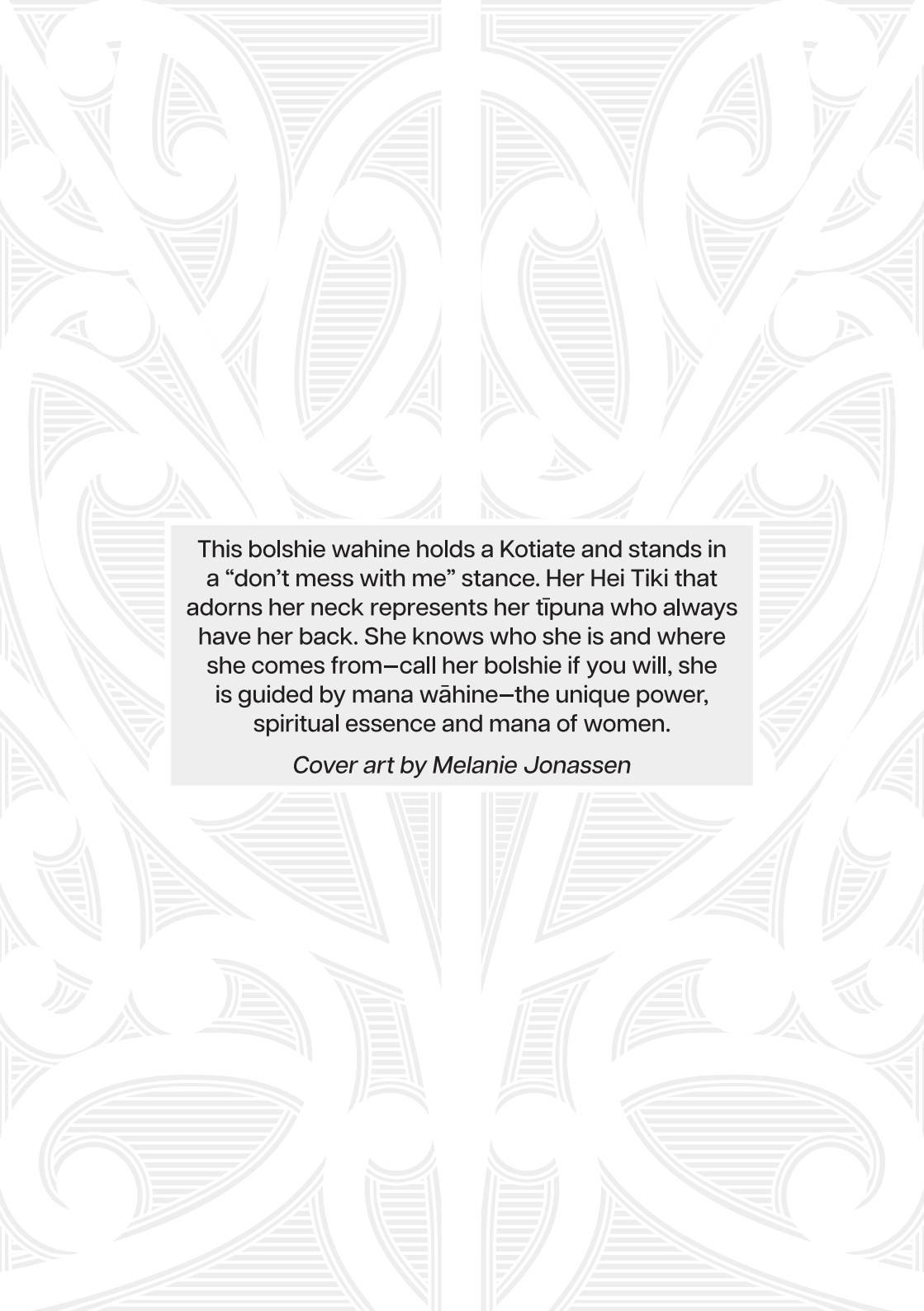


BOLSHIE





This bolshie wahine holds a Kotiate and stands in a “don’t mess with me” stance. Her Hei Tiki that adorns her neck represents her tīpuna who always have her back. She knows who she is and where she comes from—call her bolshie if you will, she is guided by mana wāhine—the unique power, spiritual essence and mana of women.

Cover art by Melanie Jonassen

BOLSHIE

a Community Think Journal

Issue 2 | November 2023

Edited by Lucette Hindin and Simie Simpson





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CONTENTS

Issue 2 November 2023	3
Foreword	6
Playlist: Bolshie 2023 Community Think Journal	7
The Community Think Team	8
Reflection: Citizen-Led Democracy	10
Social Licence	12
The Funding Trap	17
Social Cohesion in the Workplace	20
Building a Year-Long Campaign That Drives Participation on a Shoestring Budget	26
Bolshie (a Poem)	29
Reflections: Working With Controversy, Conflict and Complexity	30
Volunteer Work in Bougainville: Applying the Reflective Cycle	32
10 Minutes at 10	36
Glossary of Common Phrases	37

FOREWORD

This year's theme is: **BOLSHIE**

BOL·SHIE

/ˈbɒʃi/

Adjective

1. difficult to manage; rebellious
2. politically radical or left-wing

This journal is called bolshie—a word deriving from ‘Bolshevik’, and used as British slang for people who are politically left, socialist, communist, or union. Most commonly though, people use ‘bolshie’ to describe a person who is defiant, rebellious and uncooperative.

There is a need for rebellious and defiant people in our systems, organisations, work places, communities and friend groups. We need people who are unafraid to speak up when an injustice is happening and don't necessarily take “no” for an answer.

For some of us, all of our work is devoted to trying to put to rights something that is systemically wrong and unjust, and requires us to be bolshie in various ways. Sometimes there is a lot of complexity—systems can't be changed overnight, at least not without causing harm. We might have to speak up and say “this is awful” even when we ourselves can't see a solution. We have to live daily with the discomfort of all the things that are out of our control or sphere of influence—and that can make us feel damn bolshie.

We thought it was time for us to OWN IT! Time to bring this out into the open and celebrate the bolshie community workers of Aotearoa: the people who are persistent reminders of fairness and justice, and who don't turn a blind eye to things that are wrong or could be better.

This year's Camp Wired focused on Citizen-Led Democracy and we open the journal with Mel Jonassen's reflective drawings from the rich kōrero that happened that day. We were very grateful to have Max Harris, Penny Hulse, Morgan Godfery, Sue Abel, David Mitchell, Denise Bijoux, Cally O'Neill, and Simon Wright speak at Camp Wired 2023.

Following an intriguing conversation with Mark Allen in a cafe, Cissy Rock invited four community-based practitioners to discuss and explore the concept of 'Social Licence' within the community sector. Excerpts of this collective inquiry, as well as the link to the full video, are included.

Community Think Associate Duncan Matthews shares his experience and thoughts in an article on 'The Funding Trap'. How can we move our mindset away from compliance to a bolshier response to the funding system that has been created in Aotearoa?

In 'Social Cohesion in the Workplace,' Cissy Rock shares her responses to and applications of Hamish Brown's recent article 'Collaborative Decision Making in Facilitated Groups and Other Organisations,' reflecting on the key concepts that support social cohesion in communities and how to apply them in the workplace.

Harriet Paul shares some golden tips with us about how she masterminds the Neighbours Aotearoa campaign to increase neighbourhood connections nationwide.

Lucette Hindin responds to the bolshie theme with a short but juicy poem, and this is also a good time to recognise the awesome creative skills of our cover artist, Mel Jonassen, Community Think's resident designer.

We asked the whole team to reflect on a central theme for Community Think this year: our experiences working in spaces that include conflict, complexity and controversy. While this is a common experience for us, sometimes we find it can take its toll, giving rise to personal responses, such as anger, despondency and frustration. By reflecting together and sharing this writing, we hope we can better understand what is effective for ourselves and others while doing controversial and complex work.

Dell Rock reflects on his experience volunteering in Bougainville, offering an example of the reflective cycle in practice.

