Towards a Strategic Model for Developing Participatory Governance.

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**Abstract**

Seeking to gain insight into how to develop more equal partnership processes this paper reports on a programme is a series of case studies of participation, from national to regional and local levels, involving both conventional and action research, analysed through a community development process framework. Initial work identified the importance of forms and levels of power, and highlighted processes around building trust. This has then been further refined and explored through action research to develop the beginnings of a strategic model. At the present stage this involves an interactive framework that can confront levels of power to encourage diversity and participation in decision-making from bottom-up initiatives. Linking across to other studies we make some practice suggestions for developing effective mechanisms for citizen participation.

These suggestions highlight conventional community development process models, around power negotiation and the importance of distinctive community knowledge in a networked strategy to mobilise influence and embed change in the development of a common and unified vision among stakeholders.

Community participation, decision-making, power, trust, NGO, VCO.

Introduction

After a strongly New Right period, New Zealand made a major policy shift (under the fifth Labour Government, 1999 -2008) towards a "third way" democratic pluralist approach to social development. From one point of view this move can even be seen as the development of 'expansive democracy' involving user and community direct participation through partnerships in more inclusive decision-making.[1] However, it can also be seen in another way as a move to 'pass the buck' and place further responsibilities and controls on smaller third sector organizations here defined as Voluntary/Community organizations (VCOs)[2].

It needs, firstly, to be placed in the social context of the increasing racialisation of poverty and the active government creation of a beneficiary "underclass" (Wellington Peoples' Centre, 2006). Central government action seems to be making deprivation worse and then asking the VCO sector to deal with the results. Secondly, Government promotes community development but only does so on its own terms - building community capacity to do the tasks government wants done and using community third sector partners for its own ends (Aimers and Walker 2008). In NZ, as in the UK, one powerful player (like a state organisation) often dominates a partnership by setting the agenda and rules of the relationship (Balloch and Taylor 2001, Mayo and Taylor 2001, Craig and Taylor 2002, Walker, 2007).

Such outcomes might simply indicate a lack of competence in such uncharted territory, Goss (2001:21) for example, comments that "while there is greater demand for more democracy there has been less attention as to how to achieve it in practice" and certainly considerable attention is being given to 'training' and 'educating' public officials to work better with the community both in the UK and NZ. Strategically Kickert et al identify three primary approaches to the civil service management of "complex networks" and partnerships :

- instrumental( a somewhat manipulative 'steering' approach with selected actors),
- interactive ( an open, mutually engaged and inclusive process with no pre-set goals) and,
- institutional ( an organisational level approach which seeks to build greater variety into networks through incremental use of social capital) (Kickert et al 1997:166-191).

Their suggestion for 'engaged' public servants is a balanced interaction between interactive strategies at individual network level and institutionalist strategies at higher level as the best guarantee of achieving the best of both worlds - diversity and effectiveness at the network level and equity at national level. The reality of practice, however, seems closer to the "instrumental" strategy which uses only specific selected policy networks and actors (Hudson and Lowe 2004).

However, the power to adopt and use a strategy is held by the officials. How can we be sure that inclusive and open partnership schemes are not hi-jacked by politicians or civil servants at a range of levels – from the outset, or at any other

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[1] Expansive democracy is characterised by increased participation, either by means of small-scale direct democracy or "through strong linkages between citizens and broad scale institutions, which pushes democracy beyond traditional political spheres and relates decision-making to the persons who are affected." (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003: 3)

[2] The more positive term used here rather than the negative Non Government organization (NGO).

time during the life of a partnership? Even when greater deliberation is achieved, it can be directly undermined (Weir, 2009). The desirable future needs to be accompanied with some ideas about how the power can be achieved at community level to sustain development and exert leverage for full participation. This paper and the research/action research programme it summarises seeks to foreground the issue of power and begin the task of developing a strategy of community empowerment.

*Power Operationalised.*

We have attempted to take a contemporary approach to power using both the traditional Weberian conceptualisation of power as a resource along with the more recent Foucauldian insight of power as process and an achievement. (Sibeon)

Power resources.
Besides the conventional power resources possessed by social actors – 'capital' in all its senses (financial, human, natural) - we also identify 'social and cultural capital' in the sense used by Bourdieu. Here we have found the work of (Healey, de Magalhaes et al. 2003) useful, as they have operationalised it as a formulation of three major forms of resources – knowledge, relational and mobilisation capacity – as constitutive of 'social capital'.
They define these resources in detail as follows:

- Knowledge resources are the frames of reference that shape conceptions of issues, problems, opportunities and interventions to which participants have access. The extent to which range and frames are shared among stakeholders, integrating different spheres of policy development around place qualities; the capacity to absorb new ideas and learn from them (openness and learning).
- Relational resources are the range of stakeholders involved in the issue or in what goes on in an area; the morphology of their social networks, in terms of the density(or thickness) of network interconnections; the extent of integration of the various networks; the location of the power to act, the power relations between actors and the interaction with wider authoritative, allocative and ideological forces.
- Mobilisation capacity is the opportunity structure; the institutional arenas used and developed by stakeholders: the repertoire of mobilization techniques that are used to develop and sustain momentum; the presence, or absence, of critical change agents at different stages. (Healey et al 2003: 65)

