stop imposing stuff on people they don't want
Advocacy

Participants made it very clear that both local and central government should listen to the sector. To do this, they expected to see elected members of local government (including the Mayor) more often, out of campaign mode. They would like these politicians to come to their spaces such as to networking meetings, to 'front up'. But more than just fronting up, the sector would like local government to act as a result of this listening. It would be interesting to explore what actions by elected members would be needed to demonstrate that listening had been achieved: i.e. not just listening, but hearing.

They saw local government as having a role in facilitating, networking, advocating for their needs, and helping build on the positive community spirit; roles that would strengthen local knowledge and networking. They wanted leadership, particularly on infrastructure issues, and wanted action in particular '*less divisiveness ... we don't [want to] find ourselves fighting over water, roading, and swimming pools ... realistic strategic vision*'. As the participants live in the Kāpiti District, they were not just

¹⁵⁵ Westley, F. Zimmerman, B. & Patton, M. *Getting to maybe*, 2007, p. xiv

commenting as community workers but also as residents, on the way their own District should be for them and their families to live in. This meant that when reflecting, they also understood that any monies spent would cost them and their clients as rate payers. There seemed to be a closer and more immediate link in participants' minds between paying rates and what services were provided rather than that between the level of taxation and central government services, possibly because local government spending seems more visible

The participants see all levels of government as potential funders of the services that they identify as necessary. They wanted the Council's support to encourage volunteering, and to encourage like-minded organisations to work together more closely and to work smarter. Ideas such as having tax-breaks for volunteers (although it was noted that this could be problematic) and Work and Income providing support to enable people to volunteer were discussed.

At this point it is necessary to draw attention to the barriers that hinder working together which became clearer during this research. These barriers are considerable and provide an explanation about why the relationship is problematic. Workload, stress, and reducing resources increase tension. Both sectors have limited control over funding decisions and social policy. Currently, there are limited interaction opportunities between the sectors and also limited spare capacity to engage. There are cultural differences within and between the sectors, including the different community and bureaucratic approaches. There are bureaucratic constraints on transparency and willingness to share power, and significant power imbalances. In addition, there are many distractions along the way when other events or priorities intrude, with often differing aims and motivations, including political ones to navigate.

The workshops showed that work needs to be done to increase understanding and surmount these barriers: to create the bridge which will enable the sectors to work together more effectively. This research is only one step in this journey. What it has demonstrated is that listening to the sector on its own terms is greeted with enthusiasm and is a powerful tool.

Understanding the community social services sector's relationship and engagement style has provided clues as to how to engage and make the most of the working relationship. Given the power imbalance and the relationship history, the onus is on the party with more power to make adjustments. I suggest that it is for the Council to make the bigger shift towards the community social services sector and open this dialogue. This would also be a tangible expression of the sector's importance to the District's wellbeing. This research has been a step on the way. The next step is sharing this learning with the Council at both political and staffing levels and beginning the work on interpreting how Council can respond.

I suggest that the Council can then approach the community social services sector to work out the best way to continue the dialogue, including asking the sector how the Council can continue to listen and demonstrate that it is listening and how the Council can help. From the viewpoint of someone within the local government sector, there was a real range in the levels of understanding within the community social services sector of the way that local and central government operates. While some participants had strong experience, most had little understanding; this included the roles and

constraints of the political and bureaucratic arms of the sector. This contributed to the frustration expressed by the participants. To build understanding, the Council could be more transparent about its processes and share its challenges.

The relationship between the community social service sector and the Kāpiti Coast District Council can enable and build capacity in the community. The community social services sector can help the Council communicate with the most vulnerable in the communities. The community sector gives legitimacy to the voice of the Council, which the Council can then use to advocate for the community and its social wellbeing. The passion, commitment, low turnover, powerful networks, and personal approach of the community sector are powerful tools.