And hey! We've put together some resources that you can access for your further enjoyment! Listen to our bolshie playlist while reading this journal and access all our '10 Minutes at 10' bite-sized professional development sessions on our website.

We close with a regular feature—our glossary of terms: with some common expressions you might hear in the community sector.

We hope you'll enjoy Bolshie and that it will spark your own reflections. Keep in touch with us in 2024.

PLAYLIST: BOLSHIE 2023 COMMUNITY THINK JOURNAL



Listen to our pick of bolshie tunes on spotify.

Open the spotify app on your phone and scan the code with your phones camera to listen to Community Think's bolshie playlist.

Open  · Search  · Scan 

THE COMMUNITY THINK TEAM

Community Think is a collective of creative people committed to social change and making a positive difference to the society we live in. The Community Think team is led by Cissy Rock, an experienced practitioner with local government and community experience spanning over 20 years. Community Think are versatile, sensitive and nimble in their approach, able to think outside the square and create practical solutions by drawing on their diverse range of skills and resources. Community Think delivers a unified and effective approach to getting things done, in ways that are appropriate, relevant and uniquely tailored to each individual client or project.

Harriet (she/her) is a strategic and passionate project manager, marketer and fundraiser with over 10 years experience in the not-for-profit and corporate sectors. She helps organisations achieve their goals while creating positive social change. Harriet uses a strategic, agile, and creative approach with all her mahi. As projects lead, she makes sure everything happens when it should. Prior to joining the Community Think team, Harriet was working in the not-for-profit sector in Australia and Indonesia in marketing, fundraising, and event roles. In her spare time, she's running after her three-year-old or dreaming up her next travel adventure.

Cissy is a qualified sociodramatist who is committed to community-led development processes, combining systemic thinking with grassroots doing. Cissy loves working with people, finding ways for all to have a voice and to fully participate in meetings, communities, and organisations. Her approach is collaborative, dedicated and passionate. Cissy addresses symptoms of inclusion, exclusion and patronisation, working within the dynamics of systems in ways that develop and build social cohesion. She is not afraid to roll up her sleeves to help make things happen. With over 20 years experience working alongside communities and with government, integrity is at the heart of her work. Cissy set up Community Think in 2015, to stand in her belief that together we do make a difference. Through Community Think she has been involved in campaigns, place-based community organising, community engagement processes, supervision of people working in the community sector, workshops and facilitation. Cissy enjoys drinking coffee, eating cinnamon brioche, travelling, and building connections wherever she goes.

Melanie (Te Whakatōhea, Ngāti Porou ki Hauraki, Pākehā, she/her/ia) is our resident artist and the Design lead at Community Think. She's much better at doodling than writing a bio, which is what she's done in this journal! She has a keen eye for detail and passion for creativity. As a visual storyteller, Mel oversees key design work and helps messages to be conveyed in creative and captivating ways. Before joining Community Think, Mel did design work in not-for-profit and commercial sectors. When she's not at mahi, she can be found making art, gardening, or making friends with furry creatures.

Lucette (Pākehā, she/they) hails from Ōtautahi and is currently residing in Tāmaki Makaurau. Lucette's journey into community development was sparked through her involvement in event management and the performing arts. With over 25 years of experience, Lucette has been both a participant and a leader in group processes that prioritise creativity, learning, and empowerment. She has a strong desire to support communities working towards food resilience, waste reduction and climate-change response. She's right into empowering, grassroots, creative stuff. Throughout her diverse career, Lucette has made contributions to various organisations, including Project Lyttelton, CircoArts, Dharma Gaia Centre of Mindful Living, and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Duncan (he/him/ia) is an associate with Community Think. He is experienced in the governance, management and operations of small non-profit organisations. He has also worked as a project manager and software developer, and most recently worked in the philanthropic sector. Rainbow/LGBTIQ+ communities have been the focus of Duncan's passion over the last 15 years. A strong generalist and quiet leader, he has worked with many organisations in the last 15 years to achieve their vision and make Aotearoa a better place. He's a regular walker, daily reader and always has a thoughtful approach.



REFLECTION: CITIZEN-LED DEMOCRACY

Local DEMOCRATIC Futures



Max Harris

- RULES -



understand the rules of the game and how we can undo the rules of the game to unlock more ambitious government

- RESOURCES -



time to speak up



skills & knowledge to participate

- RADICALISM -



Economic democracy

Te tiriti o Waitangi at a local level

Rethink funding for local government

*knowing there is sufficient scope within the engagement for radical solutions



Morgan Godfrey

*Iwi having resources needed to engage with the government



Penny Hulse

Communities drawn together with a single purpose can fundamentally make change

Collectiveness

larger impact than individuals

- engagement
- power
- knowledge
- way of doing things

POLYCRISIS

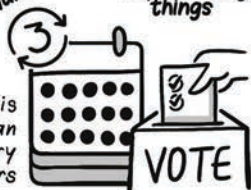
Physical impact of climate change

Economic crisis

Breakdown of social cohesion



Democracy is more than voting every 3 years



It's having the SCOPE & POWER to PARTICIPATE in things that impact you!

we need activated citizens to demand participatory democracy to solve these issues

EVERDAY ACTS OF OWNERSHIP OF YOUR PLACE

Move away from being 'subjects of the system' to 'citizens and owners of your place'



Change the lens in which we judge success - it's not your budget bottom line

Democracy is messy, you can't tie it with a little bow

Getting comfortable with the messiness of disagreement is a good thing



CAPITALISM

ECONOMIC SYSTEM

POLITICAL SYSTEM

A rupture in the consensus of the last 30+ years leads to disagreement - EMBRACE IT!

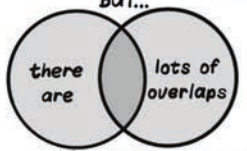
Exploring CO-GOVERNANCE

Iwi/hapū leadership:
leaders are no greater than the people they represent



Partnership at the top needs partnership at the bottom.

Co-governance & Co-management



BUT...
How do co-governance arrangements happen?

Applies to any situation of shared responsibility where different groups have shared interests.

Shared responsibility with hapū and iwi.

"We stole them, we won't give them back, but you can join us in their co-governance"
non-financial recompense for losses



Sue Abel

EXAMPLE:
Ngāti Manaipoto and the crown



Co-govern:
set 'primary direction' to achieve restoration of Waipā & Waikato river

Co-manage:
Working in partnership to implement the direction

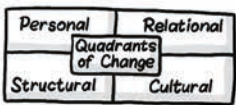
As part of treaty settlements 1

Voluntary agreements 2

Through the resource management act 1991 3

4 IDEAS AROUND

Citizen-led Democracy



Creating a culture of sharing
Share what you do so others can adapt/evolve what you're doing

Co-design in education

Teacher was keen to get class involved in community projects



David Mitchell



16 Weeks

Pilot Project:

"Have a go" sports day (with healthy eating)

Once the kids knew they were in charge, it took off like a rocket

The potential of Polis: Democracy at scale

lots of people
lots of issues
lots of interests
lots of positions



gather and make meaning of perspectives at scale



Denise Bijoux



Start where you are
Use what you have.
Do what you can.
- Arthur Ashe



Simon Wright

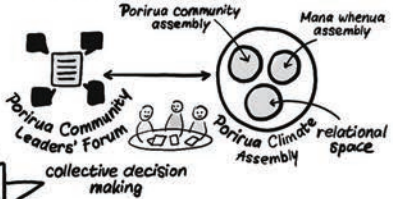
a survey that is co-created by the people who take part in the survey



Gally O'Neill

What does a tiriti framework of deliberative democracy look like?

Practical exploration into the vision and frameworks of Matike Mai



collective decision making



Scan QR code to watch camp wired

Drawings by Mel Jonassen

SOCIAL LICENCE

Excerpts from a conversation. Illustrations by Lucette Hindin.

Cissy Rock chatted to four community-based practitioners about the concept of ‘social licence’ and what it means in Aotearoa today.



