



Vereniging van  
Nederlandse Gemeenten

## How do others do it?

INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION



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VNG International supports Dutch municipalities in the development and implementation of their international endeavours.

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# Introduction

“How do others do it?” – A very relevant question for people who are exposed to dynamic environments and seek innovative approaches in response. Since recently, the Netherlands is undergoing a shift that embraces the idea of ‘increased citizen power’, meaning less government involvement and more citizen participation. This trend is present as well in numerous other countries, following a sense of discontent in regard to the combination of increasing cost and decreasing quality of public services.


VNG International, the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, has therefore examined a number of such cases in other countries. The results thereof are outlined in in this publication. In each of the cases, (local) governments seek a greater role for citizens when it comes to improving their own and direct environment’s conditions; optimizing and using their individual and collective strength is key.

Although the contexts are quite different from that of the Netherlands, the commonalities are notable in terms of searching for innovative approaches to manage and tackle common challenges. Besides illustrating the various approaches, methods and ideas, this publication hopes to spark further exploration of this development. Attached to each case, you find further information as well as contact details of applicable local governments that can provide clarification if necessary. And, of course, VNG International is also very interested in your reaction!

# 1 CANADA, Region of Peel

Human Services Department: the integration of social services



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|--|--|
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| <b>Name of the local government/local government association and country</b> | The Municipal Region of Peel, Ontario, Canada<br> |
| <b>Number of inhabitants</b>   | 1,296,814  |
| <b>Project is running since</b>  | 2008   |

Since the outbreak of the economic crisis in 2008, many governments are facing a budget decrease due to austerity measures, while simultaneously experiencing an increase in demand for services, due to the rise of unemployment and related factors of social instability. To combat these problems many governments look towards **service integration** to decrease costs, while increasing user satisfaction. Service integration promises the following benefits by facilitating:

- Simplified access to services, for example through “single window” access;
- Intensive support through coordinated case management;
- Efficiency savings through streamlining front- and back-end operations;
- More effective resource allocation through an improved understanding of existing gaps in service provision and;
- Improved advocacy, due to a more comprehensive view of the client’s needs their case manager is better able to lobby for additional resources for the client.



The municipal region of Peel, in Ontario, Canada, has successfully implemented such reforms. Moreover it has publicized, in cooperation with KMPG, best practices based on their experience.

## Canadian Context

Social programs in Canada include all government programs designed to give assistance to citizens outside of what the market provides. Canada is a federal state comprised of 10 Provinces and 3 Territories, each of which maintain a **welfare program**. The rules for eligibility and the amount given vary between the provinces/territories, which are accorded a

very high level of autonomy due to the federal nature of the state.

In 1998, the government implemented **Local Services Realignment**. This changed many key provincial and municipal responsibilities and funding arrangements. The Province of Ontario transferred several responsibilities and costs for social housing, social assistance, public transit, child care and land ambulance services to the municipalities. The download of additional social services and costs occurred over a period of time. In the rest of Canada, Social Services remain a Provincial responsibility.

Social Assistance is universally available for families and individuals without or with low incomes. Subsidies for housing and child care is also available to these 'no to low' income people, but is subject to availability of funding from the Provincial government and local municipal contributions, wait lists are common.

### **Human Services Department**

In 2007, the Region of Peel initiated one of the largest **integration efforts** in Canada to create a **service delivery model** that would provide holistic, **client-centred** and accessible service to meet citizen needs. It carried out an enormous reorganization, merging previously separate departments to align services, bringing together multiple Social Services and Housing departments forming the Human Services Department. This department is responsible for children's services, social assistance and employment programs, social housing, financial and homelessness services. This Human services integration was initiated to meet the **improving services** and **reducing costs**. It has been able to materialize the benefits above, increasing their clients' satisfaction significantly. For example through data sharing and the use of 'single window access' the people in the Region of Peel with multiple needs can be helped more efficiently and also more effectively. Previously if one was eligible for multiple forms of assistance, inhabitants of Peel needed to identify all the different services for which they might qualify by themselves and then send in separate applications to each department. Now, due to single window access, they only have to tell their story once, and are then informed by an intake professional for which services they qualify. Subsequently they can supply their personal information once, which is then shared across the departments which carry out the different service provisions, simplifying the procedure and enhancing the client's experience.

The integrated model promotes a **single point of access** and supports a more **agile approach** to service delivery, planning, funding and resources. Over 700 consultations informed the development of the integrated model; senior management, regional councillors, clients, employees and community agencies were engaged. Service satisfaction surveys and meetings with the local Legal Clinics identified policy and service challenges. The new approach is also characterized by increased stakeholder involvement, particularly through increased contact and better relations with community partners such as Legal Clinics, Community Services, Neighbourhood Supports, Faith based groups, etc. moreover it also implemented service reforms in various departments.

### **Early Learning and Child Care**

The Region of Peel reviewed its role as a direct service provider, making the decision to withdraw from direct delivery and strengthen their **service system manager role** to benefit the early learning and child care system. The service manager relies on community-based organizations to play a key role and build the capacity of the Peel community. Community-based organizations provide collaboration, research, planning, knowledge transfer and government relations and are essential to inform the development of strategies and local solutions to support the needs of Peel's children and families.

### **Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy**

Employees and community partners jointly developed Peel's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan which focuses on the housing continuum, demonstrating the importance of partnerships among

non-profit, public and private sectors to overcome obstacles to deliver housing and supports to the community.

### Alternative Service Delivery

A number of models of alternative service and business delivery have been put in place to address local challenges by leveraging partnerships and local resources.

- Partnerships and agreements instead of building ownership and operation responsibility reduce cost and risk to the Region as evidenced in a reduction of \$61,000 per unit cost in a recent build.
- Peel's Choice-Based Renting program provides applicants from the wait list with an option to receive rent subsidy where they live or to find accommodation and landlord of their own choice. This initiative resulted in approximately 500 applicants receiving subsidy.
- The Ministry of Finance (Provincial) now administers the Rent Supplement/Housing Allowance on behalf of the Region of Peel who provides funding to landlords to bridge the difference between market rent and the household contribution.

### Reflection/Analysis

#### Challenges

Key challenges confronted the region when integrating human services:

- *Organizational structure:* Services often have distinct budgets within different ministries or departments requiring large-scale reorganizations.
- *Legal restrictions on data sharing:* Data protection and privacy legislation can prevent sharing client information across services, departments, or ministries.
- *Labor relations:* Collective agreements can make it difficult to re-write job descriptions and reconfigure working arrangements.
- *Organizational resistance:* Changes that affect daily work, established institutional culture, loss of status, manager's control of budget/team impact employee support.
- *Service delivery partners with entrenched interests:* For some organizations, established business models and financial security depend on continuing government contracts, making partner support difficult.
- *Time lags in realizing savings:* Significant upfront costs are incurred while economic benefits (streamlined operations and improved social outcomes) can take years to materialize.

#### Factors for Success

Service managers have **higher accountability** to set local rules and policies that reflect community needs and support a sustainable relationship. Community stakeholders need to be engaged in the planning process and community assets and resources leveraged to strengthen capacity and ownership of solutions to local issues.

#### Piece of advice

Janet Menard: ensure that municipal governments are given local flexibility to arrange the integration of service departments and adjust their service provision to the needs of their constituency. This can come in the form of local rules, policy discretion, block funding, consolidation of programming, removal of ministerial approvals and system management responsibilities (versus service delivery or transfer payment status), etc.