Power Process.
For attention to the power process we have adopted the "transaction sociale" approach that sees social forms (embodied discourses) as arising out of the interaction and power relationships between social actors (Smith and Blanc 1997). For this study we have also used the framework of the ABCD process model developed at the Scottish Community Development Centre (Barr and Hashagen 2000). This framework (inputs, process, outputs and outcomes) is superior to simple input-output or outcome models as it explicitly identifies the process as worthy of investigation and distinguishes between the obvious tangible 'outputs' and the longer term and more substantial changes – defined in the model as (overall) outcomes.

Case studies were investigated as they are holistic interactive sites through which we can pay attention not only to the resources or rules or outcomes – but the processes through which they are developed.

The cases have been selected as examples of a range of differing initiation points[3]:
1. Top down directed: State initiated projects with centrally defined objectives and protocols.
2. Top down encouraged: State establishment of a broad field of funding with relatively indeterminate objectives and protocols,
3. Bottom up: Locally initiated but seeking state acknowledgement and support.

We shall briefly cover each of these in turn identifying the stages in the ABCD modelled process, an analysis of the changes in the partnership itself and a diagram of the relationships between the stakeholders involved.

TOP-DOWN DIRECTED

### Strengthening Families

Strengthening Families is a programme to create a collaborative network of agencies, governmental and third sector, to work with 'at risk' children, young people and families. Its genesis is a model of interagency cooperation which received official backing and support from the ministries of Health, Education and Social Policy, with the latter having a lead role in the co-ordination of the initiative (Walker, 2001).

Inputs are from two major sources;
outside - the policy driven strategy by three central ministries, Health, Education and Welfare.
inside - from the local regional government departments and larger third sector organisations through local management groups using a set of centrally drafted protocols

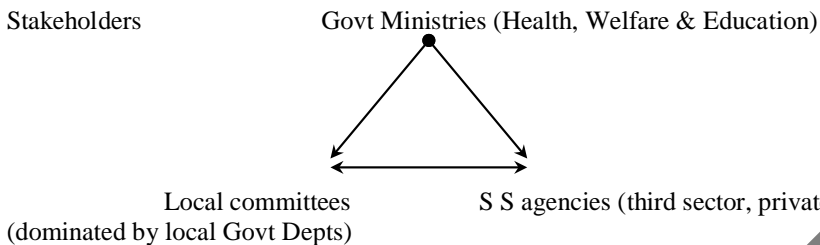Outputs are the co-ordination of services for social service intervention with some families. Outcomes are to ostensibly provide a seamless comprehensive service delivery structure at a local level.

However the delivery on these outcomes is flawed due to process issues of the limited funding of the initiative, its selective application and the exclusion of many smaller third sector organisations. [4]

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[3] Interestingly very similar categories of partnerships are identified in the OECD – LEED 'how to do it' guide to "successful partnerships" (Forschner, 2006).

[4] While there have been positive reports on the initiative that overlook these problems, there are also renewed calls for a seamless provision of services supporting children (Office of the Children's Commissioner : 2006) in light of many continuing high profile cases of child abuse and neglect where agencies were blatantly not sharing information or working together.

Stakeholders                    Govt Ministries (Health, Welfare & Education)

Local committees             S S agencies (third sector, private)
(dominated by local Govt Depts)

TOP DOWN ENCOURAGED

### Dunedin Community Law Centre (DCLC) – Ngai Tahu Maori Law Centre(NTMLC)

This partnership between two third sector organizations, funded by the Legal Services Agency (Walker 2005), uses the Treaty of Waitangi to meet the needs of the community in Dunedin and the South Island for specifically Maori land law, resource management, fisheries and Waitangi Tribunal and whakapapa (genealogical) legal issues.[5]

Outsider input - the funding from the then Legal Services Board (LSB) [now Legal Services Agency (LSA)]

Insider support from the DCLC and the three runaka (traditional local iwi [tribal] governance groups) in the Otago province.

The process was one of working together to establish the agenda of the new partnership through sponsorship by the DCLC for national funding. The three runaka had an historical relationship with the DCLC that was strengthened by the development of the new NTMLC.

The output of the project was an ongoing working relationship providing Treaty based community legal services for the whole community.

A major overall outcome, apart from a comprehensive seamless service at local level, was consciousness raising of the LSA to the extent that this form of partnership has now become the new preferred option for Treaty-based Law Centres  In addition the development of a self-determined  iwi controlled community law centre that focused on particularly Maori areas of law was also seen as a form of political resource.