Kia ora, I'm Sandy Thompson and I work with an organisation called Lead. We're a group of community people who work with organisations, boards and community leaders to help them be the best they can be. We believe if we have a strong community sector, then we have wellbeing throughout our communities and everyone can thrive.

The full video conversation can be found on vimeo. Scan the QR code at the end of the conversation to watch.



Mōrena, I'm Brennan Rigby, nō Murihiku ahau. I tipu ake ahau i Taranaki—I'm from Invercargill and I grew up in New Plymouth. I'm a practitioner of treaty policy basically. I work for The Royal Commission of Abuse in Care in that capacity and I do some contracting work in Te Tai Tokerau on housing matters, which is kind of where my heart is too.



Kia ora koutou, my name is Jo Wrigley. I lead the team at the Waikato Environment Centre Trust. I was born near Te Urewera. I currently live in Morrinsville. Our workers are across the Waikato region. My qualifications are in public relations, so the social licence is a key ingredient there. But also my practice is around facilitation and tangata tiriti practice development.



Kia ora everybody, my name is Mark Allen. I am a Westie. I hail from Te Henga, Bethells Beach. I'm Pākehā; I came out on the good ship Ruahine in 1963. I am the Executive Officer for Community Waitākere and I'm also on the Waitākere Ranges Local Board. I've also been on the West Auckland Trusts ever since the licensing trust was formed.



Cissy: I'm hoping we can create a bit of a shared definition between the four of you, perhaps with some examples to help us really get hold of what we mean by 'social licence.'



Jo: I guess for me, the term 'social licence' is part of public relations practice which involves engaging stakeholders, mapping stakeholders, having the right conversations, being able to document relationships and then conveying and communicating the good or the benefits that you're providing the community. Social licence is that formation of trust that affords you the opportunity to make some decisions without being deeply in conversation with the entire community.



Brennan: I'm quite engaged in the story of how Te Tiriti became a part of our legal and political landscape. Let's just think about 1975 as the year when the Treaty of Waitangi Act was made and the efforts that Māori communities, Iwi and Hapū have made in the decades leading up to that, to say to the Crown: "You're not honouring it, you're not recognising it, you're not upholding it." I often dwell on why the Crown eventually gave way to that demand. It's a western law view that one of the roles of the government is to maintain peace in our societies. So when there's a massive movement like that, they've got an obligation to act. But I think in there also is a question of social licence where Māori actually made it really clear again and again and again that as far as they were concerned, the

Crown and the State just had no social licence to operate because they weren't honouring what Māori saw as this very basic foundational document.

Māori actually made it really clear again and again and again that as far as they were concerned, the Crown and the State just had no social licence to operate.

I think COVID is a similar example because no party had gone out on the campaign trail saying "This is how we're going to deal with a massive global pandemic." That's how our political parties create part of their social licence—they campaign on stuff. No party had done it. So the government of the day was forced to grapple with that without a social licence to do so.



Sandy: My interest in the conversation about social licence comes from understanding that it came from the corporate world. It was a term that was invented as part of giving mining companies permission to pillage the planet. I had a friend who had a job where mining companies used to helicopter him into the highlands of Papua New Guinea because they wanted to put some pipes through traditional lands, and his job was to facilitate that conversation with the community to get the social licence for them to do what they wanted. He was sent in with cell phones to offer for free to the villagers so that they could get the pipes to come

through. And he realised after a while that he was giving out the cell phones to buy a social licence. And here were people who had lived in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, didn't wear clothes, the men were wearing penis sheaths and attached to that was a cell phone. And he looked at that image and said, "There's something wrong here." And he quit that job.

So when you said, "Let's have a conversation about social licence," I'm saying, "Yeah, let's do that, but how does social licence apply from a community perspective, from the position of a community rather than the government or the corporate asking for a social licence? And also how do community organisations get social licences to act?"

"Let's have a conversation about social licence," I'm saying, "Yeah, let's do that, but how does social licence apply from a community perspective, from the position of a community rather than the government or the corporate asking for a social licence?"



Mark: I think it is not a "You have it or you don't have it." I think there are degrees of it and it is a completely dynamic thing. People running under a political hat can gain a mandate within the parameters of the party that they're affiliated to.

One of the things I/we observe in local government that most people don't realise is that you never know what you're going to be facing. That kind of links to Brennan's point about COVID. It's really hard to seek social licence for many of the things that you're going to have to consider as an elected member. You're actually putting yourself forward to always be in the situation of "Where do I stand?" And what I observe is some politicians came in on a crusade or to tilt at a windmill, and they have quickly realised that actually it wasn't what they thought it was and there's a whole lot more information that comes to light that they actually have to take into account. And then over a period of time they realise "I have to go back and reflect. I have to sit back into my community that brought me where I am and ask the questions." And some do have big, strong networks and can have those conversations and then come back and say, "Hey, look, I'm reflecting on this." Some don't and they find it really, really hard and often they get quite isolated.



Jo: It reminds me that the concept of social licence is one of 'peak whiteness'. It's an imported concept to Aotearoa. It's the idea that we can harness power and measure relationships for our purpose as opposed to being in relationship with shared power. So as a charitable organisation, there's a real tension for us. Environmental sustainability is now being monetised because it is all linked back to someone's social licence to operate in the community, and to do that you have to prove that you're also caring for the environment. Increasingly, we also see it in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi—you have

to have a statement that you undertake some actions. And there's no measure of whether those are tokenistic or not. It's hugely problematic because there's no analysis of what it is to be genuinely in good relationships.



Cissy: When I heard you talking, I was thinking about a driver's licence, like you're handing out a licence. And I was thinking about the ANZ Bank when they did all of these rainbow ATMs. With pinkwashing, it's like you're making out that you support LGBTIA+ rights, but actually you've got workers who are in poor working conditions and you've got people who might go into your bank and still be confronted with transphobic or homophobic experiences. Was that them trying to buy a social licence, trying to say, "Look, we have what it takes to be trusted by this group of stakeholders who happen to be the Rainbow community."?



Jo: There is a difference between social licence and building a social following from pink washing or greenwashing. So the authenticity of what's being said has to be challenged constantly.

The authenticity of what's being said has to be challenged constantly.



Mark: I was going to go a little bit lighter: Splore festival, pop music's pumping, we're all in community, we're all in the same vibe, somebody decides to go crowd surfing and there's a big hole—boom they hit the ground. Social licence wasn't as strong as they thought it was going to be, you know?



Brennan: It takes me back to my Independent Māori Statutory Board work where we had a statutory mandate to—I'm just going to paraphrase viciously—to try and support Auckland Council to do better for Māori in regard to the treaty—Te Tiriti. But Auckland Council itself had very weak legal requirements to do those things. So there was always Te Tiriti o Waitangi mentioned somewhere in the first ten paragraphs and there was always the idea of how a plan or strategy would deliver for Māori or how they were going to do engagement with mana whenua. And we didn't necessarily have to define what that looked like, we just had to ask the question and raise the idea that within the Māori community [Council] are not going to really have a social licence to progress this piece of work unless they can answer that question.

Kāinga Ora is probably another story again which is reasonably similar. They've got a legal mandate [to operate] and that is legally structured. We knew before the 2017 election that Labour were going to try and rebuild our social housing system, but did New Zealanders want it to happen in their neighbourhood? Not so much, in some cases. And so on that local

level, Kāinga Ora have been challenged consistently, to prove their social licence, which is something that has delayed developments. It has made some developments untenable, some of them have been burnt down. There's been quite vociferous local opposition gathered around [the local community's] own local social licence as a community to say "No." So Kāinga Ora's legal mandate is pretty robust, but within that, they are grappling with building and maintaining the social licence to carry out that work.



Mark: As a community organisation, one of the things that we try and encourage our community developers is a mantra of "Keep checking your mandate, keep checking your mandate, listen to the community you're working with."

Keep checking your mandate, keep checking your mandate, listen to the community you're working with.



Sandy: I don't like the corporate sector taking our language and using it for their benefit to get them a social licence. And I don't like our sector taking for-profit language and concepts to say "You can trust us, we're a good business, we're going to be accountable for all the money you give us."