The iterative and collaborative process needs to be continued. The three major networking groups in the community will continue to prove helpful by providing input and a forum for discussion. There are real opportunities for local government to work with the community social services sector towards shared goals. The sectors can work together to promote the leadership and community cohesion that the community social services sector was asking for. Together, they can improve advocacy for their communities by leveraging off the local government connects to central government. This bridge can be used to secure funding in a more strategic and effective way. Working together could reduce compliance costs which have become such a burden on the stretched community social services sector workforce. The sectors can also work together to strengthen volunteering which is so vital for the District's wellbeing. In addition, local government can strengthen network facilitation, identifying the needs in consultation with the community social services sector. This networking provides the oil to promote collaboration and is needed for both sectors to work well.

Within this thesis, I have drawn attention to the strengths and opportunities available to the Kāpiti Coast community social services sector and the Kāpiti Coast District Council to work together better, whilst acknowledging the challenges. Both sectors have a place-based focus and are passionate about their communities. This work has explored the relationships between the sectors within the wider theoretical and national context and has identified some of the barriers to building effective relationships. The research has demonstrated the power of listening.

Listening has proved a very effective tool and with good will on both sides great work can be achieved. I wanted to leave the final word to a participant...

I just wondered if I could say thank you for listening and 'cause you know we are a bit passionate up here and we've appreciated your ability to be part of us for a little while and give us the opportunity to speak our minds 'cause that's not easy to do in a sensitive way.

Appendices:

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HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Application for Approval of Research Projects *

Nature of Proposed Research:-

- (a) Staff Research N
- (b) Student Research Y Degree Masters of NZ Studies.
Course Code NZST512.

Project Title: - Case Study: The impact of economic and policy changes on community social service agencies in the Kāpiti Coast District.

Investigators: -

- (a) Principal Investigator

Name	Samantha Hutcheson
Email address	hutchesons@paradise.net.nz
School/Dept/Group	Stout Research Centre
Any Professional Code of Ethics to be followed (Name)	NA

- (b) Other Researchers Name Position

NA

- (c) Supervisor (in the case of student research projects)

Sandra Grey, School of Social and Cultural Studies

Proposed Starting Date 18 January 2010

Proposed Date of Completion 25 October 2010

Proposed Source of Funding Kāpiti Coast District Council. The involvement and the support of the Council will be made very clear to participants. The Council will support the project by meeting the costs of the venue, food, stationery and promotion. I am currently an employee of the Kāpiti Coast District Council in their Social Wellbeing Group. Participants know me in this role. While there are benefits in this double research and work role; such as making the selection of participants easier and easier access to local government resources, it is possible that participants may feel constrained. This tension of being both in a research and work role will need to be managed carefully; strategies to manage this are outlined below.

*** Please write legibly or type if possible. A copy of this document can be printed from the WWW at <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/administrative/hec>**

Briefly Outline:

(a) The Objectives of the Project

This study explores the following:

4. What is the impact of recent national economic and social policy changes on community social service agencies?
5. How can the Kāpiti Coast District Council and community social service agencies work together to respond to these changes?
6. From a local government perspective what possible forms of non-financial support could be offered?

(b) Method of Data Collection

This is a piece of action research using a blend of focus group and deliberative democracy techniques. Two focus group type workshops will be held for participants to share their experience of the impacts of economic and policy changes on the social agency sector and thoughts on how the Kāpiti Coast District Council and community social service agencies could work together. The sessions will be audio recorded and a range of written techniques used to record data. Follow up questions may be asked to clarify details from the workshop sessions.

(c) The Benefits and Scientific Value of the Project

This research will increase knowledge of the impacts and stresses upon community social service agencies during this period of change. There have been significant changes in policy direction from central government which have coincided with major changes in the economic environment and created change in the funding environment for community social service agencies. These agencies are doubly impacted, as they are experiencing these changes at the same time as their clients. The findings will be used to enable the Kāpiti Coast District Council to better support the sector in non-financial ways and may provide a blueprint for others to do so. Given the amount of change being experienced by the community social service sector and the limited resources available, it is important for the Kāpiti Coast District Council to hear from the experts in the sector. It is also important that this information is shared within the community social service and local government sectors.