Stakeholders

Legal Services Agency

DCLC                        Nga Runaka/NTMLC

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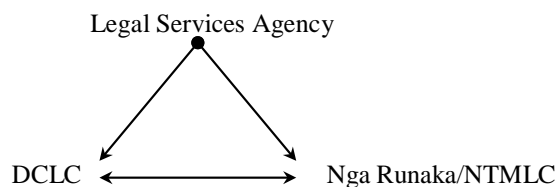
[5] The Treaty of Waitangi, regarded as the founding document of New Zealand,contains three articles, ceding sovereignty,to the Crown, guaranteeing Maori self-determination and the rights of citizenship…..

BOTTOM UP

## The Royal New Zealand Plunket Society

This large and very respectable VCO, an iconic New Zealand institution, has had a funded monopoly over community-based services to mothers and young children (up to age 2) for many years.

External inputs - full government funding of its services, public donations and significant commercial sponsorships.

Internal inputs - a very strong governance group made up of volunteers.  Other significant stakeholders are professional nurses who provide all the society's services to mothers and children.(Favell,2006)

Stakeholders
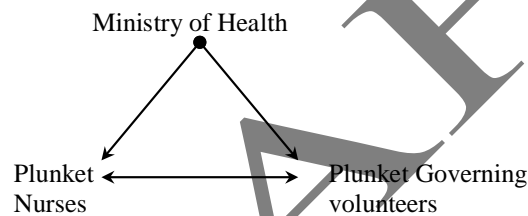


The process, in this very 'path dependent' ,100 year plus old, organization, has the Governing volunteers largely controlling the organisation and its direction dictating and indeed extending services while successfully resisting some past challenges from the government Ministry of Health

Outputs are nurse consultation services to young mothers with a claimed 90% coverage rate of young children.

Outcomes, in terms of professional child health services, and standards of child health are poor and Maori child health in particular has suffered greatly since Plunket took over care of Maori children from the government

## Te Whanau Arohanui

Te Whanau Arohanui,  a Maori social service organization, entered into two significant partnerships; with the Kati Huirapa Ki Puketeraki Marae and with state organisations. the then Children, Young People and their Families Service and the educational funders the Employment Training and Support Agency (ETSA). (Walker, 2004)

Inside inputs were from the TWA's desire to establish programmes to deliver care and training to young people and their whanau.

External inputs included local  blessing and support from the Kati Huirapa Runaka but not the Children, Youth and Family Service due to TWA's  focus on whanau appropriate within tikanga. External support was initially gained from the Maccess (Maori employment access

scheme), with funding for three training programmes, general life-skills, traditional raranga (weaving) and whakairo (carving).

The process was based around culturally appropriate relationship building, based on the concepts of tikanga and kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face communication), and embedding a relationship between Te Whanau Arohanui , Kati Huirapa marae and Macess.  Initial outputs were the establishment of kaupapa Maori programmes. However after the initial period of support the government changed the focus from Maccess towards vocational training through the Employment Training Support Agency.  The imposition of new rules and regulations concerning the content of the programme, the length of contract and the minimum qualification of the trainers meant that the partnership became untenable for Te Whanau Arohanui and they withdrew from training provision.

Stakeholders                          TWA

Runaka                    local Govt Depts. (ETSA & CYFS)
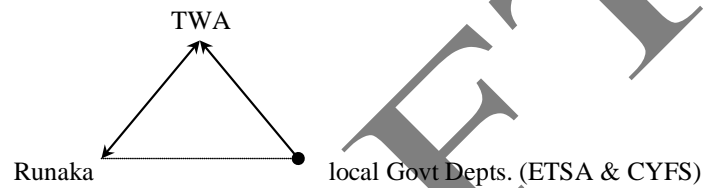
## Otago Youth Wellness Trust[6]

This is a small social service agency established from the local District Council of Social Service (similar to the UK Councils for Voluntary Service) gaining enough support for the establishment of a Trust, with local 'community' members, which was successful in then gaining central government funding to operate services, initially around truancy.
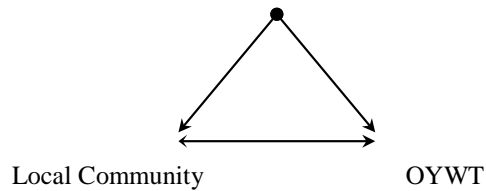
Insider input was its broad 'community' aegis and a very strong agency philosophy, across all levels of the agency – from professional staff to management and board members- seeking holistic, integrated, professionally defined 'services'. This local input then engaged with the external input of central government and was successful in achieving integrated funding, cutting across the 'silos' of the relevant government departments (Education, Health, Social Development, Justice). This became something of a model for integrated "outcomes" funding so that, in terms of process, it was successful in not only developing a common approach at local level but, as with the Law Centres, was even able to change government procedures at the higher levels.

However, in the longer term outcome sense, the integrated contract was not honoured and led to significant problems for the agency in retaining its characteristic integrated client-led focus (Weir, 2009).