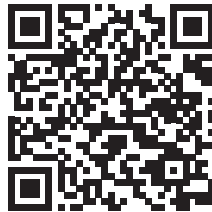


Cissy: And what you're also bringing forward is critical thinking, right? Like how many people aren't even aware of where they are being lulled into the idea of "This is the social licence," right? I was just thinking about how often we go along with something without critically thinking right. And the critical thinking is the bit that helps you get hold of what it is you're being sold.



Sandy: Is it the role of community leadership to challenge people who are seeking social licences and is community leadership actually a group of people who have good critical analysis who are then given a social licence on behalf of the community to do that?

Is community leadership actually a group of people who have good critical analysis who are then given a social licence on behalf of the community to do that?



Scan the QR code with your phone to watch full video conversation

THE FUNDING TRAP

By Duncan Matthews

Pursuing funding can be seductive; promising free resources to help address the pressing issues we see around us. Yet, this siren song lures us away from the core values of community-led development. Funding implicitly requires that someone is 'in-charge' and accountable for the monies received. This can divert attention from a spirit of collaboration and shared purpose. The temptation of funding can cause us to compromise on our mission, tailor projects to fit funders' preferences, and lose sight of the genesis of our work. The relentless hunt for funding in 12-month cycles can lead to superficial, short-term solutions rather than enduring ones that address the root causes of systemic problems.

Read on to understand the 'funding trap' and how community workers can push back against the inadequate government and philanthropic funding systems.

The Risk of Complacency

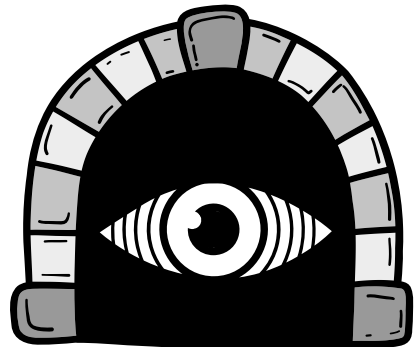
The brief feeling of joy when funding is confirmed can be quickly replaced by an ever-present anxiety—what if we're not successful next time? We become entangled in a cycle of dependency on external financial support, stifling creativity and innovation to ensure that we tick the boxes demanded by those who drip-feed us pūtea. As we have seen during COVID, the whims of funders can flood or freeze money to communities. Several organisations and networks quickly established to address the food insecurities triggered by lockdown

restrictions have just as quickly lost the majority of their funding. At the same time, high demand for their services remains. Reduction of the financing does not equate to reduced accountability to those we work with.

Reduction of the financing does not equate to reduced accountability to those we work with.

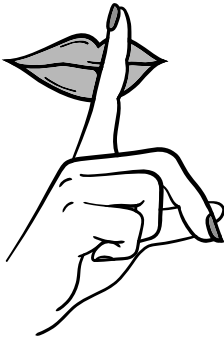
The Tunnel Vision Effect

Four decades of neo-liberal public policy and procurement have conditioned us to consider the funding available first. Rather than carefully plan our strategy and activities confident in our ability to secure what is needed for our community, we instead seek to understand what the government and other funders might be interested in funding before considering the solutions needed in our community. The effect is to keep us in our lane, never looking outside of the compartments prescribed by those with money to tackle the needed bigger, fundamental, and community-driven change.



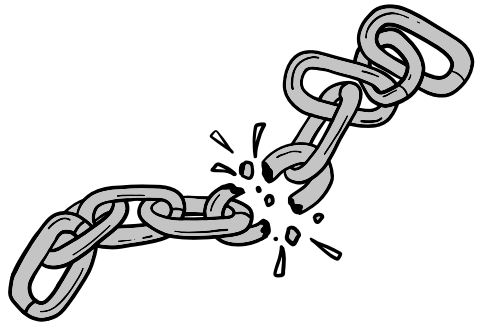
Secrecy Serves the System

Ever-present competition and anxiety around funding have trained us to protect our sources of pūtea, lest others accessing the same funds reduce the amount we get. Intentional or not, creating conflict amongst a population is a feature of oppressive systems across history so that those at the top maintain their positions of power and control. Focus on our neighbour's funding success and its impact on us prevents the wider collaborative work required to push back against a funding system inherently unsuited to address the challenges of today.



Success According to Who?

Another trap we fall into is defining success solely by financial gain or project completion. Measuring success through these traditional neo-liberal metrics may lead us to overlook the immeasurable impact community development can have. The true measure of success lies in aspects of whakawhanaungatanga, people having the agency to effect the things they care about, and building resilient people, neighbourhoods, and communities capable of creating their own solutions.



Breaking Free: Re-embracing Community Development

To escape the funding trap, we must reimagine our relationship with money, and what better time than in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis? While easy to say but much harder to do in practice, rejecting a neo-liberal informed approach to community development is one of the big systemic changes that need to happen. Fortunately, we are in control when it comes to our own minds.

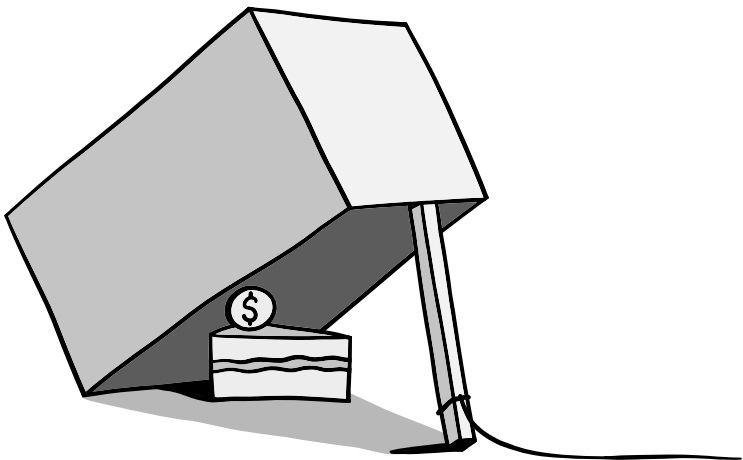
Here Are Some Strategies to Consider:

1. Notice when our minds put up the problem of who and how money will be managed in a community project. Reject the assumption that money is the most crucial thing to handle correctly instead of the means-to-an-end that it is.
2. Get comfortable with talking about money, comparing notes with other community workers, and breaking down the walls of secrecy. As community workers, we benefit from being able to learn and grow from the experiences of one another, and this includes our financial experiences.

3. Expect more from our funders. While we assume funders have all the power in our relationships with them, the reality is that they can only achieve their visions for a better Aotearoa with people to give their money to. Funders do not create an impact in communities in a silo. Ask funders for what you need and challenge their approaches when misaligned with the change they want to see in the world.
4. Track and measure the outcomes you want to see from your work. Beyond meetings held, hits to a website, and money spent, did we create the change anticipated? What are the signs that long-term change is being achieved?

We must break free of the 'funding trap' to achieve the change we community workers want for Aotearoa. Most government and philanthropic funding will only perpetuate the existing systems and prop up those in positions of power. Real change will require a collaborative effort from many of us to push back against these systems rather than be complicit in them. Let us embrace the Bolshie spirit and challenge the status quo to create a more equitable and resilient society.

Let us embrace the bolshie spirit and challenge the status quo to create a more equitable and resilient society.



SOCIAL COHESION IN THE WORKPLACE

By Cissy Rock

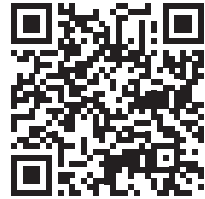
Social cohesion is the notion that we can stay 'in relationship' in times of conflict and have the hard-to-have conversations. I think about good friendships where you might disagree but you know you can rely on the friendship not to disintegrate because you express yourself. This notion is well documented as an important feature of society. In fact, the Ministry of Social Development created a Social Cohesion Framework after COVID as part of the recovery plan of Aotearoa. I wanted to explore key concepts that support social cohesion in communities and how we can apply them in the workplace.