#### Further information

- Region of Peel website  
<http://www.peelregion.ca/social-services/hssp.htm>

- MOWAT and KPMG report: Integrating Human Services in an Age of Fiscal Restraint: A Shifting Gears Report  
<https://www.kpmg.com/Ca/en/IssuesAndInsights/ArticlesPublications/Documents/Shifting-Gears-Report.pdf>
- Human Services plan 2007 - 2014  
<http://www.peelregion.ca/social-services/plan09-12/media/human-services-plan.pdf>



## 2 UNITED KINGDOM, Manchester

Work Clubs: addressing the needs of the unemployed



|  |  |
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| <b>Number of inhabitants</b>   | 502,900  |
| <b>Project is running since</b>  | 2010   |

The Global Economic crisis has left its mark in almost all societies in the world. The UK is no exception to this. Rising unemployment, which often leads to further instability within the individual's environment, became an acute problem within UK society. However, the call for austerity measures and a decrease in public spending created a backdrop of **public sector funding cuts** and **welfare reforms** that have radically reshaped the landscape of worklessness provision, especially at the local level. The labour market in the United Kingdom is currently weak and characterized by high levels of **worklessness** combined with significant **underemployment**. It is against this backdrop that the Work Club initiative has been introduced to combat unemployment while limiting public spending.

### Work Clubs

The Work Club initiative was introduced to encourage groups or individuals to set up local Work Clubs to address the **needs of unemployed people** in the community. Work Clubs are part of the Get Britain Working initiative launched by the (National) Government in October 2010. They are a key part of the Manchester City Council's response to welfare reforms by **promoting access to paid work** for residents. The Work Clubs are a national initiative that is actively supported by the Manchester City Council. They have allocated extra funding to ensure continuity of support.

The primary aim of the Work Clubs is to **support individuals into employment**, using voluntary and flexible forms of support. Work Clubs were initially (in the National initiative) supported by branches of the Job Centre Plus (JCP), which is a public institution, part of the national welfare system for the unemployed in the UK. The Work Clubs were an initiative to increase the involvement of social/community partners in the attempt to decrease unemployment.

The Work Clubs typically provide a **mix of pre-employment activities** such as information, advice and guidance and support with job search, CV writing and job applications.

There are roughly three kinds of Work Clubs:

- *Community-based*: entirely **volunteer led**, staff experience is limited, funding is limited to JCP or Manchester City Council, community facilities, general support to local residents. This type of Work Club can perhaps be seen as most closely aligned with the 'Big Society' ideal of community-led solu-

- tions to local problems with significant reliance on volunteers;
- *Specialist*: paid staff with some volunteers, staff experience is limited, some funding from JCP and Manchester City Council and some recourse to external funding, specialist centres, niche **support to groups with particular needs**. These Work Clubs evolved out of existing civil society organizations, which target specific vulnerable groups; for example those supporting the blind, immigrants, or ex-offenders. The Work Club initiative has allowed these groups to formalize services they previously provided on an ad hoc basis. The CSOs that are the basis for these Clubs often offer other services to their target groups as well.
  - *Established*: paid staff with trained volunteers, staff has **significant prior experience**, funding from JCP and/or Manchester City Council plus **recourse to external funding**, employment and training facilities, either general or niche support. The established Work Clubs are often **embedded in pre-existing social structures**, they are able to cross-refer to and from other services delivered in the centre where they are based.

### Manchester City Council's support to Work Clubs

Up until the end of last year, Jobcentre Plus (JCP) had a small pot of **Start Up funding** to fund the establishment of a Work Club. They could apply for up to £8000, but in reality awards were around £2000 per Work Club. Work Clubs would need to make the expenditure first and then claim back the money from JCP. The Ministerial Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) outlined from the outset that there is no fixed delivery model of a Work Club. Once JCP had funded a Work Club they then took a 'hands off' approach in terms of how the Work Club is delivered. The **Manchester City Council** decided to offer backing/help to Work Clubs after this initial inception phase to ensure there was **continuity of support**.

To ensure that support was relevant to the needs of the Work Clubs a **survey** was conducted in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and Work Club coordinators in early 2012 among the 23 Work Clubs then in existence<sup>1</sup>. This survey was used to identify the needs of Work Clubs for support from the City Council. Following on from the survey, Manchester City Council coordinated a **networking event** for Work Club coordinators that linked them to a range of partners. It was from this event that the idea for an informal network for Work Club coordinators was developed. The coordinators' network takes the form of periodic networking events – up until now about 2 per year.

Manchester City Council developed a Work Club page on the Manchester City Council **website** where jobseekers and advisors can find Work Clubs by searching on postcode. They purchased licenses to **Work Star**, which is a purpose designed tool for measuring client progress against seven different indicators of work-readiness, for Work Clubs and delivered Workshops to Work Club coordinators to enable coordinators to measure the journey of change with jobseekers.

Last year Manchester City Council set up a Work Club **steering group** made up of Ward Regeneration Officers, Jobcentre Plus and Manchester Adult Education Service. The steering group is currently looking at developing a **quality benchmarking tool**. This is to identify the support and measures necessary to ensure Work Clubs deliver a quality service, that the service is appropriate to the needs of jobseekers and that Work Clubs are able to become financially sustainable.

### Reflection/Analysis

#### Results

The results of the Work Clubs are capricious, mainly because of the lack of reporting requirements to

<sup>1</sup> According to the Manchester City Council Website there are currently 43 Work Clubs (April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015).

the funders. Nonetheless, staff and clients of Work Clubs have reported on a number of **outcomes**:

- Enhanced confidence, well-being and self-esteem
- Increased social contact and valuable peer support
- Holistic service: support with a range of non-employment issues
- Enhanced employability, through; accredited training, volunteering, enhanced IT skills, improved job-search skills, additional vocational skills and qualifications, increased awareness and understanding of job options

In addition research carried out by the University of Sheffield commissioned by the Manchester City Council indicated that the Work Clubs provide **excellent value for money**; for each pound invested the Work Clubs generated £13.61 of value.<sup>2</sup>

### Challenges

The main challenges are the **lack of resources, insufficient expertise** and the use of **volunteers**. These delivery obstacles were most keenly felt by the community-based Work Clubs. Ironically, these Work Clubs, which are most in need of training and support, were least able to find the time to invest in them due to their reliance on volunteers. One Work Club fundamentally challenges the notion of a volunteer-led employment support: "It's the result of the cuts, a Big Society thing. It's not realistic to expect people to step in and do paid jobs for no pay. Work clubs are fiddling around the edges".

### Success factors

The factors that contributed to the achievements of the Work Clubs include; **employer-led approach**, which allows the Work Club to tailor their activities to the demands of certain employers such as the University of Manchester, use of **(trained) volunteers , local facilities, partnerships** (source of referrals and information), skills of the Work Club staff and understanding the needs of vulnerable clients. However, it is important to note that specialist and established Work Clubs were significantly more successful in moving job seekers into employment than community-based Work Clubs.

### Further information

- Manchester City Council Work Club Funding  
<http://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/news/manchester-city-council-work-club-grant-funding>
- Work Club page on the Manchester City Council website  
<http://www.manchester.gov.uk/workclubs>

<sup>2</sup> The investment was set off against the decrease of (unemployment) benefit payments made to those previously unemployed who had now moved into employment through the Work Clubs.