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[6] Based on the work of Megan Weir (2009)

Stakeholders           Govt Ministries (Health, Welfare & Education)

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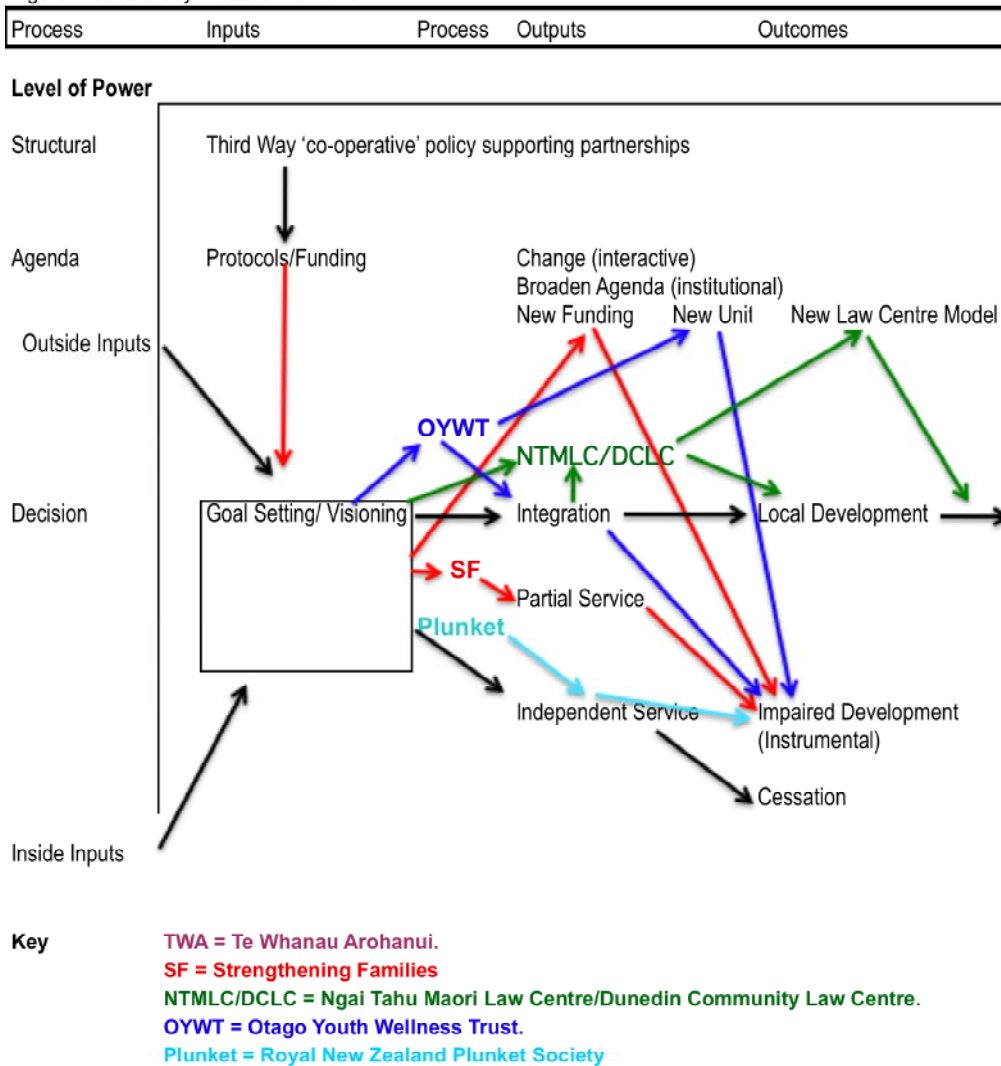Local Community           OYWT

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Analysis : Partnerships and Power Relationships

A limitation of the triadic diagrams of the relationships between the stakeholders, while heuristically useful, is that they do not indicate the strength of the power relationships. Thus the strength and resources of each stakeholder requires analysis in each case. Of the three categories of cases examined – only one "bottom up" group (Te Whanau Arohanui) could be said to have "failed" in the sense of ceasing to exist. For the others, on one hand the unilateral use of power is apparent – in one case by an 'untouchable' VCO and in the other cases, by central government. On the other hand leverage from "below" was possible in several of the cases and indeed reached beyond the partnerships themselves. Here it is useful here to apply Lukes' seminal discussion of the 'dimensions' of power (Lukes 1974)– vulgarised at our hands into the :

- Decision-level: the lowest level where decisions are actually taken (partnership level)
- Agenda level: where the 'agenda' for options to be considered at the decision-level are set (central government agency)
- Structural level: the background conditions governing the agenda level (overall government policy)

Using the level of power in the vertical axis and combining this with ABCD process analysis (horozontal axis)–provides a comparative overall picture as in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Case Study Process Framework

| Process | Inputs | Process | Outputs | Outcomes |
|---------|--------|---------|---------|----------|

**Level of Power**

Structural — Third Way 'co-operative' policy supporting partnerships

Agenda — Protocols/Funding

Change (interactive)
Broaden Agenda (institutional)
New Funding        New Unit        New Law Centre Model

Outside Inputs

OYWT

NTMLC/DCLC

Decision — Goal Setting/ Visioning    Integration    Local Development

SF

Partial Service

Plunket

Impaired Development
(Instrumental)