Last summer, I read 'Collaborative Decision Making in Facilitated Groups and Other Organisations,' by Hamish Brown.

At the time I was working with a leadership team; a group of six people responsible for over 50 staff, who needed to have a collective approach to gain some 'authority'. By that, I mean for people to accept their analysis or direction. They had new members in the team, and cohesion was imperative to workplace culture and the ability to get work done. The strength of relationship would directly affect the ability to do the task at hand.

When I read an article, I need to be able to apply the thinking to an actual situation. As I read I made notes from the 'Collaborative Decision' article, and in handwritten text I share my thinking as I apply my own understanding and thoughts around the importance of workplace social cohesion.

Social cohesion is the notion that we can stay 'in relationship' in times of conflict and have the hard-to-have conversations



Scan the QR code with your phone to read the article



High cohesion plus high collaboration equals innovation. In this situation, you can expect group members to act with higher degrees of autonomy and self-direction, and issues of authority and dependency are less likely to be the focus. Dysfunctional organisations—where there is low social cohesion and low collaboration—have high staff turnover and low engagement scores. There will be issues of dependency and authority, and passive resistance to decision-making and change.

High cohesion plus high collaboration equals innovation.

maybe it's low social cohesion?

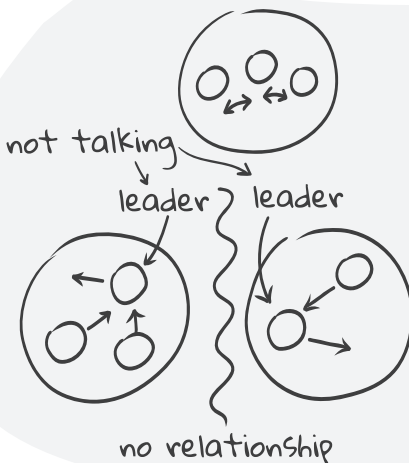
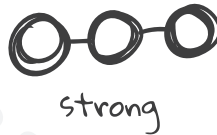
Some criteria for me to use when making an assessment of the situation are:

Is there high staff turnover?

Competition and resistance to decision making?

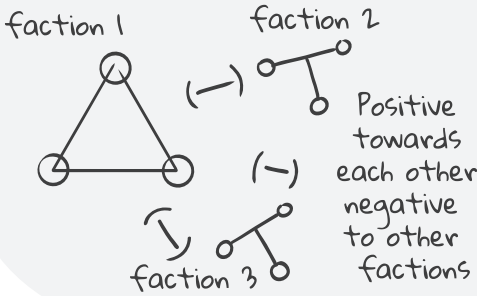
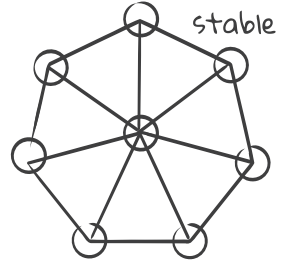
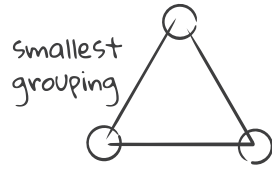
... if so, maybe it's low social cohesion?

A group with strong social cohesion is able to withstand considerable stress. Weak social cohesion tends to show up as a loss of work focus, subgroup in-fighting and unnecessary competition.



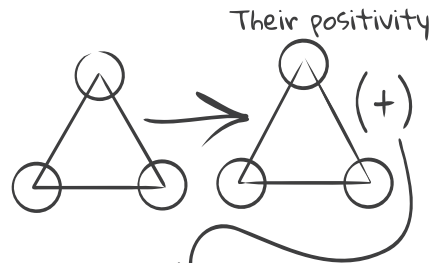
I think about this leadership team and how the six people form factions and blame each other for the workplace being unsettled. Two of the leaders, who each lead a big piece of work, can barely talk to each other, let alone work out how to work together. This is felt amongst the staff.

The smallest grouping that relates to building social cohesion is the triangle. Social cohesion can be stable—meaning everyone feels positive towards each other—or unstable, a mixture of positive and negative relationships. In fact, negative relationships can also be stable. When the percentage of negative relationships is high, then the way that the group copes is by splitting into subgroups and then each subgroup becomes positive towards the others inside the group but negative towards the other group.

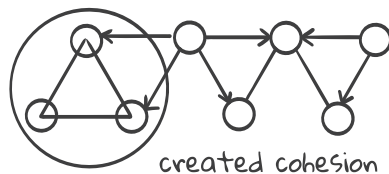


I think: wow, there are so many negative relationships in the leadership team that they have actually found their stability through forming factions, where they rate each other in their faction but not across factions.

When the average connection across the entire group is positive, the group system evolves into a positive pattern of social cohesion in which there is stability in the group.

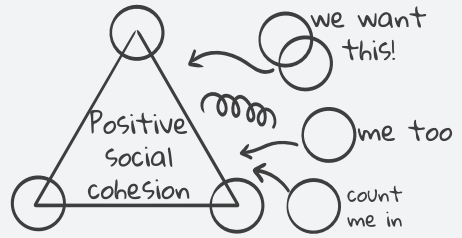


will spill over

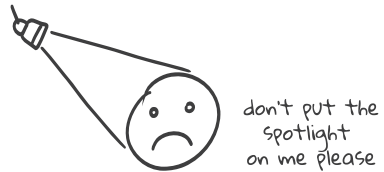


creating cohesion!

If the smallest unit is three people and we need positive social cohesion to start a pattern of positivity, I think of three people who get on and if their positive social cohesion will be contagious.



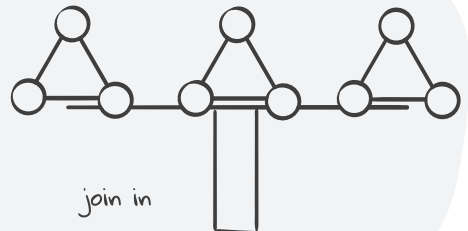
When thinking about interventions that will create social cohesion, you have to think about how much social cohesion there is in the first place. If it's a very low amount of cohesion, then any intervention must not produce too much exposure because people will get distressed.



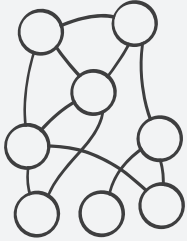
how much social cohesion there is in the first place?

Often when there isn't social cohesion, we are aware that interventions are needed. However we may end up creating more of a split in the group if we ask for too much openness or exposure. We need to think very carefully about how to have more positive relationships in the group that tip the balance into positivity or stability rather than creating more of an unstable environment.

I think to myself "OK, I can see the factions, the factions can feel the factions; there is low cohesion, so, anything I do needs to not expose either faction. I can't just call it out."



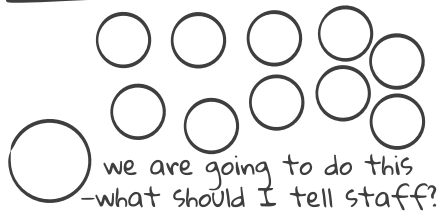
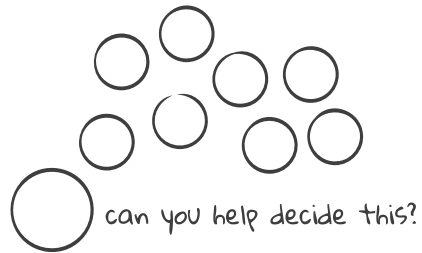
What level of social cohesion in the group is needed to allow people to be able to withstand the complexity and messiness of working collaboratively? Competition and subgroups can't really be present if collectively we're going to work towards a common shared goal.



we have each other here!!

Often it seems as if people need to prove themselves—to be better than others on the team as a way to show their worth—and this creates a dynamic. Where does leadership unintentionally play an undermining role? Everyone needs to be in this together and have each others' backs.