(d) Characteristics of the Participants

Employees or Governance Members of community social service agencies in Kāpiti

(e) Method of Recruitment

Members will be selected by their role as a senior member of key community social service agencies. Care will be taken to ensure that the group reflects the breadth of agencies in the District i.e. working with women, Māori, young, elderly. Each workshop will contain no more than 8 participants.

(f) Payments that are to be made/expenses to be reimbursed to participants

No payment will be made for their time; however a \$20 petrol voucher will be offered to cover transport costs for those traveling from outside the immediate area.

(g) Other assistance (e.g. meals, transport) that is to be given to participants

Participants will be offered a light meal and coffee/tea.

(h) Special hazards and/or inconvenience (including deception) that participants will encounter

Participants are likely to be very willing to take part as the research topic is of great concern to them. There may be a tendency to withhold or exaggerate information as

they already know the researcher in a work context. This risk will be managed by careful facilitation; a co-facilitator will be required. As participants know each other, there will be some natural peer moderation. A range of different opportunities will be offered to provide data, as all participants will be well known to each other and some participants may feel constrained by the presence of other participants.

(i) How informed consent is to be obtained (Include a copy of the consent form and information sheet that is to be used.) (See paragraphs 4.3.1(g), 5.2, 5.5 and 5.6.1 of the guidelines). If written consent is not to be obtained, please explain why

Participants will receive an invitation outlining the process and purpose of the research, and their rights. They will be advised that the aggregated materials will be used to inform the Kāpiti Coast District Council, the community social service and local government sectors as appropriate and that they may be used for other publications.

(j) State whether the consent is for the collection of data, attribution of opinions or information, release of data to others, or use for particular purposes

The consent is for the collection of data and its use in a number of forms:

- an academic paper;
- a summary document;
- presentations to the social service and local government sectors; and
- it may also form the basis of further academic writings such as for journal publications or conference papers.

These documents will be available for use by the Kāpiti Coast District Council to inform its support for the sector and also by the wider local government and social agency sectors to increase knowledge and encourage good practice in support of community social wellbeing.

(k) Whether the research will be conducted on an anonymous basis. If not, state how issues of confidentiality of participants are to be ensured if this is intended. (See paragraph 4.3.1(e) of the guidelines) (e.g. who will listen to tapes, see questionnaires or have access to data)

This research will be neither anonymous, nor confidential. Although participants will not be named in the various written documents, they are well known to each other and the community. Informed consent will be obtained through a signed consent form (attached). Themes will be identified in the analysis and quotes will be used, but these will not be attributed to individuals by name. Individuals are participating as representatives of their agencies and personal information is not being requested. The Kāpiti Coast District is a small community and it will be relatively easy for those

within the community social service sector to attribute comments. While participants are being selected as representatives of an agency, participants are welcome to give both organisational and personal views and specify which they are providing if they wish to. This will be explained at beginning of the workshop. Tapes will be listened to by the researcher and supervisor only. Written materials created during the workshops will also be available to the researcher and supervisor only.

(l) Procedure for the storage of, access to and disposal of data, both during and at the conclusion of the research. (See section 7 of the guidelines)

Tapes, notes and other written materials will be kept for a period of two years within a locked cabinet and then destroyed. Data will not be shared with or kept by the Kāpiti Coast District Council.

(m) Feedback Procedures (See section 8 of the guidelines)

Participants will have the opportunity to view a summary document and to provide comment on this via email, in person, or telephone.

(n) Reporting and Publication of Results

The full copy of the findings will be available to participants. A summary of the findings will be available within the sector to assist understanding of the agencies experience of change.

Signature of Investigators as listed on page 1 (including Supervisors)

.....
.....

Date:

Questions for Participants:

These questions are a guide of the topics that will be covered in the workshops.

What is the impact of recent national economic and social policy changes on community social service agencies?

- What national policy changes have affected your organisation?
- What changes have you noticed which are affecting other organisations not present?
- What effects have policy changes had on your clients?
- What effects have the recession had on your organisation?
- What effects have the recession had on your clients?
- What funding changes have you experienced?
- What has your organisation done to respond to the above changes?

How can Council and community social service agencies work together to respond to these changes?