Independent Service

Cessation

Inside Inputs

**Key**    TWA = Te Whanau Arohanui.
SF = Strengthening Families
NTMLC/DCLC = Ngai Tahu Maori Law Centre/Dunedin Community Law Centre.
OYWT = Otago Youth Wellness Trust.
Plunket = Royal New Zealand Plunket Society

In terms of inputs, Strengthening Families originated 'outside' the partnerships at the structural level, imposed by the agenda level, through protocols and funding, onto the decision level. Local agency inputs then join in a negotiating goal/setting process which excludes small agencies but enables larger ones, based on their human capital [professional expertise] to exercise leverage to change agenda level funding. This leads to partial services for clients of those agencies alone as the output, leading to partial and thus impaired coordination, as the outcome. This local professional orientation (human capital resource) was a similar source of

power for Otago Youth Wellness (OYWT). Here a strongly held view was able to influence central government agencies, creating change at the agenda level. However over time this was itself overtaken by the reassertion of the bureaucratic silo agendas leading to impaired development. In terms of stakeholders it would seem that OYWT was not able to build or mobilise its vision in terms of social capital to the extent where it could support its professional agenda.

Plunket in contrast gets funding from the agenda level, both central government and public, but is from then on completely self-sufficient for the development of its services. Volunteers exemplify the social capital building process well. Their 'lay' knowledges of child health, and considerable attention to networking and relationship building are able to effectively mobilise control of the organization and its direction. Their social capital resources are sufficient, as an iconic institution with major public support, to make them largely immune to direction by government departments or professionals.

Power process analysis in terms of social capital resources, also indicates how the Dunedin Community Law Centre and Ngai Tahu Maori Law Centre were both able to develop a strong and unified vision around integration which could support local development as well as create change 'upwards' to government departments at the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and Legal Services Agency levels. Te Whanau Arohanui, in contrast, although using the same process as the law centres , was not able to develop the social capital resource through mobilisation, to have its vision of a kaupapa Maori service (Maori cultural service) accepted at agenda level so that funding and the programme ceased.

Overall, the process focus shows that while the inputs and power from inside the community were initially weaker in resource terms, they were, in three of the five cases, based upon a strongly unified vision at local/decision level and were able to create changes at the agenda level. However, in at least two of the cases these did not lead to major sustained implementation of a wider vision – as that of the agenda setters was reimposed.
The tentative conclusion from the analysis of these cases is that one pole of the stakeholder triad, if strongly developed, can have significant influence but the resource on which it is based is dependent both upon process and the development of power relationships with other stakeholders and the persistence, nurturing and retention of its resource base.

Issues for a strategic model
The central issues from these for a "how to" model embodying power relationships seem to be:
1. The importance of each stakeholder group identifying and developing its power resources in process terms – for social capital the distinctive knowledge(s), networks and mobilisation – seem to be important elements in making a resource effective.
2. The central place of developing goals and objectives through a planning visioning/negotiating process whereby stakeholder differences are worked through for effective local input into a common vision (issues of exclusion, who is "in " or "out" , seem important – the most inclusionary process possible seems recommended)
3. The ability of local level visions to achieve sustainable change at its own level depends upon the persistence and maintenance of the power relationships established locally.
4. The ability of local level visions to achieve sustainable change at the higher agenda levels also depends upon the persistence of the power relationships established locally.

For the leverage of social capital, where the differing knowledges are built into a common vision and plan – through relationships – trust needs to be achieved. The nature of trust is rarely analysed in detail; in the business field Das and Teng (2001) have produced a two-fold typology of trust within a partnership relationship, goodwill and competence trust. Goodwill trust is one's good faith, good intentions and integrity prior to entering into a relationship, reducing a partner's perceived relational risk. Competence trust, is based on the various resources and capabilities of an organisation, which reduces performance risk. Being developed in the business sector, they do not separately analyse the various elements seemingly involved in competence trust in terms of material, financial and human resources (capital). This becomes important in government/VCO partnerships as these elements come from differing stakeholders – human capital from the VCOs and financial capital (and legitimation of its use) from government. This process seems therefore to involve at least two steps:

i) identifying relevant stakeholders in terms of the relevance of their resources to achievements of outcomes (competence trust)

ii) building relational trust in terms of those outcomes

Thus it would seem that direct engagement in the planning/visioning process and the negotiation over resources within that process are key factors in a strategic model.

We sought to develop these insights further through action research into community organisation/government relationships, seeking to experiment and 'test' ideas and processes in a range of settings.

### Best practice for Equality? "How To" Case Studies

These cases were a series of projects, the development of governance input in a low income suburb in Dunedin (South Dunedin), extension of Safer Community Council activities into developmental crime prevention (Timaru Safer Community Council) , user involvement in a disability services organization (CCS/Disability Action) and the development of family support services(Hokonui Horizons).