## 3 FINLAND

### Council for Older People and Wellbeing supporting home visits: engaging senior citizens



|   |   |
|---|---|
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| Project is running since  | 2013  |

In the majority of Western European countries a demographic shift is taking place. People's lifespan increases, while birth rates decline, resulting in the aging of the population. This demographic trend is also noticeable in Finnish society. Finland has an elaborate welfare system that risks becoming too expensive to maintain because of these changes. To combat this trend the Finnish National government has taken the initiative to change their provisions concerning the care of the elderly. Central to this approach is the promotion and facilitation of healthy aging. **Healthy aging** supports the extension of careers, contributes to enabling the **full participation** of older people in the society, improves their quality of life and reduces the need for social and health care services. In doing so it also promotes the **sustainability of public finances**. In addition to these measures, however, Finland has also introduced further provisions to reduce costs, while increasing the wellbeing of the elderly.

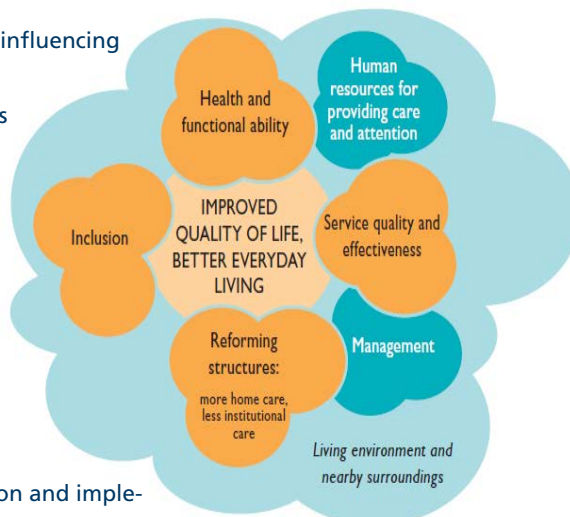
In Finland, the responsibility to organize services for the elderly lies at municipal level. Since July 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 this is regulated by the Act on Supporting the Functional Capacity of the Ageing Population and on Social and Health Care Services for older Persons (so called **Act on the Care Services for Older Persons**). This law aims to bring about two central objectives. The first objective is to support the wellbeing, health, functional capacity and independent living of the older population. The second is to improve the opportunities of the older population to **participate** in the preparation of decisions influencing their lives and in developing the services they need in the municipality.

#### Reform of the Local Government Act

Reform of the Local Government Act is on-going, it will enter in force by January 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. According to the draft, the **residents** of the municipality and the service users have the right to **participate** in and to **influence** the **municipal activities**. The decision makers have to take care that there are enough wide-ranging and effective influencing possibilities. This new reform of the local government act strengthens the commitment to the second objective of the Act on the Care Services for Older Persons, for it obliges local governments to ensure participation of all its constituents, including the elderly, in its decision and policy making.

Recommendations to improve participation and influencing of service users in municipal activities:

1. Organizing **discussions**, hearings and citizen's panels;
2. **Consult** the opinions of the municipality's constituency before making a decision;
3. Choosing **representatives** of service users to municipal organs;
4. Organizing possibilities to **participate** in municipal household planning;
5. **Planning**, developing and **producing services** together **with service users**; and
6. Supporting **initiatives** of planning, preparation and implementation of matters of the residents, organizations and other communities.



### Council for older people

Local authorities must establish a **council for older people** to ensure the older population's **opportunities to participate** in and **exert influence**. The council must be provided with the opportunity to influence the planning, preparation and monitoring of actions in the different spheres of responsibility of the municipality in regard to matters that are of significance for the wellbeing, health, inclusion, living environment, housing, mobility and daily activities of older persons or for the services needed by the older population.

### Services promoting wellbeing

Local authorities must offer services to older people:

1. Guidance aiming to **promote wellbeing**, healthy lifestyles and functional capacity as well as to prevent illness, accident injuries and accidents;
2. Identification of any **social and health problems** caused by the impaired health and functional capacity of the older population, and provision of early support related to that;
3. Guidance regarding **social welfare** and other social security regulations and provisions;
4. Guidance regarding **medical care**, multi-professional rehabilitation and safe pharmacotherapy;
5. Guidance for using the **services promoting wellbeing**, health, functional capacity and independent living available in the municipality.

### Wellbeing supporting home visits to the elderly

One of the central provisions of the Act on Care Services for Older People is to stimulate measures that support the elderly to stay in their own homes as long as possible. This is based on two assumptions: the first is that institutional care will be too expensive in the future due to demographic changes (aging population) and these measures will decrease the amount of people who need round the clock care. The second is aimed at the wellbeing of the elderly and is based on the idea that their wellbeing is best served by staying in their own, familiar environment as long as possible. To help accomplish this a health or social care professional makes home visit to the elderly to assess their state of health and wellbeing. Particular attention is being paid to those people who belong to so-called risk groups like people with dementia, single households, malnutrition, poor functional capacity, who have recently moved to a new environment etc.

### Welfare Plan

The **wellbeing supporting home visit** is used to gather information about the person's ability to live their lives (as they – would – like) and go about the (necessary) day-to-day activities. This assessment

results in a **welfare plan**, drawn up by the municipal professional in cooperation with the older person, and if necessary/desired family or close friends. The goal of the welfare plan is to support the elderly's own capabilities and resources to minimize reliance on services. In formulating the welfare plan special attention is paid to the future and possible changes that can be foreseen in the long term (housing, daily activities etc.). By placing the older persons' **capacities and needs** at the centre and involving him/her actively in the elaboration of the welfare plan the older person is encouraged to take **responsibility** for his/her own life. During the visit the elderly must also be **informed of the services** in the local authority that can contribute to their health and wellbeing, whether provided by public, private or charitable organisations. This is not limited to classic service provision but also looks towards ensuring their health and wellbeing pro-actively, by encouraging behaviour that increases the chances of them aging well. This category includes healthy nutrition, exercise and investing in the extent of their social network, for example by facilitating their active involvement in society.

During the home visit different issues are discussed with help of a **form**. These issues include their health, functional capacity, housing and living environment, information about the services they (would like to) use, their own wishes to make life meaningful. These are incorporated into their own, individual, welfare plan. It is important to **re-evaluate** and **update the welfare plan periodically** to ensure that changes in capabilities and needs are incorporated and addressed. **Questions included in the form** are:

1. Important matters for me are...
2. I voluntarily do the following things (e.g. gym, hobby, travels)...
3. ... makes me happy.
4. I am afraid and become anxious when...
5. If I cannot live in my apartment, I wish to live...
6. I would like to take part in some activities like parish, voluntary work, council for older people...
7. What I will do for good ageing, how I take care of myself...
8. Through these items/people I feel secure at home...
9. My own welfare plan (e.g. movement, exercise, hobbies, culture)
  - Activities
  - How often, with whom, where?
  - Evaluation

Enabling and encouraging the elderly to prolong their residence in their own homes is predicated on the **careful management** of their **individual cases**. It demands a pro-active stance from care-givers both formal and informal. There is research-based evidence of the **effectiveness of increased risk management** (e.g. preventing falls and accident injuries), nutritional advice and exercise in particular, and of the fact that early intervention in the deteriorating functional capacity of older people pays off, but it is a big challenge to find the persons at risk. The wellbeing supporting home visits can be one solution to this.