- What strategies is your organisation or are other organisations using to respond to these changes that are working?
- What strategies have you tried that haven't worked?
- What other ideas have you had?
- What could Council and community social services agencies do together?

Appendix 2: Information Sheet/Letter to Participants



Tēnā koe

Research Project

Case Study: The impact of economic and policy changes on community social service agencies in the Kāpiti Coast District.

As a senior community social service sector representative, you are invited to take part in this action research. This is an exciting opportunity to be involved in documenting the experience of community social service agencies in this period of fast paced change. The research focuses on the impacts of economic and policy changes on the community social service sector in Kāpiti. As you know there have been significant changes in policy direction from central government which have coincided with major changes in the economic environment.

The following questions will be explored.

1. What is the impact of recent national economic and social policy changes on community social service agencies?
2. How can the Kāpiti Coast District Council and community social service agencies work together to respond to these changes?

The research will help inform the Kāpiti Coast District Council about what non-financial tools the Council can use to support the community social service sector. This material will also be part of my dissertation to complete my Masters of New Zealand Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. The Council is interested and keen to support this research.

The research will take the form of workshops which will take up to two hours. The conversations of the workshops will be recorded. There will be a range of techniques used to gather written data. You may withdraw from this study at any time before the final analysis of data without providing reasons (within two weeks of the workshop you have participated in); this applies to any information which is separate from the group discussion processes. All the materials from the workshops will be destroyed within two years.

A light meal will be provided.

A summary of the workshop will be made available for your comment. When the research is complete you will be given a copy of the research summary. In addition there will be a presentation of the research to the sector and you will be informed how to access the full report electronically. I look forward to sharing these back with you.

The experience of the community social sector during this time of change is a very interesting topic and learning from this experience is very valuable both for the community and the Council. Given the amount of change being experienced by the community social service sector and the limited resources available, it is important for the Kāpiti Coast District Council to hear from the experts in the community social services sector. It is also important that this information is shared within the community social service and local government sectors.

If you need any further information, please feel free to get in touch with me, my contact details are below. You may also wish to contact my academic supervisor: Sandra Grey Senior Lecturer, Social Policy/Sociology sandra.grey@vuw.ac.nz or phone: 04 463 5361.

Thank you for considering being involved in this project. Your participation would be greatly valued, however feel free to decline if you need to.

If you are able and willing to take part please sign the form overleaf.

Nga mihi nui,

Sam

Samantha Hutcheson
Community Partnerships Coordinator
Sam.hutcheson@Kapiticoast.govt.nz
04 296 4818



Consent Form

1. I have been provided with adequate information relating to the nature and objectives of this research project, I have understood that information and have been given the opportunity to seek further clarification or explanations.
2. I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time before the final analysis of data without providing reasons (within two weeks of the workshop that I have participated in); this applies to any information which is separate from the group discussion processes.
3. I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be reported only in an aggregated/non-attributable form.
4. I understand that the workshop discussion will be recorded and a summary will be provided, with the opportunity to comment.
5. I understand that the information I have provided will be used for this research project and be available to increase knowledge of the current climate in which social agencies are operating.
6. I understand that when this research is completed the transcript and notes and other written materials from the workshop will be destroyed within two years.

Date:

Name

Organisation:

Signed:

Email address:
(for summary to be sent to)

Appendix 4: Background Sheet

Background Sheet Ōtaki/Paraparaumu

Part One: Participant Information

1. **Name:**

2. **Age** (please circle age range):

0-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75
plus

3. **Ethnicity** (please describe as you wish):

4. **Current Community Social Service Agency involvement:**

Most of you are involved in more than one organisation – if you need to add other rows, please do. Please estimate the number of hours for the last week and feel free to add any comments you would like.

Organisation	Role(s)	Paid hours	Unpaid hours

5. **How long** have you been involved in the community social agency sector:
_____ years

6. **Your background experience (paid and unpaid):**

Please provide any information you would like about what you bring to your roles from past work or life experience.

-
-
-
-

Part Two: Organisation Information

First some quick information about your organisation

1. **What does/do your organisation(s) do?** Feel free to attach a copy of a document that describes the work of your/each organisation(s) e.g. promotional leaflet, mission statement, etc.