### South Dunedin

This was a University initiated project (Participation Action Research Team [PART]) in conjunction with a strong local organisation (St. Kilda Community Club) in a low-income area lacking any formal systems of input into governance. (Perry C., Shannon P., Chilcott J. & Maykind M. 2003). The goal was to build and institutionalise such input through bringing together community and governance stakeholders.

This project had outsider input from the PART team (skills/community development expertise) and insider input from the St Kilda Club (local expertise/ legitimation), then working through a community visioning process with a cross section of local stakeholders develop to action plans and a new organisational structure seeking to make change at both decision-level and also at the agenda level (recognition by Dunedin City Council) as a legitimate source of input and advice).

The visioning and relationship building led eventually and after much controversy to the development of a new peak group – the Vision South Umbrella Group.  They formed local

**Comment [C1]:**

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relations with city councillors via visioning and umbrella processes but were unable to develop any meaningful relationships at agenda level, the City Council organization itself simply ignored the group and refused to support it. While several new services were developed at community level (decision level) by individual local stakeholders, the failure to develop effective leverage on the council led to the eventual demise of the umbrella group after three years.

Stakeholders

Local councillors

SKC/local groups                    Council Decision-makers
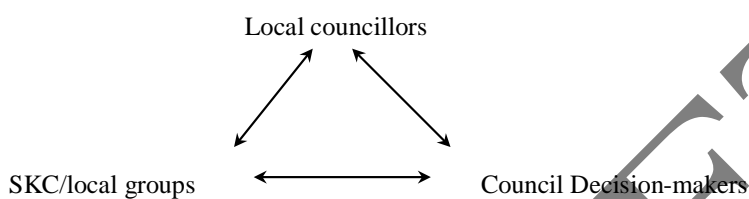
## Timaru District Safer Community Council. (TDSCC)

The TDSCC is a 'partnership' focusing on crime prevention in the Timaru provincial district (South Island of New Zealand). Funded by the central government Crime Prevention Unit (CPU) - a unit of the Ministry of Justice - its board of governance is drawn from significant stakeholder groups within Timaru including the Police, the Timaru District Council, local service and government agencies and a range of community-based organizations (Shannon and Walker 2006).
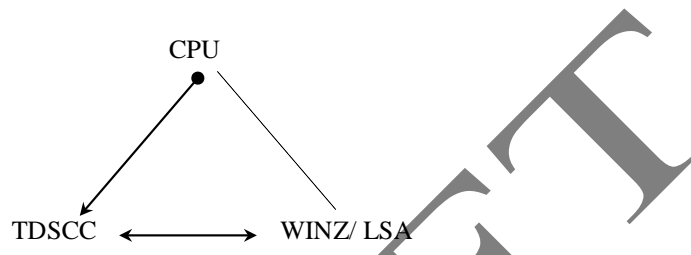
Inputs were from two sources; internally from the desire of the board to build on effective prior action in prevention of reoffending to undertake community development to prevent offending in the first place. Externally from the very restrictive funding and policy inputs (focused solely on offence statistics) from the Crime Prevention Unit of the Department of Justice.

The visioning process involved over 150 stakeholders from social service organisations, Mana Whenua, the Police, the business community and outlying rural areas. This built on existing power resources in terms of knowledge, relational and political capital with a wide active stakeholder input so that the TDSCC is now widely embedded within the Timaru area. Seeking to achieve its decision-level goals, after the refusal of the CPU to cooperate, escalated the issue to the agenda level and the new strength of the TDSCC was able to exploit the seeming structural weakness in 'siloed' central government to achieve new outputs, through obtaining funding from other central government departments.

The output resulted the establishment of a new Youth Worker position by seeking funds outside of the CPU through the Department of Work and Income(WINZ). In addition there is ongoing communication with the Legal Services Agency(LSA) to establish a Community Law Centre in the area and several new cooperative ventures by local agencies working together.

The outcome of the TDSCC partnership is the deepening and extension of a safer community in Timaru based on local defined community preventative action. In terms of stakeholders the restrictive two-way relationship (TDSCLC/CPU) was broadened to include other central government units (WINZ/LSA)

Stakeholders

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            TDSCC  ←——————→  WINZ/ LSA
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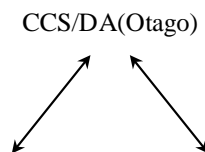
## CCS/Disability Action

A traditional VCO in the disability sector, taking a community inclusion perspective, sought to further develop user/client involvement in quality control. Inside inputs were from staff, management and a cross section of users/clients of the local Dunedin branch that took part in a visioning process (including prior work with very high needs clients). In that process client wishes went beyond issues of quality control to embrace claims for user involvement in governance which staff supported within the limits of national organization policy. As an initial output, a working party was set up from the forum to develop the lines of action suggested with branch management.