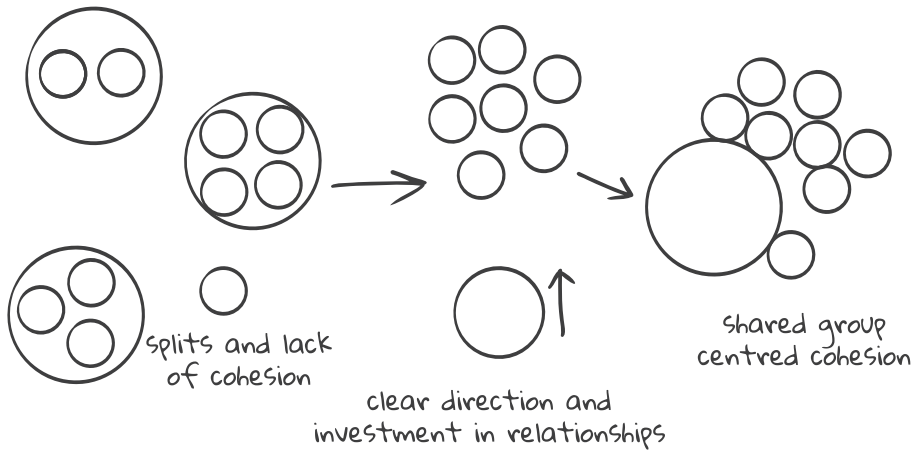
Often decision-making is used as an intervention with the idea that we have to work to consensus; that everyone has to be involved in the direction-setting. It is actually the misunderstanding around who will decide or how things will get decided that causes the tension. If we're clear about the decision-making process and what people's involvement in that process is, then expectations are managed and we're working in truthful and open ways.



I think about the style of the leader of the leadership team and how I have a very inclusive, collaborative style that at times creates a lack of direction. With my team, I act as if I'm not the boss when actually I am and I need to develop what's needed for my team to understand the direction I need them to take. Managing expectations seems to be key.

People are invited to be involved in ways that manage expectations; this means that if the leader can make a decision, "This is what's going to happen" and "This is where I need your feedback" and "This is the role I would like you to take," then people are clear about where they fit. Often we think about involving people in the decision-making process

to address the lack of social cohesion or build collaborative processes. However, this can lead to paralysis where no one's expectations are being met. This creates an unstable environment of people forming small subgroups of people who feel a lack of clarity and can't focus properly on their work.



When conditions are right and you are in the innovation space then shared leadership is appropriate. You need strong leadership and centralised decision-making to create the conditions to foster an innovation space.



I need to get the three leaders most positive towards each other to work as a team and attract others into their orbit.

BUILDING A YEAR-LONG CAMPAIGN THAT DRIVES PARTICIPATION ON A SHOESTRING BUDGET

With Harriet

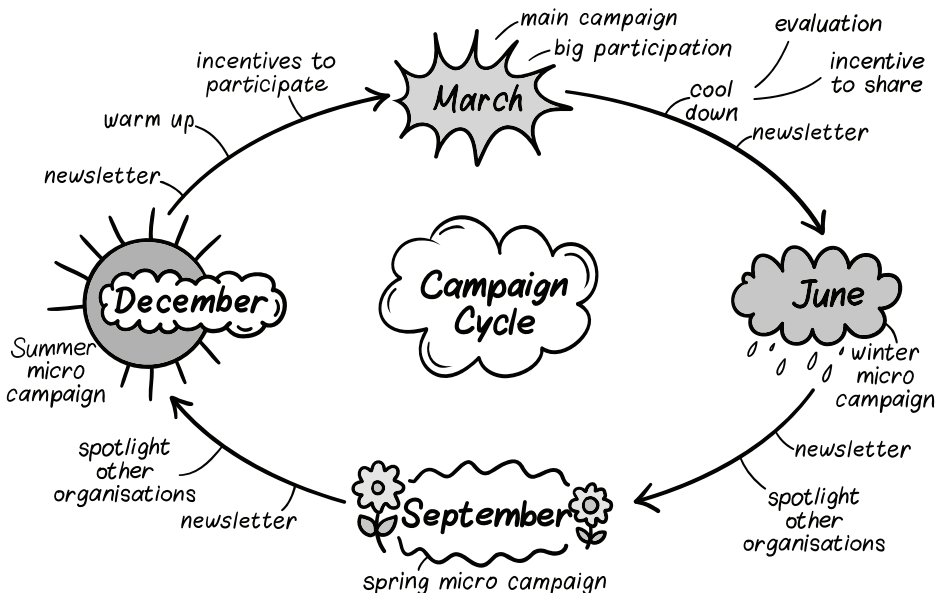
Community Think project manages Neighbours Aotearoa: a community development initiative dedicated to growing, connecting, and strengthening neighbourhoods across the country. It's a year-long campaign, but the headline campaign month takes the spotlight in March each year. Harriet, the Project Lead for Neighbours Aotearoa, understands the value of stretching resources. With no full-time staff and limited funding, creativity and collaboration are essential to achieve great outcomes, such as: more people knowing about, and participating in Neighbours Aotearoa across the motu.

Here's our approach when mapping out the year-long campaign to maintain momentum and expand the movement:

Planning

We break the year down into segments, with March being the highlight campaign month. The months leading up to March are about building awareness and encouraging participation, while the months after focus on reflection and feedback. But what about the rest of the year? This is where we think about acquisition and retention.

Here is a diagram that illustrates the campaign cycle:




Retention and Acquisition

These may be buzzwords, but they're crucial for campaign planning. Retention is about keeping people already connected to Neighbours Aotearoa engaged, while acquisition is about attracting new people to take part. Below are some ways we do this.


Micro-Campaigns

Throughout the year, we use 'micro-campaigns' to keep Neighbours Aotearoa buoyant. These campaigns are super simple but effective for growing our database and keeping the momentum alive.

 **Tip:** *To save money and expand our reach, we try to collaborate with other organisations or brands for these. For example; we were gifted free packs of seeds for our spring campaign.*


Quarterly Newsletter

A regular newsletter keeps Neighbours Aotearoa in people's minds and is a vehicle for regular connection.

 **Tip:** *To save time, we curate tools and resources from other organisations in our newsletter. This approach fosters collaboration and support while reducing the resources needed for this— and they're more likely to share something for you down the track too!*


Capturing Information

When offering something, we aim to get a non-monetary exchange—this could be getting sign-ups to our database or asking for a testimonial.

 **Tip:** *Automate this with the sign-up forms so everything automatically feeds into your database. Automate an email when people sign up—'Welcome to the Neighbours Aotearoa community' and introduce them to your website—this makes it feel less transactional.*


Content and Storytelling

Having or generating enough content is a typical thing people struggle with but it is very important when building a 12 month campaign. We believe the best stories and content come from the community, so we encourage people to share their photos and stories and we usually provide incentives for doing so.

 **Tip:** *Give good direction: we asked people to share their favourite recipe with us and a quick story or memory connected to the recipe. People got really into this idea, and it gave us engaging content for months!*

Incentives Along the Way

Yes, they work, and sometimes you have to dangle a carrot in front of someone to get them to take the next step!

 **Tip:** *See if you can get prizes sponsored and use these for incentives.*

Now, how do you reach new people?

Getting the Word Out in a Cost-Effective Way

Spreading awareness can be a costly exercise—especially if you’re thinking about paid advertising spend. We utilise the Neighbours Aotearoa communication touchpoints first, before any paid spend.

First, we map out all our ‘owned communication assets’ that could be used to build awareness: this could be the website, database, our staff email signature, social platforms, any owned physical display areas we could utilise, and we start from there.

Then, we look beyond what we ‘own’ and leverage what our partners, supporters, and networks might have. This could be their e-newsletter, website, staff database, social channels, a workshop they might be holding, or physical offices.

Once we’ve exhausted all the ‘free’ avenues, we look at paid spend.



Tip: Make it easy for people to share information! For example, give them content ready for social media or imagery that is the correct size for their website. They will be very grateful, and you’re more likely to get a better response!

Consistency

Keep consistent and stick to the plan! If you have agreed to post once a week on social media, then really try and do this. It could even be sharing something another organisation has shared—again this is building connection and collaboration.