2. **Please describe your clients for each organisation**

Now your thoughts on the impacts of the recession...

3. **What impact has the recession had on your clients over the last two years?**

4. **What impact has the recession had on your organisation(s) over the last two years?**

Finally to the impacts of Government policy change...

5. **How much have your clients been affected by Government policy change**
(1 is not at all, 7 is hugely affected, please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

How?

6. **How much has/have your organisation(s) been affected by changes in government policy?**

(1 is not at all, 7 is hugely affected, please circle)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

How?

Please add anything else you would like to say. Feel free to talk with your colleagues/boards if you want.

Appendix 5: Workshop Programme

Workshop programme

Set up

- *Check forms filled in, tick off sheet*
- *Name tags*

Setting up: (10 minutes)

- *Karakia*
- *Purpose – research topic, Masters, see wall prompts – stats & pictures of community*
- *Ground rules- my role (hat), intro Karen, Wharepaku, check re food and breaks,*
- *Icebreaker (how many organisations are you involved in? what are they?) - intro*

The world we're in:

Community/Clients, Community Social Services Agencies (20 minutes)

The background sheet asked you to think about the impacts on your clients/community and on your organisation(s) of economic and government policy changes.

Please break into 2 groups and talk about what you have seen – write or draw this down on the two large sheets of paper provided. One is for your community/clients and the other is for your organizations. (10 minutes)

On back put names and topic

Identifying themes:

Please hop up and take a look at what the other group(s) have/has done. We are going to pick out the key themes. You each have 6 stickies, 3 of each colour.

What do you think – 3 or 5?

Write a word on each sticky that describes what has been happening –*the themes you see*. The pink ones are for describing what is happening in the community and the yellow ones are for describing what is happening for your organisations. Please stick them up on the big sheet on the wall so we can look at what we are all seeing/experiencing. (10 minutes)

We will sort the words to identify the themes.

What are the strongest themes?

Continuum Exercise

Think back to our level of social wellbeing two years ago. On a scale of 1 to 10 – 1 is an extremely poor level of social wellbeing and 10 is the best we could ever hope for. What was the level of social wellbeing in your community and amongst community social service agencies? Place yourself along the continuum.

Record names and numbers

Now lets move to the present – where are we now? Place yourself along the continuum.

Record names and numbers

BREAK?

The future:

Now that we have drawn a picture of what is happening – let's use the 5 column approach to look towards the future.

*Mention strengths-based approach – explain why use 5 column
Ensure that possible Council role has been discussed*

Closing down:

- Acknowledgements
- What next – *some months, will have report back – how would like to see this?*
- Karakia

Appendix 6: Ground Rules (original was A3)

Ground Rules:

- Accept differences of opinion
- Show respect
- Share the floor
- Look after each other and yourselves

In addition, for the co-facilitators:

Facilitators are

- the only ones who can interrupt to redirect the flow
- not here to answer questions except about the process
- here to observe and record

Role of facilitator:

- encourage 'equal' participation
- encourage understanding of the process
- help 'move' the group through the process
- record on the board
- explain 5 column approach
- record flow of conversation (not verbatim just topics covered and their sequence and approximate time/energy given to each topic)
- assist with coffee etc.
- timekeeping

Appendix 8: Presentation: Summary of Initial Analysis

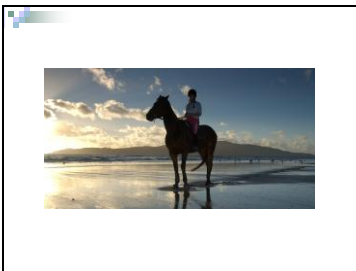
Slide 1



Slide 2



Slide 3



Slide 4




Slide 5



Slide 6



Slide 7

■ 

Research Report Back

Slide 8

■ 

Research Project

- From a community perspective, what non-financial support(s) would best assist community social service agencies in Kāpiti to respond to the recent national economic and social policy changes?