However the vision led to a negative reaction from the national governing body of the agency which felt challenged, especially around the critical issue of whether service users, most of whom did not pay a members subscription, could be full members of the organization (with a role in governance). Work by committed users and staff, especially local management, is continuing and attempting to seek ways of imbedding the process of client participation more fully
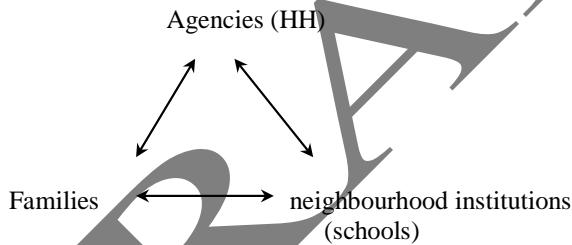
Stakeholders                   CCS/DA(Otago)

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                    CCS/DA(Otago)
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users/clients     ……………….    CCS/DA (national)


**Hokonui Horizons**

This was a community wide collaboration of agencies in a provincial town (pop.) which was seeking ways to develop family support programmes in community, in the light of growing problems around forensic child protection intervention. Alongside their inside input, the outside input has existed in central government seeding funding behind the community collaboration of agencies embodied in Hokonui Horizons.

This supported a visioning and planning process facilitated by PART, joining social service agencies with school representatives, which identified the need for both neighbourhood school based and interest group initiatives. This initiative is still at an early stage of development but the group is currently working to develop relationships with local neighbourhood schools as a way of deepening the process. At this stage there has been little or no engagement at the higher agenda level, although the outside input of support for the Hokonui Horizons funding itself is due to cease



Stakeholders                    Agencies (HH)




            Families              neighbourhood institutions
                                         (schools)


Analysis towards a Strategic Model.

In these action projects the developments tended to validate and reinforce the tentative conclusions drawn from the earlier analysis . Key features like the critical importance of engagement of all the stakeholders and the centrality of the development of a common vision  were reinforced. Generally further lessons were learned in each case towards refining the model.

South Dunedin :

Stakeholder engagement here was problem at two levels. Firstly, some groups were not as organised and as "participation-ready" as others and this did result in less than optimal social capital and perhaps in the failure to develop the leverage on the Council. Secondly, although both lower level council staff and elected councillors were involved, senior bureaucratic management could not be engaged at that stage. While the boundary of who was included seemed initially appropriate, later leverage could not be developed on the senior management

'agenda' group. Thus despite improvements in local community programmes, the major goal of the exercise remained frustrated. It could be suggested that the power resources for leverage could not be fully developed and more social capital development was required to develop those resources. This case stressed the importance of earlier development work with some less established stakeholders, which the earlier studies of established groups had not established, and a need for greater development of the overall group to establish the mobilisation ability to influence city governance.

Timaru (TDSCC)
The results here were almost the opposite. Insider social capital was built effectively. Knowledge resources were limited prior to the visioning exercise but were built by the organisations involved and are now greatly extended through far wider active stakeholder input.  The relational resources were restricted but with the visioning exercise and 150 participants involved there are now much extended networks. Mobilisation resources were also limited but with cross sector engagement the TDSCC has greatly extended support. The restricted CPU domination was sidestepped to include other sources of funds which escalated the issue to the agenda level.  The new strength of the TDSCC being the ability to exploit the siloed structural weakness in central government to achieve new outputs and, potentially, a major outcome of wide-ranging local control of social service and community development.

CCS-Disability Action
In this case the early stages went well, including prior work with those not able to fully participate in visioning, and has full trust and support at local level. The ongoing critical issue at local level is the task of imbedding and engaging new elements in organisational management and control in highly centralised systems. This aspect is a rather unexplored part of the model.[7] The second is the familiar 'agenda' level the national level CCS/Disability Action seemed to feel threatened by the changes proposed so work is now proceeding on the local level "model" or "pilot".

Hokonui Horizons.
This project is at a very early stage but can be seen as the current stakeholders of the collaboration defining new directions in the development of a generalised agenda at city level and the need to concretise and develop it downwards to neighbourhood forms. Thus this case is different inasmuch as it has defined itself as acting at agenda level and there is the need to move down to local neighbourhood level – again replacing a simplistic "top" down or "bottom-up" binary with a "middle-down" (and perhaps also 'up') approach. This does raise the issue of the danger of a simplistic, linear use of the input-outcome process.

Overall Implications
Each of these four more directional action research projects served at least partly,  to "test" and develop the tentative conclusions of the earlier studies. In that sense they gave priority to the identification of relevant stakeholders and their engagement, building social capital and trust

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[7] However the experience of organisational side of the European employment partnerships is instructive here – Forschner,2006)

around developing goals and the need to sustain and continue developing it for effective leverage at agenda level.