### Further information

- Act on the Care Services for Older Persons  
<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/kaannokset/2012/en20120980.pdf>
- Quality recommendation to guarantee a good quality of life and improved services for older persons  
[http://www.stm.fi/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?folderId=9882186&name=DLFE-29345.pdf](http://www.stm.fi/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=9882186&name=DLFE-29345.pdf)
- The Finnish Local Government Act  
<http://www.localfinland.fi/en/authorities/local-self-government/Documents/Finnish%20Local%20Government%20Act.pdf>

## 4 UNITED KINGDOM, Luton

### Social Inclusion through Capacitation<sup>3</sup>



**UCLG Committee  
on Social Inclusion,  
Participatory Democracy  
and Human Rights**

**Inclusive Cities  
Observatory**

|  |   |
|--|---|
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| <b>Name of the local government/local government association and country</b> | Luton Borough Council, United Kingdom<br>  |
| <b>Number of inhabitants</b>   | 203,201 in the borough of Luton according to 2011 UK census (ca. 9000 of which are residents of the Marsh Farm neighbourhood) |
| <b>Project is running since</b>  | 1990's -ongoing   |

Deterioration and deprivation of neighbourhoods is a common feature in large cities around the world. However, effective methods to **galvanize the neighbourhood** to become actively involved in its own improvement are still elusive. The borough of Luton in the United Kingdom has developed and implemented a plan to improve one of its disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The borough of Luton is one of 33 that constitute the Greater London Area. The Greater London Area is one of the most prosperous regions in the European Union, however within its bounds **urban poverty** remains; the Marsh Farm neighbourhood within the borough of Luton is one such area. Marsh Farm historically has a working class character, previously being the site of (heavy) industry. In the 1980s

<sup>3</sup> The **Inclusive Cities Observatory** is a space for analysis and reflection on local social inclusion policies. It contains over sixty case studies on innovative policies for community development, access to basic services, gender equality, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty, among others. The initiative has been developed with the scientific support of Prof. Yves Cabannes from the University College of London (15 case studies) and a team of researchers from the Centre for Social Studies (CES) at the University of Coimbra, which has worked under the supervision of Prof. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (50 study cases). This Observatory aims to identify and investigate successful experiences that might inspire other cities to design and implement their own social inclusion policies.

The **Inclusive Cities Observatory** has been created by the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of UCLG. United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the global platform that represents and defends the interests of local governments before the international community and works to give cities more political influence on global governance. The **Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights** aims to contribute to building a common voice for the cities of UCLG in the areas of social inclusion, participatory democracy and human rights. It also aims to guide local governments in designing these policies and to that end, fosters political debates, the exchange of experiences and peer learning among cities around the world.

industry deserted the area, leaving its mark on local economic structures. Mismanagement and bad planning led the neighbourhood to become one of ‘the most deprived neighbourhoods’ in Britain in 1997, according to a National Government report. This severely (negatively) impacted the confidence levels of its residents in the government, both local and national.

The governance system in the United Kingdom is formally highly decentralized, giving local governments a high level of autonomy. The boroughs hold power over a number of fundamental service areas such as housing, education, social services, transport, and planning. However, the formal structure of decentralization is weakened due to financial and political constraints. Not only are local governments highly dependent on national funds (it accounts for over 65% of Luton’s budget), they are also politically limited in their autonomy by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), which coordinates and discusses themes within the local sphere at the national level.

### New Deal for Communities

The inter-connectedness of the local and national level is also evident in the ‘New Deal for Communities’, a policy adopted in 1998 by the British Government to address territorial deprivation by **concentrating a very large amount of funds** and technical resources on **targeted neighbourhoods**. It comprised a massive (financial) investment (around £50 million for each area spread over a 10-year period) by the national government. The program was structured in a way that the national government would remain involved through (the regional bodies) of the Social Exclusion Unit<sup>4</sup>, which is directly tied to the (National) Cabinet’s Office. However, the direct responsibility and accountability for the overall program lay with the local authorities. In addition, the program involved local communities (inhabitants and organizations, through the formation of local trusts, which would coordinate the interventions to be undertaken. Moreover, the program required **direct involvement of the local community** and the creation of strategic partnerships between community-based organizations active in the social and voluntary field, public bodies, and private enterprises. These partnerships had to allow for, among other things, the reorganization and redefinition of local services beginning from the **needs expressed by the residents’ aspirations** and direct involvement.

The Marsh Farm Community Empowerment Strategy, which began in the early 1990s, is an ongoing community-based regeneration program based on a **‘capacitation’ approach**. This approach recognizes the impact of lack of skills on the potential for autonomous development for and within communities. However, despite this recognition it stresses the importance of opportunity over capacity. Capacitation stresses the development of capacities through action over capacity development through a capacity building approach, because it considers a lack of opportunity to act as the greatest impediment for the disadvantaged, rather than the lack of skills per se. The main objective of the policy is, therefore, to enable the people living in Marsh Farm to improve themselves and their neighbourhood through the construction of a **community of self-help**. Within an urban regeneration process, the policy focuses on those with a story of **social exclusion** due to long-term unemployment<sup>5</sup> as well as socially marginalized people.

### Development of the initiative

The focus of the Marsh Farm initiative is therefore **direct involvement by the community**. In this context they also aim for social inclusion of all its residents, this is important because of the highly diverse composition of its population, both concerning ethnicity as well as faith. The Marsh Farm Outreach initiative benefited in the pursuit of these aims from the high concentration of **social capital** in the

<sup>4</sup> The Social Exclusion Unit is an initiative of the New Labour Government to explore best practices concerning social inclusion.

<sup>5</sup> Unemployment in Marsh Farm exceeds 30%. This is even higher for youth unemployment, it exceeds 50%.



Marsh Farm neighbourhood. It houses a large variety of organizations linked to ethnic minorities, religious groups and different sorts of local activist groups, which were an important facilitating factor in achieving community participation.

In addition the initiative aims to allow the Marsh Farm **community to help themselves** through the facilitation, coordination and realization of its **residents' initiatives**, most notably with regards to local economic development, unemployment and social inclusion, through the creation of, and support for local businesses and social enterprises. Part of the initiative is the **rehabilitation and re-allocation of existing resources**, such as several abandoned buildings in the area, which were converted for public use or set up to accommodate the (new) local businesses and enterprises. These projects were generally set up to maximize community participation for example through the use of local businesses for the building projects and the requirement of the provision of traineeships within the execution of the projects.

The pinnacle of the Marsh Farm initiative is the recently green-lit Organizational Workshop pilot project, which is an on the **job training programme**, embodying the capacitation approach, by giving a group of Marsh Farm residents the funds and training to realize their ideas for local businesses and social enterprises. As such the Organizational Workshop combines capacity building with the opportunity to act.

### Funding

In the initial stages, the project was self-financed by those involved. In 1999, as part of the NDC, the policy was awarded £48 million over a 10-year period. Recently a further investment of £9 million was allocated to run the Organizational Workshop Pilot Project over a six-month period.

### Reflection/Analysis

#### Results

The results so far include the reuse of an abandoned factory building as a **community centre**, the reuse of an old farmhouse into the community's social enterprise incubator, the **creation of jobs** and enterprises arising from the needs and knowledge of the resident population, and a **feeling of belonging** to a community and a place. The latter has activated a number of underused or unused resources present in the neighbourhood to become valuable assets to the community itself.

#### Factors for success

The greatest result of this policy process is the **policy itself**: the residents of Marsh Farm are directly involved in the urban inclusion and regeneration policy processes being implemented in their neighbourhood. Overall, the policy's greatest achievement has been its ability, through concrete and visible actions, to create jobs and even enterprises that arise from the needs and knowledge of the resident population. This **use and awareness of resources available in the neighbourhood** has created a more **positive community feeling and identity**.

#### Challenges and obstacles

First, **strong bureaucratic structures** and lengthy processes of control slowed down the policy and limits its flexibility to adapt to the continually developing ideas and to unforeseen needs that come up during the implementation of policies. Additionally, **local political conflicts** played a major role in determining the speed at which some of the problems were tackled in the Marsh Farm case.