Teamwork

Effective teamwork is the key to a successful campaign. When we plan for the year, we come together to brainstorm and workshop ideas—our participant survey and evaluation really steer the direction on this too. Next, we divvy up tasks and responsibilities so that each team member can work on what they’re passionate about and good at. Regular check-ins and a clear project plan keep everyone on track, making sure we hit our milestones and team members take ownership of their work.



Tip: We create a weekly project timeline to make sure tasks are completed on time. We maintain open communication and always celebrate even the tiniest of wins.

See my presentation ‘Project management 101’ in the ‘10 Minutes at 10’ series for more tips.

Neighbours Aotearoa’s year-long campaign proves that creativity, dedication, and cost-effective strategies can drive meaningful community impact, even on a tight budget!

BOLSHIE (A POEM)

By Lucette Hindin

she's a handful

a mouthful

of colour

a colourful

mother of planets and stars

the abundance

she endures

she lures

she is the fudge sauce

the ice cream

queen

those hips

have sunk a thousand ships

she says yes

she says

no

jim can fuck right off

she's ongoing

she's flowing

with the volume turned up

she's voluminous

she's numinous

SHE'S BOLSHIE

REFLECTIONS: WORKING WITH CONTROVERSY, CONFLICT AND COMPLEXITY

By the Community Think team

Cissy: Prince has sung about it, and now we find ourselves in the middle of it: Controversy.

I am attracted to working in areas where there is conflict, contention or controversy—largely because I recognise potential for there to be change.

It's not the drama I enjoy, it's that the disturbance can be a fruitful ground to understand and generate new ways of appreciating each other, even if more often than not people are very entrenched in their 'corner' and it can feel hopeless. For me, the fact that they are worked up about something is a sign of commitment and passion.

To be an active listener means really getting a sense of what is upsetting and appreciating this, as if I was standing in the shoes of the person talking to me. This in itself can be restorative to the teller.

I have a clear memory of walking around a caravan park, many years ago, and asking people what they wanted in terms of services. One guy said to me "you asking is enough for me—I feel valued". The power of being heard and seen, without the need to fix or offer solutions, has stayed with me.

'A problem shared is a problem halved'—that adage rings true for me. First, we have to work with the disturbance, we need to take the heat out,

or at the very least manage the heat, and get clear about the experience and motivations that have led to this experience. Often people want to 'move on' and see this 'in the past'. I think that without attention to the relationship and truth telling, it is hard to work with people to generate a new experience or new way to approach a situation.

In saying all of that, being immersed in people's trauma, fear, anger, righteousness and experiences of being marginalised does require one to look after themselves.

My main takeaway is not to disregard anyone. It takes all of us in the system to be expansive for the new to emerge.

Harriet: I was recently involved in a community engagement project that involved a series of conversations centred around a divisive social issue. Our primary role was to gather feedback from the community. Throughout the project, I encountered comments that I found to be harmful, insulting, classist, and racist, which left me feeling deeply uncomfortable. I constantly grappled with the urge to respond, challenge, or defend against such comments—reactions I might have had if I were in a different role—despite understanding the importance of maintaining neutrality to facilitate the process effectively.

What proved instrumental to help me navigate this were the regular and valuable informal and formal debriefing sessions with our team throughout the project. These sessions offered a safe and supportive space for us to openly express our thoughts and emotions, providing a much-needed vehicle to decompress and reflect on the difficult situations we encountered. I believe that incorporating this into your project process is not only beneficial for the project's success but also for the well-being of everyone involved.

Lucette: I think about the number of times that I've been taught about listening: in Nonviolent Communication, as a CAB volunteer, in my Buddhist training, just to name a few, and also how much I've learnt by watching Cissy put that simple but powerful tactic into practice in situations where there is conflict and complexity.

It's easy to see how helpful it is for the individual, and also for the difficult situation that they are so embedded in, when someone comes along and listens to them with full attention, reflects back what they've heard and values what they are saying—sees the value in it, makes sense of it, makes it part of the larger picture.

It helps people see that *they* have value, that what they have been through is real, the way they have responded to it is valid, and their voice still matters. I might be sitting there thinking “well, I've got no idea how to sort out this mess” but already we are making a difference by allowing people to speak their truth. Only after a lot of open listening do we start the process of analysing what

everyone is saying about the situation and planning how to help them come to some sort of solution or way forward together.

Mel: It can be one heck of a learning experience to work in the midst of chaos, disputes and tangled webs of complexity. The spiciness of controversy can spark change in our mindsets, but it can also blow up in our faces. You've got to tread carefully, listen more than you speak, and always look for common ground.

I'm a bit of a conflict-avoider—I'd rather keep the peace than be swept up in the heat of the moment. But, bottling up emotions and letting bad behaviour slide is not always the way to go. It's certainly not a bolshie way to deal with something. So, what's someone who would avoid drama to do? What I've learned is the importance of recognising my emotions and figuring out their source—emotions are information, they help us direct our attention and influence what we learn, what we remember and the choices we make. If we are blinded by them, we could react to conflict in a less-than-helpful way, i.e. reactive rather than responsive. Having a level of awareness has helped me navigate the stormy seas with my sanity intact!

Complexity is where growth and learning happens, even if it feels like juggling flaming swords. So, embrace it! Break it down into bite-sized pieces. Keep learning, adapting, and always stay open-minded. Remember, you're a force to be reckoned with!

VOLUNTEER WORK IN BOUGAINVILLE: APPLYING THE REFLECTIVE CYCLE

By Dell Rock (Office Junior at Community Think, 2022)

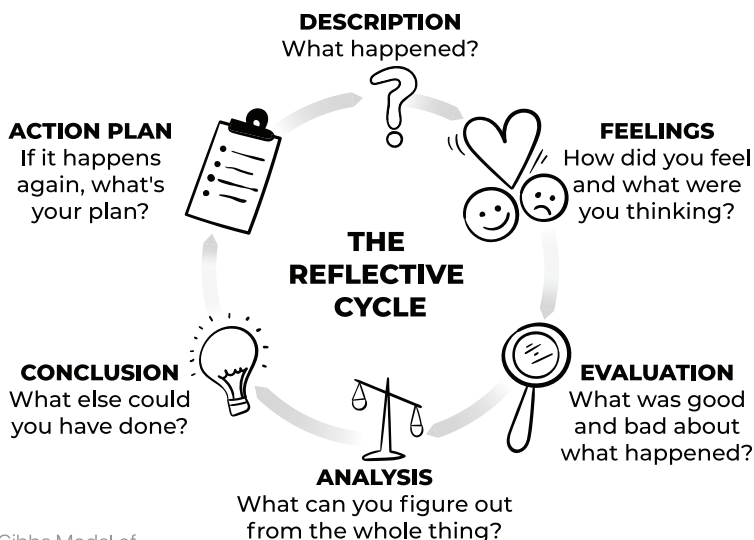
Introduction by Lucette Hindin

What Is the Reflective Cycle and How Can It Be Used?

There are many situations that can benefit from reflection. In fact, we can use it any time that we want to gain insight or learning from a situation, any time we feel confused or dissatisfied or need to understand something more fully.

Whether we are at the beginning, middle or end of a project, a reflective cycle with the working group or participants can really help us all see what has been unseen, get hold of dynamics that might hold the work back, or understand why things might not have turned out how we thought they would.

Following the reflective cycle helps make sure that we go through all parts of the process consciously and don't jump straight into analysis or action plans without giving time for feelings, thoughts and evaluations to surface. This also helps value all voices and ways of thinking—you might notice that some people have more to offer at different stages of the cycle. Making time for and valuing everyone's input can generate better engagement, cohesion and teamwork.



The Gibbs Model of Reflection 'Gibbs 1988'

A Community Development Volunteer in Bougainville



What Happened?