Slide 9

■ 

Research roles

- researcher
- participants

Slide 10

Objectives

- What is the impact of recent national economic and social policy changes on community social service agencies in Kāpiti?
- How can the Kāpiti Coast District Council and community social service agencies work together to respond to these changes?
- From a local government perspective what possible forms of non-financial support could be offered?

Slide 11

Why?

- Social policy changes
- Economic changes
- Funding environment
- Community best place to respond to change

Slide 12

Workshops

- 1 in Ōtaki, 1 in Paraparaumu
- Workshop structure, community venue, recording methods,
- Confidentiality, aggregation of voices
- Academic supervision
- Creation of safe space

Slide 13

Participants

- collective experience in sector 230 years
- 21 organisations
- Roles: Volunteer, Secretary, Chairperson, Manager, Co-ordinator, Minister, Board member, Governance member, JP, Mentor, Chaplain, Driver, National executive member
- In the week chosen worked: 183 paid, 223 unpaid, total = 406 hours

Slide 14

Strengths

- Participants closeness to community
- Depth of experience
- Passion for the community

Slide 15

Your feedback please

- Does this sound right to you?
- Have we missed anything?
- Any other thoughts?

Slide 16

Themes

- the impact of economic and policy changes on the community
- the impact of economic and policy changes on community social services agencies
- the way the Kāpiti communities; including community social service agencies, respond to these challenges and the strengths of the community
- relationships with and expectations of central and local government
- funding issues
- pressure of workload
- the importance of volunteers
- fear for the future

Slide 17

the impact of economic and policy changes on the community

- increasing signs of distress in community: loan sharks, family violence, crime, mental health, a&d,
- financial distress: benefits not keeping up with price increases and tightening of entitlements, unemployment
- cuts ACE, ACC, health services
- Gaps in government funding – withdrawing from one sector but need not being addressed elsewhere

Slide 18

the impact of economic and policy changes on community social service agencies

- pressure to do more with less
- reduction in funding
- workload
- 'more demand from the community on us'
- 'its just constant change'

Slide 19

the way the Kāpiti communities; including community social service agencies, respond to these challenges and the strengths of the community

- pride in the way work together
- personal relationships with referrers
- strong community spirit
- 'we've got amazing community resources'
- 'networking its networking'

Slide 20

the community social service agencies relationships with and expectations of central and local government

- frustration at not being listened to
- see as 'top down not bottom up'
- 'stop imposing things people don't want'
- strong sense of déjà vu
- need for advocacy
- appreciation for linking role of some council staff

Slide 21

funding issues

- reduction in funding eg CYF
- compliance costs
- 'compared to now 2008 wasn't a bad year'
- changed dramatically over last 12 months
- a few organisations have benefited financially while most disadvantaged

Slide 22

the importance of volunteers

- volunteer contribution is huge
- 'we've got community-minded people'
- Easier to get some kinds of volunteers than others
- Volunteers are getting older

Slide 23

the pressure of workload

- 'picking up the government's work'
- increasing workload is leading to stress
- is workload sustainable?

Slide 24

fear for the future

- 'as a community it hasn't hit us yet'
- 'struggle' 'stressful'
- wellbeing scale: moved from 5 to 4.3

Slide 25

"Making do" * Argh!!! * Asked for more *
Client *increases * Coping mechanisms *
Finance * Finance *Finance \$ * Funding *
Funding * Funding cuts * Funding-loss *
Generosity of people * Increased demand *
Lack of volunteers * Less resources * Money
* Overworked * People * People * Re focus
core services * Resolving techniques *
Security * Shortage funds * Stress * Stress *
Stress * Super Grans * Uncertainty * WINZ
not informing clients * Workload * Workload *
Workload * Workloads * Work-volume

Slide 26

amazing community resources *
community mobilisation * don't realise
how strong * generosity of love *
generosity of our community * hugely
intelligent people who commit an
enormous amount of time and energy
* I can immediately tap into our
network * make things happen *
NGOs are pretty resilient * passion
otherwise wouldn't do it * still
community minded * we've got a very
strong community minded people

Slide 27

What next

- Finish in October
- Make available to community
- Present to new Council
- Research to inform Council response
- Make available to the sector and central government
- THANK YOU

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