Second, a major challenge is the **competition** between this system, aimed at giving actual independence to the community, and other welfare programs, especially if based on services of independent

companies, who often try to sabotage the initiatives when these companies feel such initiatives threaten their vested interests.<sup>6</sup>

### Replicability

The policy could be replicated in similar areas that are considered marginal if we accept the starting point of the policy: it is not a lack of abstract skills that hinders the development of an autonomous economic cycle in the area but, rather, **a lack of opportunities** and the **need to refine skills** through putting people's ideas to work. This, as the Marsh Farm case shows, favours ideas that are needed by the local community while permitting citizens/organizations to become **independent from the welfare programs** on which they rely through the decreased dependence on (formal) service providers, such as the movement into work of the employed (who no longer rely on unemployment benefits). The external financing certainly enabled the development of the policy and its results, helping give local initiatives a much more stable base and therefore enabling them to reach additional people living in the area and activating new services. However, at the core of the process is the initial idea of self-help and self-organization which, as far as possible, aims to **use and re-use internal resources available locally** (both material and 'intellectual'). The recognition of the Organizational Workshop as a pilot scheme with the possibility of being replicated on a countrywide basis is proof of the power of this strategy.

### Further information

- Marsh Farm Outreach website  
[www.marshfarmoutreach.org.uk](http://www.marshfarmoutreach.org.uk)
- Luton Council website  
[www.luton.gov.uk](http://www.luton.gov.uk)
- UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights – Inclusive Cities Observatory: Luton case  
[http://www.uclg-cisd.org/sites/default/files/Luton\\_2010\\_en\\_final\\_0.pdf](http://www.uclg-cisd.org/sites/default/files/Luton_2010_en_final_0.pdf)

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<sup>6</sup> Such conflicts are often taken up with the council, who is in control (ultimately) of the project, council awareness of these interests and their support for the local initiative is especially important in this regard.

## 5 AUSTRALIA, Port Phillip

The Community Pulse: measuring what matters<sup>7</sup>



**UCLG Committee  
on Social Inclusion,  
Participatory Democracy  
and Human Rights**

**Inclusive Cities  
Observatory**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Name of the case-owner</b>  | Alicia Hooper, Community Pulse Project Coordinator, City of Port Phillip  |
| <b>Contact details of the case-owner</b>                                     | AHooper2@portphillip.vic.gov.au   |
| <b>Name of the local government/local government association and country</b> | City of Port Phillip, Australia<br> |
| <b>Number of inhabitants</b>   | 102,501   |
| <b>Project is running since</b>  | 2001  |

There are three levels of government in Australia: federal, state or territory, and local. Local government powers are determined by state authority and are generally responsible for tasks such as spatial planning and local service delivery. Though local governments in Australia are caricatured as being concerned only with the 'three Rs' – Rates, Roads, and Rubbish, recent years have seen increasing devolution from state (or territory) to local governments. This process of **devolution** increases the power local governments can wield and their sphere of influence. The Council of Port Phillip has decided to seize this opportunity to simultaneously increase the possibility for public participation among their constituents.

### The Community Pulse Project

The Council of Port Phillip (CoPP) implemented its Community Pulse Project (CPP) in 2011. It incorporates **participative government** practices on **multiple levels**. The project is based on the premise that

<sup>7</sup> The **Inclusive Cities Observatory** is a space for analysis and reflection on local social inclusion policies. It contains over sixty case studies on innovative policies for community development, access to basic services, gender equality, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty, among others. The initiative has been developed with the scientific support of Prof. Yves Cabannes from the University College of London (15 case studies) and a team of researchers from the Centre for Social Studies (CES) at the University of Coimbra, which has worked under the supervision of Prof. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (50 study cases). This Observatory aims to identify and investigate successful experiences that might inspire other cities to design and implement their own social inclusion policies.

The **Inclusive Cities Observatory** has been created by the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of UCLG. United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the global platform that represents and defends the interests of local governments before the international community and works to give cities more political influence on global governance. The **Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights** aims to contribute to building a common voice for the cities of UCLG in the areas of social inclusion, participatory democracy and human rights. It also aims to guide local governments in designing these policies and to that end, fosters political debates, the exchange of experiences and peer learning among cities around the world.

one's sense of ownership and care about developments within the community must start by asking what progress and wellbeing constitutes for them. Through the Community Pulse Project, or the Pulse, the CoPP tries to engage their constituents to actively work towards the achievement of their vision for their community.

### Objective and methods

The main objective of the CPP is, therefore, to contribute to **creating healthy** and **sustainable communities** in the Port Phillip area. This idea of healthy and sustainable communities is based on a **holistic notion of progress** and **sustainability**. Progress and sustainability are defined in terms of the way in which our social, natural, built, cultural and economic environments support individual and community wellbeing, now and in the future. The Pulse tries to achieve this through:

- Using indicators to demonstrate movement towards or away from sustainability;
- Providing early warning signs of potential problems;
- Showing the CoPP and community how it can improve its environment, health, and wellbeing and achieve its vision of a sustainable community; and
- Being the change – engaging the community and asking to help tell the story of 'how our community is faring', ensuring their role in collectively finding the solutions.

At the heart of the project lies the collection of data on those issues that the local community considers important to track. The project '**measures what matters**' in neighbourhoods and more widely across the city of Port Phillip.

### Indicators

The project first needed to get an idea of what the local community members wanted, what they found important. This was followed up by asking 'How do you know your community is getting better (or worse)? The answer to this question was determined through a process which started at an open meeting in the town hall. During this meeting 220 possible indicators for measurement were identified. During this meeting the central desire of the residents was to gain increased control over their community and its destiny, they demanded **increased self-determination**. Autonomy therefore featured heavily in the all aspects of the Pulse project.

Subsequent to the town meeting the 220 indicators were narrowed down<sup>8</sup> by a reference committee of Municipal staff and residents to 13 themes. Finally indicators were chosen for each theme to be used as tools to track progress towards or away from their aspirations. The project intentionally used indicators that **relate to people's everyday experiences** to offer a simple way of assessing whether process was occurring, rather than focussing on rigorous scientific standards. These unique **place-based indicators** are designed to track how neighbourhoods are changing and the quality of residents' lives, and to engage residents in expressing, understanding, and acting on things they value locally. Because the indicators are developed from the **ground up**, and not from the top down, they serve as a **bond for a partnership** – a shared responsibility – between Council and residents, also including community organizations and businesses.

### Social change

**Social inclusion** and **participatory democracy** are ongoing in multiple layers within this project. First a sense of **ownership** is created, through basing the project on the needs and wishes of the community. Then indicators are identified which can be used to create a **map of social change** for the community over time, giving both the authorities and the community members insight into the developments in the neighbourhood. This knowledge can then be used to try to **influence this change** (either through

<sup>8</sup> Based on criteria such as measurability, meaningfulness, cost effectiveness, consistency in data collection and timeliness.

stimulating it further or by trying to prevent it from gaining momentum). The data is collected by community groups and residents, which are augmented with available data from state and federal organizations and the private business sector. Through the **active involvement of many stakeholders** in the data collection, knowledge about the state of affairs becomes widespread, moreover it will most likely be in the hands of those who are prepared to act on it. The collection after all is done by stakeholders, community organizations and volunteers with an interest in that indicator. The collected data can be used for lobbying purposes, but also to inspire initiatives from within the community.