At the end of 2022, having just completed university, I signed up to become a volunteer doing community development in Bougainville. What attracted me to this position was the rich history of the island as well as their journey towards independence since becoming an autonomous region following the conflict which ended in 2001. This history meant that I was presented with the unique opportunity to assist in the development of community structures as Bougainville carves its way towards independence from Papua New Guinea.

It took some time, due to delays with the visa process, but eventually I managed to make my way into the country and could get to work. I would be volunteering with a government department and through them working with Bougainville Youth Federation, a network of youth aged 18–35. My main role was

working alongside the executive team of the federation and helping them with day to day operational tasks and technical literacy skills.

While on paper that was what I would be doing, things didn't exactly turn out that way. Issues quickly began to arise with the communication between the involved organisations. There was a lack of communication and mutual understanding of my role, and the hierarchical structure of the relationship between these organisations was a barrier to them being able to work this out. Some of the breakdown in communication stemmed from the fact that the role that I had originally applied for was designed before Covid, and now, four years later the context of the role, and even the need for it, had changed. These internal issues soon led to a complete halt in the work and myself being displaced.



How Did You Feel and What Were You Thinking?

Before coming to Bougainville, I was excited about developing my own skills while giving back to a country that is in the process of establishing its independence. I aimed to have no expectations towards the role, knowing that progress isn't always smooth; it takes time. I wanted to enter the space with a community-led mindset, allowing the locals to choose a direction and for me to assist in reaching that direction.

As things broke down, I continued to hold onto the hope that time would resolve the issues, and that things would soon continue despite the setbacks. However, the lack of work tested my patience and optimism.

The experience of being immersed in a different culture was interesting. Due to the work New Zealand did during the peace agreement talks in the early 2000s and the continued presence of both volunteers and police from

New Zealand, there was an overwhelming abundance of appreciation for the ‘kiwis’ or “fat chickens” as some of the locals would say. The locals were more than happy to explain things and appreciate the curiosity and genuine interest expressed in their culture and way of life. It was often the warmth of these interactions that made it easy to forget that my time in this place was not working out in the way I had imagined at all.

However, it was this same warmth I was greeted with that made it harder to face my own lack of progress. I regretted not being able to achieve some of the things I thought I might. Being separated from what I knew, without a clear purpose or role and lots of time on my hands, made it feel like I was taking more than I was giving. I had hoped for a mutual exchange; one in which I could assist the community in growing, and in doing so, grow myself.



What Was Good and Bad About What Happened?

The good of the situation was that the challenges I faced forced me into discomfort, a place where at times I felt stagnant but I was also forced to grow my patience and resilience. It was a time in my life that it felt like many things were going wrong but the only way to really cope was to focus on the small things such as the day to day interactions with people which brought me joy.

The bad of the situation was that I had come to work alongside the people of Bougainville but I had quickly found myself feeling as if I was here with no purpose. When there was work for me to do, it felt like there was a reason I was there, but over time, as the work halted, I began to feel that my presence took up time and resources that could be used better elsewhere—not only all the time I had given up to be there but also the resources the organisation was spending to keep me in the country.



What Can You Figure Out From the Whole Thing?

As I reflect on this period, I’ve gained some valuable insights, shedding light not only on the situation but also on my own approach. Instead of trying to avoid having expectations, I’ve learned that it’s better to be conscious of them and how they affect my perspective and approach to a situation. Focusing on having ‘no expectations’ meant that I failed to gain an understanding of the nuances involved. Expectations, in themselves, are not inherently negative. While it’s

important not to let expectations dominate our perspective, they can be helpful in preparing us for what we are facing.



What Else Could You Have Done?

Something that may have helped me is my own preparation—to ask questions, be curious and to have made sure I had an understanding of the role's expectations. This might have helped me be more conscious of the organisational challenges I was about to face. It may not have changed the outcome of my volunteering experience, but it might have changed the way I felt about the experience.

There's a balance to be found between understanding the situation and trying to control it, between knowing that things can go wrong and presuming that they will.

Perhaps if I had been more understanding and prepared, I could have more easily identified that the overbearing bureaucracy was the major issue in the progression of substantial work just as I find it to be in New Zealand. Often the ideas and goals of people lower down the rung were lost upstream and even I, with the privilege of a direct line, found my attempts to carry their voice ineffective.

Volunteering overall has been a great experience for me. Despite the difficulties, it has taught me a lot about myself, about growing complacent in the known when I should be pushing for more. It was a time that built resilience in me and understanding that no matter how good your intentions are in setting out to do something, what matters is what you do and how you do it more than anything else. I understand that though the contexts I am working in may be different, the core issues I'm faced with are often the same. Where there is room for change is in how I approach them.

10 MINUTES AT 10

Enjoy access to the full playlist for 10 minutes at 10—our bite-sized professional development series offered July–September 2023

communitythink.nz/10at10

Strategic Planning

What it means, why it's essential, where to start, and how to stay on track.

How to Run an Effective Zoom Session

Cissy shares five things she does to enliven a Zoom session to try to make it as engaging as possible.

Project Management 101

Some ways to kick off a project, and tips and ideas to keep the project on track!

Facilitation

Cissy has a simple framework lovingly called the 5 Ps of Facilitation. She goes through each 'P' to provide a solid sense of what to consider when facilitating.

Online Tools

An introduction to some tools we use at Community Think, including Canva, Jot form, Doodle polls and Google forms.

Canva

Some of our best tips for getting the most out of Canva Pro.

Mailchimp

Dive into the art of impactful communication through Mailchimp!

Proposal Writing

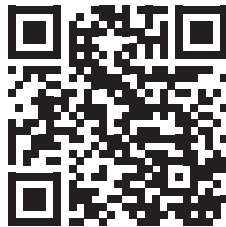
Our top tips for successful proposal writing that leaves a lasting impression! Learn key elements, structure and persuasive writing techniques needed to create winning proposals.

Workshop Design

Get clear about what you should consider with workshop design.

Social Media

How to use social media for your organisation and ways of coming up with content.



Scan the QR code with your phone to watch

GLOSSARY OF COMMON PHRASES

Tahi

“CIRCLE BACK”

To return to a point earlier in the conversation. (Perhaps someone was cut off and didn't get to finish what they were saying; perhaps we have strayed away from the purpose of the discussion).

Toru

“COLLECTIVE IMPACT”

A methodology in social change that brings a group of organisations and individuals together to address an issue.

Rima

“BONDED VS BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL”

Bonded social capital describes relationships that are dependent on membership (e.g. church, club, school), whereas bridging social capital describes relationships where people are from different groups or demographics.

Rua

“SOCIAL COHESION”

A measure of how strongly a group is connected internally. Things like the duration of relationships, the number of close connections and the strength of positive feeling towards others in the group affect social cohesion.

Whā

“BUILDING CAPACITY”

To enhance the community's ability to address it's own needs and goals. This could involve strengthening skills, knowledge, resources and relationships of community members as well as growing collaboration and empowerment of the people.

Ono

“ASSET-BASED”

Gathering information and making decisions based on strengths, looking at what already exists and is working well rather than a 'deficit-model' which talks about 'needs' (i.e. what is absent or underdeveloped).

Whitu

“SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT”

An outcomes-based framework for measuring and evaluating the social, environmental and economic values of a service, activity, programme, policy or an organisation to society.

Iwa

“COMMON DENOMINATOR ACTIVITIES”

Activities for two or more people that require no or low prior learning and experience, so are universally accessible. Examples include eating and drinking, cooking, gardening and playing.

Waru

“PINKWASHING, GREENWASHING, WHITEWASHING”

While whitewashing is covering over something or ignoring facts in order to present an inaccurate view or conclusion that is advantageous to the group presenting it, pink and green-washing are overstating a group’s rainbow or environmental involvement and commitments in order to make sales or look good in the eyes of customers, funders etc. The term “treatywashing” was coined by Brennan as part of the social licence conversation.

Tekau

“CAMPAIGN”

The plan of actions that help us achieve our goals. Forming a campaign takes into account the steps we need to take (milestones), what resources and networks we can draw on, the timeframe for actions, roles and responsibilities and how we will measure outcomes.

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