The **simplicity** of the **indicators** is an important factor to ensure that the project is accessible for all community members so that it can extend its reach as far as possible. This requires an innovative approach to the way in which certain aspects of community life can be measured. The most famous example from the CPP is the “smiles per hour” indicator to measure neighbourhood connectedness. Volunteers would remain in an area for an hour and count the amount of times people smiled at them first if they were wearing a neutral expression. Subsequently signs were placed indicating the amount of ‘smiles per hours’ in that area, trying to catalyse this behaviour in future. It also serves as a reminder of the aim connected to the indicator, in this case increased social connectedness.

The CPP had an initial commitment from Council of ten years (2001 – 2010), to understand long-term change trends. This commitment provided **minimal resources** for a part-time staff person and endorsement of a local advisory committee comprised of residents, Councillors, and staff representatives.

### Beneficiaries

**Cooperation** is crucial to the Pulse. Commitment to cooperation is safe-guarded by the CoPP’s conviction that the future of a local community is extremely complex, and that the municipality is only one agent in a much broader system. It was therefore a conscious choice to use a collaborative approach for the CPP. The key to this philosophy is **mobilizing community members** to exert their influence to realize the communal vision. To optimize this **existing partnerships** are used and new partnerships are established with citizen groups and community organizations as well as local businesses. One example is the mobilization of existing organizations to help with the data collection for relevant indicators and to subsequently engage volunteers in addressing the negative developments concerning these indicators. The local EcoCentre and Earthcare helped collect data on local flora and fauna and arranged for a clean-up of the beach when they found it was severely polluted.

Within the Council, there is **interdepartmental collaboration** and **horizontal exchange of information** to maximize the impact of the data collection. Housing Development, Health Services, Waste Management, Street and Beach Cleaning, Sustainable Transport, Community and Health Development, and Governance departments all work to coordinate data, are intimately involved, and benefit from these efforts.

### Reflection/Analysis

#### Factors for success

The Pulse is a **cost-effective** way for government to catalyse engagement in community-identified issues. The most crucial development is found on the individual level, when volunteers collecting data realize that their role is not only to measure, but to be the change.

The primary challenges in this project are two-fold:

- **The positioning of the project between Council and community** means its role is in a constant state of shifting tension. Is the Pulse a direct program of the Council or do citizens drive it as a lobby body?
- **The minimal resources** provided to the project by the Council, coupled with its broad scope. The

partnerships with community organizations and local businesses must be capitalized on, either as a source of volunteers or as a source for financial backing.

### Replicability

Staff and volunteers have a clear advice: it's about place-based values and local citizen vision. This advice builds on the underlying principles of the initiative: self-determination, creativity, and grassroots engagement processes. Community indicators are messy, not clear cut, and require a **long-term commitment** to the process. Most importantly, indicators must be determined locally. The methodology can be modified to new places and communities, but only the people who experience the community can determine **what progress means locally**.

### Further information

- Community Pulse Project  
[http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/community\\_pulse\\_overview.htm](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/community_pulse_overview.htm)
- City of Port Phillip Community Profile  
<http://profile.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=221>
- UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights – Inclusive Cities Observatory: Port Phillip case  
[http://www.uclg-cisdg.org/sites/default/files/Port%20Phillip\\_2010\\_en\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.uclg-cisdg.org/sites/default/files/Port%20Phillip_2010_en_FINAL.pdf)

## 6 NEW ZEALAND, Bay of Plenty

Local Area Coordination: new model for supporting disabled people



|   |   |
|---|---|
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| Contact details of the case-owner                                     | <a href="mailto:ruthgerzon@gmail.com">ruthgerzon@gmail.com</a>  |
| Name of the local government/local government association and country | Bay of Plenty Region, New Zealand<br><br>Bay of Plenty<br>REGIONAL COUNCIL |
| Number of inhabitants   | 278,100   |
| Project is running since  | 2010  |

The health care provision in New Zealand has recently come under scrutiny from multiple directions. Not only are the costs related to current service delivery systems questioned due to the economic down-turn, some of the premises underlying **classic service provision systems** are also **in doubt**, for example the ability of current service providers to actually provide support to those who, due to health problems, find it more challenging to be a recognized and valued member of the communities to which they (want to) belong. The **Local Area Coordinator** approach tries to combat this problem, while simultaneously **decreasing** people's **reliance on service providers**, which **decreases** the **costs** of service provision. As such it is a way of effecting necessary changes in health care to ensure the level of care remains consistent, while decreasing the costs.

### Local Area Coordinator

Central to the Local Area Coordinator (LAC) approach is the idea that health care systems should be based on the skills, gifts and resources already existent within the individuals, families and communities it caters to. It recognizes that people in need of health care are not passive 'clients', 'service users' or 'customers' of a social care system. It aims at diverting people from the service system through **building** their **capacity** to become **more self-sufficient** and to stay strong. However, it recognizes that both people and communities who have relied on services for years, rarely create new networks of support or find new forms of self-reliance in isolation. Yet, if you provide the people with the right allies, who have an overview of community activity and the time to foster new solutions and connections and an unswerving belief that everyone has something of value to contribute, then cuts in terms of budget can create abundance in terms of creativity. The LAC aims to fulfil this pivotal role of ally. A LAC's central tasks are to offer a single point of contact within an area to **help people to solve their own problems** and build a good life as a **member of** their own **community**. It combines (elements of) several (previous-

ly) existing roles within the community, within one person. Related to the Dutch system it combines the area focus and easy accessibility of the former position of the district nurse (wijkverpleegkundige) with the knowledge and function as a social connector of the district-director (wijkregisseur), specifically it combines these roles with the focus on health care provision. Building on a **real relationship** and a **real presence** within the local community the Local Area Coordinator will:

1. Help people identify their strengths and capacities to solve their own problems;
2. Provide practical assistance to ensure crises are overcome or avoided;
3. Help ensure people achieve their legitimate entitlements;
4. Support people to maximize their contribution as citizens.

The LAC approach hinges on the **view of people as capable** rather than needy, and as capable people they are both able (and must be allowed) to make their own decisions and to meaningfully contribute to the communities they are (or want to be) a part of. Thus its starting point is the simple question: "What is your view of the good life? And how can (we help) you (to) achieve it?" This is not a symbolic question, but the foundation for the ongoing and in-depth relationship the LAC builds with people to be able to work with them to achieve this goal. The LAC must possess many skills and combine many functions in order to do this effectively: provide information and advice, actively build the community, develop a personal network, be aware of (map) community assets, brokerage, support planning (on community and individual level), advocacy, community based social work, service coordination, and community development. The LAC role is unique in the combination of these roles and that tight connection to a limited number of people in a geographical community, as a **single, local, accessible point of contact**. This wide variety of skills means that a wide variety of people with different (professional) backgrounds can become (good) LACs, such as community education, health care, or social work professionals, psychologists, etcetera.

The LAC supports people as **local citizens**, not as service labels, therefore (s)he can support people from all ages and across all service silos, helping to simplify and integrate often complex service systems. Moreover the LAC boosts the **local community resources** and **organizations**, considering the mobilization of **social capital** central to meet needs. In addition, a commitment to Local Area Coordination can provide a powerful and dynamic tool to **reform the health care system**. It gives individuals and communities a chance to make themselves heard, breaking the dominant position of service delivery companies whose interests do not always coincide with their clients. The LAC approach creates opportunities to rethink the roles of specialist and funded services, helps to increase accountability, and helps identify opportunities for reform, simplification and **increasing efficiency**.<sup>9</sup>

### **Bay of Plenty Pilot Project:**

New Zealand's Ministry of Health recently used the LAC approach to develop a new model for support to their disabled population. Consultation with disabled people, their families, providers and the wider disability sector, indicated that disabled people wanted **more choice and control over support they receive**. The new model combined the LAC approach with the Enhanced Individualised Funding initiative (similar to the Dutch "persoonsgebonden budget"). In cooperation with a LAC a disabled individual could decide for him- or herself what kind of care is desired and needed. The New Model aims to ensure people are connected to their communities and natural supports, create more flexibility in funded supports and enable disabled people and their families to be more in **control of that funding**.

The New Zealand model has four components:

- **Information and assistance:** Local Area Coordinators walk alongside the disabled person, help them

<sup>9</sup> For more information, including case studies, about the LAC approach please consult the UK's Centre for Welfare Reforms publication on Local Area Coordination: [Broad UK Local Area Coordination.pdf](#)



work out what they want from life, help them build community networks;

- **Funding:** moving towards giving funding rather than types of services. Increased use of self-assessment;
- **Buying support:** more choice and control over what disabled people can buy with the funding by increasing availability of Individualised funding and making supports more flexible;
- **Quality of support:** the long term, personal contact between the LAC and the disabled person creates a better way to assess and ensure the quality of life.

The Ministry of Health has implemented this approach through a pilot project in the Bay of Plenty area of New Zealand, introducing elements of the New Model in Western Bay of Plenty in 2010. Since that time four Local Area Coordinators (including a supervisor) have worked alongside disabled people in a number of Western, and as of lately Eastern, Bay of Plenty communities. The new model is not just a reorganization of the way the Ministry contracts for support or changes in what service providers do. Ultimately, the model is based on a fundamental shift in our thinking – it is a **'paradigm shift'**.

It involves changes in:

1. Fundamental question that the system asks. From “what support do you need” to **“what’s a good life for you”** and then helping people to explore what that means for them and how they can build that life. With funded support being the last resort rather than the starting point.
2. Balance of power. There is a shift in decision making authority from the Ministry<sup>10</sup> and providers towards **confirming disabled people’s autonomy** as citizens and enabling them to control their lives and the support they are allocated.
3. Emphasis: from being solely based on needs to **recognising the capacities and strengths** that disabled people can contribute in their communities.
4. Organisation. Moving away from identifying common needs and then contracting a service to meet them, towards **identifying individual needs** and building support.
5. Focus. A greater **focus on inclusion in communities** building natural networks and support around a person, complemented by funded support when necessary.

### Further information


- Inclusion Aotearoa  
<http://www.inclusionaotearoa.co.nz/>
- Local Area Coordination Bay of Plenty  
<http://www.lacbop.org.nz/>
- Inquiry into the quality of care and service provision for people with disabilities – Report of the Social Services Committee  
[http://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-nz/48DBSCH\\_SCR4194\\_1/cb220d2e3ba25dc33dec0b28b29b-30578d110dd5](http://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-nz/48DBSCH_SCR4194_1/cb220d2e3ba25dc33dec0b28b29b-30578d110dd5)
- Ministry of Health  
<http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/disability-services/new-model-supporting-disabled-people>  
<http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/disability-services/new-model-supporting-disabled-people/local-area-coordination-0>

<sup>10</sup> In the Netherlands, following the new decentralization laws, one could read here ‘Municipality’ instead of ‘Ministry’

## 7 NEW ZEALAND, Whangarei district

### Agile Open Government: Regulatory Planning Experiment



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Name of the case-owner</b>   | Nick Williamson (Team Leader District Plan & Policy Whangarei District Council)  |
| <b>Contact details of the case-owner</b>                                      | nick.williamson@wdc.govt.nz  |
| <b>Name of the local government/ local government association and country</b> | Whangarei District, New Zealand<br><br><b>WHANGAREI DISTRICT COUNCIL</b> |
| <b>Number of inhabitants</b>  | 52,900   |
| <b>Project is running since</b>   | 2014   |

Citizen participation in local governance can be arranged in many ways. In the Whangarei District in New Zealand a successful experiment was conducted with adapting 'lean' and 'agile' methodologies, used in the software development community, to **facilitate citizen participation** in the planning process of the local government. The pilot project was centred around the revision of the spatial planning policy for the suburb of Kamo. The project relied heavily on the use of **social media** and **open government principles** to change the role of the Council from arbitrator to facilitator of regulatory and social initiatives to resolve the problems that the community has identified for itself. An open government enables interested citizens to get more directly involved in the legislative process.

The Kamo pilot project, dubbed the 'Kamo Place Race' denoting the connection to spatial organization and the main goal to facilitate a **quick planning process dominated by public consultation**, won the Association of Local Government Information Management 2014 Web and Digital Award for Best Use of Social Media.

#### The Kamo Place Race

In February 2014 Council planners held the 'Kamo Place Race' which was an interactive 5 day planning event. Its main objective was to develop a draft regulatory plan change of the District Plan for Kamo, while providing the community with a sense of **'ownership'** of the process by focusing on extensive **consultation of the public** and create mechanisms for them to influence the changes. While some of the issues raised by the community turned out to lie outside the scope of the plan change, the main themes (particularly that of the suburb's 'walkability') have informed its design.

The Kamo 'Place Race'-approach combined the **'agile'** and **'lean' methodologies**. The 'agile' approach, on the one hand, ensures the process actively seeks and is led by 'live' customer feedback. It provides

for **continuous improvement** by using feedback loops regularly and consistently to learn from customer experience and adapt the product accordingly.

The 'lean' method, on the other hand, makes the procedure **problem-oriented**. The core-business, when using this method, is not to produce a product, but to solve a customer's problem. The product is therefore stripped of all attributes that are not necessary to solve the problem. This both reduces costs, while also creating a product that is of great value to the target audience.

The techniques are often combined by Tech start-up companies to get a product to market as quickly as possible and with minimum expenditure. Local governments also have vested interests in ensuring their processes are **timely and cost effective**, therefore the District Council of Whangarei decided to amend these methodologies to fit local governance needs and purposes.

### Objectives of the 'Place Race'

The direct objective was to develop a draft regulatory plan change for the suburb of Kamo. Besides the "production" objective the process had three "social" objectives:

- provide the community with a sense of **'ownership'**;
- create a **'social contract'** in which responsibility for the success of the project was shared between the council and its constituency;
- opportunity to rekindle the **sense of community** that had existed in the past;
- **building trust** between the Council and the community.

To obtain these "social" objectives 'open data' and 'open government' principles were applied to give substance to the 'lean' and 'agile' approaches when deployed in service of local government.

### The 'Place Race' lean canvas

The basis for the planning of the Kamo 'Place Race' project was a **lean canvas**. This is a business plan template used extensively by the Tech start-up community to rapidly develop a viable business model based on customer feedback. The Kamo project team started out by adapting the lean canvas model used by the tech start up community to fit local governance purposes.

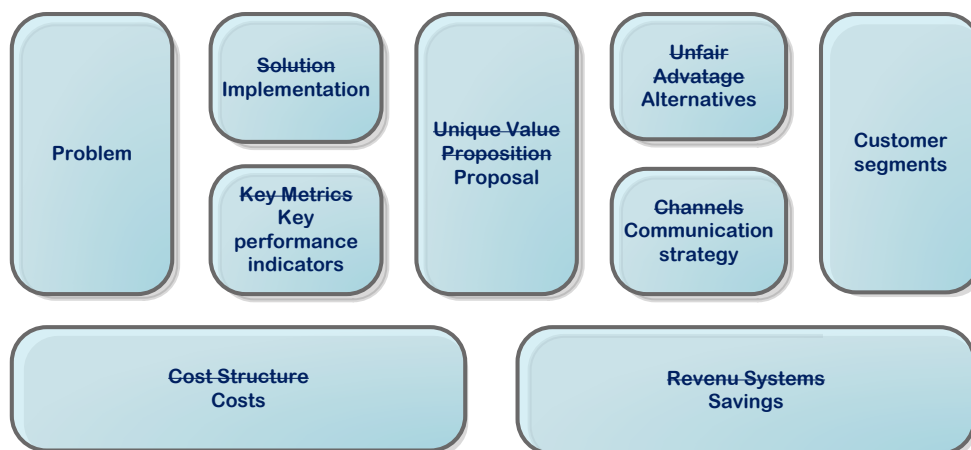


Figure 1: Lean Canvas Adapted from Tech Start-Up Format to fit Local Governance Purposes

The 'Place Race' lean canvas identified the slow planning process as the main problem. The proposal was to learn from the tech start-up community how to speed up this process.

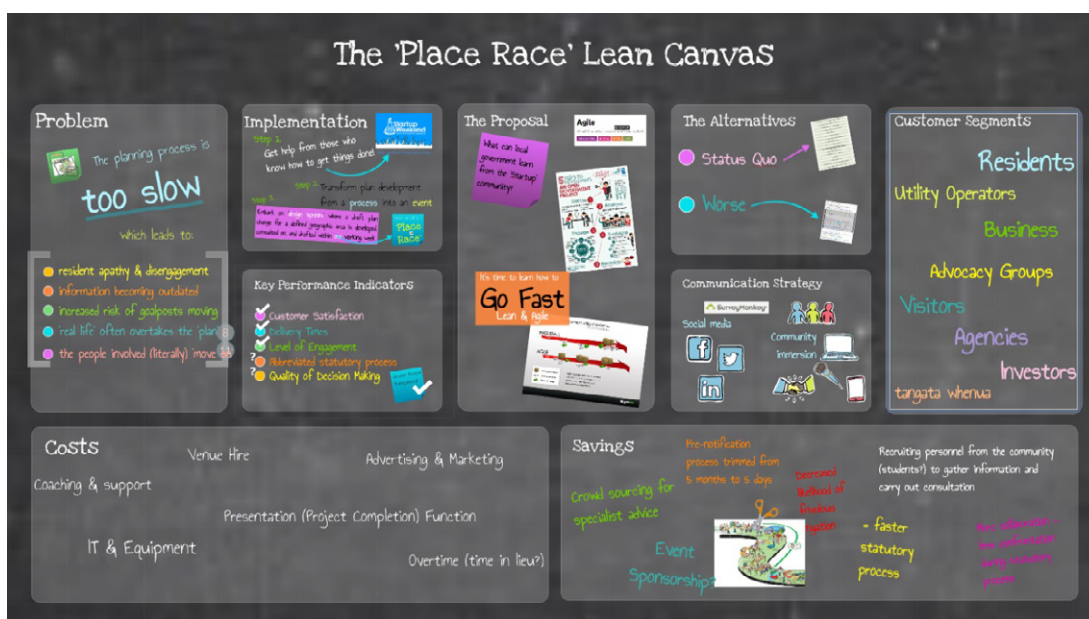


Figure 2 The Final Kamo 'Place Race' Lean Canvas

### Planning

Once the problem was identified, the planning began to successfully solve it. The 'lean' and 'agile' approaches were used to organize a five day planning event<sup>11</sup> to develop a plan change with the community of Kamo. The weeks preceding the event were dedicated by the project team to the **promotion** of the event to ensure that Kamo citizens were aware of, and eager to participate in the event. To this end they used a combination of new and old 'technologies' such as flyers and posters, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube), and meetings with various stakeholders such as the Kamo business community. Besides external promotion, time and energy was also expended to create a positive atmosphere within the District's civil service, to ensure internal support for the project.

| Before the event  | Day 1   | Day 2  | Day 3   | Day 4   | Day 5   |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| Prepare. Promote the event both internally and externally and get physically ready for implementation | Understand. Dig into the design problem through research, competitive review and strategy exercises | Diverge. Rapidly develop as many solutions as possible | Decide. Choose the best ideas and hammer out a user story | Prototype. Build something quick and dirty that can be shown to users | Validate. Show the prototype to the target audience and evaluate together |

The preparation time was also used to design and implement the project base. Although a significant part of the action was to take place online, through surveys and social media, the project team was careful not to exclude those who do not or only rarely use the internet. Therefore all activities that were available online were replicated in physical form. For example the information available online was displayed at the project base, as well as the multimedia imagery and the live survey results. In addition people on the streets were addressed and asked to participate directly, either through filling out the survey or through conversation.

<sup>11</sup>This event was modelled on Google Venture's concept of design sprints.

### The Event:

- Day 1: **Understand**. The first day was dedicated to defining and understanding the '**problem**'. In the Kamo project, aimed at spatial planning, this meant to distil all the resource management issues into a few discussion topics and use the survey to gather the opinions of the community on those topics. The results of the survey were compiled and published throughout the day.
- Day 2: **Diverge**. The purpose of the second day was to **stimulate creative thinking** in order to come up with as many **options and solutions** as possible to address the issues identified. To help the process along the findings of the survey of day 1 were summarized and some conclusions were drawn from the results to provide a starting point. In addition polls were developed to validate the conclusions drawn from the survey.
- Day 3: **Decide**. The proposed solutions were evaluated on viability, this mainly rested on a **cost benefit appraisal**. Lean canvas business cases were developed for the three front runners and were published for public feedback.
- Day 4: **Prototype**. The prototype needed to be developed. In the case of the Kamo 'Place Race' a draft of the new Plan Change was prepared. For those ideas that fell beyond the scope of the Plan Change, expectations were actively managed and discussion was directed towards issues of funding, or other obstacles to their realization.
- Day 5: **Validate**. The adjustments in the new draft Plan Change were put into effect on a temporary basis (in this case, for example, certain roads were blocked to create a Village Green), to give the community the **opportunity to try out** and **evaluate** the changes.

## Reflection/Analysis

### Results

The results of the 'Place Race' event:

The 'production' objective was reached, within five days a prototype District Plan Change was developed in consultation with the community.

### Customers

- Credit given for effort
- Found the silent majority
- Interested and engaged
- Participation is easier
- Conversation between public
- Overwhelmingly positive

### Finance

- Printing, copying and postage costs reduced drastically
- Less staff time than holding a series of public meetings
- Technology cost within normal operating parameters

### Process

- Council's role changes from arbitrator to facilitator
- Agile process enables visible listening (=trust)
- Risk is dispersed (through continual feedback loops the target group is actively involved in the production of the product/policy thereby reducing the risk that the policy will fail because of irrelevance, inefficiency and impracticality)

## People

- Staff empowered, motivated and invigorated (=high productivity)
- Took conscious effort not to resort to conventional method
- Sense of satisfaction with progress and achievement
- Unlocks creativity

## Further information

- Kamo Place Race trailer  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7P-cKjihMfQ>
- Prezi presentation: What is a Place Race?  
[http://prezi.com/yjb2\\_kowdzcg/what-is-a-place-race/](http://prezi.com/yjb2_kowdzcg/what-is-a-place-race/)
- Prezi presentation: Agile open government  
<http://prezi.com/ry73ttwcrkqz/agile-open-government-regulatory-planning/>
- Whangarei District Council website  
<http://www.wdc.govt.nz/Pages/Default.aspx>
- Specifically this report including an account of the Kamo 'Place Race'  
<http://www.wdc.govt.nz/YourCouncil/CouncilMeetings/Documents/2014/Planning-Committee-2014-04-09.pdf>