In overall terms, despite all the variable successes of these projects, they tended to reinforce earlier conclusions. Other points they highlight, which do not tend to arise in 'post facto' studies, is the need for both preliminary work and to avoid a simplistic linear approach. Thus South Dunedin emphasised the need to put work into developing stakeholder groups who are not 'participation ready' to the stage where they can effectively take part (high needs clients of CC/Disability Action not functionally able to participate in visioning were another group needing special preparatory work). In addition, the Hokonui Horizons case illustrated initiation at agenda level and the need to return to initiation at the local neighbourhood level – and the risks of looking for straightforward linear development.
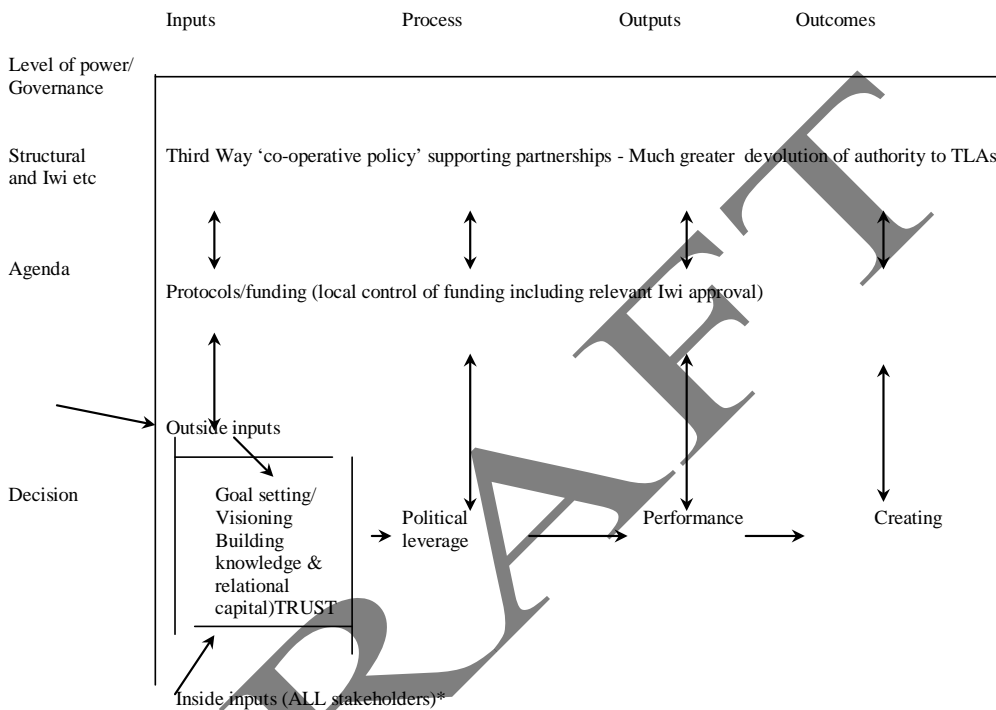
Finally, in terms of agenda power, it seems that lower level 'bottom-up' initiatives find it difficult to affect the agenda level when the higher level simply refuses to engage– as in the South Dunedin and Timaru cases. Even if leverage is built it is also helpful to have other options as in Timaru's strategy to go elsewhere for support by exploiting silo divisions within government –which itself seems to hold lessons (Shannon and Walker, 2007)

## Towards a strategic model for practice

The implications of these cases can usefully be presented pictorally as an 'ideal' strategy in terms of the process and levels figure used earlier

Figure 2: Ideal strategic model



|  | Inputs | Process | Outputs | Outcomes |

Level of power/ Governance

Structural and Iwi etc — Third Way 'co-operative policy' supporting partnerships - Much greater devolution of authority to TLAs

Agenda — Protocols/funding (local control of funding including relevant Iwi approval)

Outside inputs

Decision — Goal setting/ Visioning Building knowledge & relational capital)TRUST — Political leverage — Performance — Creating

Inside inputs (ALL stakeholders)*

*(including special development programme for unready groups)

This diagram presents the suggested strategy options in terms of the ABCD process.

Firstly, it seems clear that outside resourcing or initiating will usually be required in some form for local initiatives and, indeed, that professional help will often be required to work through and develop the process. Inside inputs include the involvement of as full a range as possible of all local stakeholders.

Secondly, it also seems obvious that a sustained process of inclusive and open interaction is required if partnerships or other relationships are to be equal and autonomous with significant local input and this must be the major strategic approach taken. Major attention must be given to creation of a shared community/network vision involving explicit knowledge development, relational building and mobilisation action of the social capital resource.

Thirdly, building trust and the community working together, is the basis of the social capital resource and community power. This model highlights what can be achieved as a planned strategy by validating and making relevant local community knowledges. Further, it highlights the importance of networks, trust and mutual community confidence which can be developed to mobilise influence

If the approach to levels of power taken here is correct, and change can be made at agenda and even structural levels, then the lowest decision-level will also have salience at the most general level. In many respects this is not new. Two recent guides to creating and sustaining equal empowerment partnerships at a range of levels (Forschner, 2006 and Robinson and Hales 2007)) largely coincide with the conclusions here although Forschner deals primarily, with larger scale and better resourced options and Robinson and Hales with a large-scale research process with a rural community. Conventional community development process (assessment/ planning/ intervention/ management and evaluation) models are confirmed by this work as is the general identification of community development principles of empowerment (Laverack 2005). What this tentative strategic model also does, to some extent at least, is point to how this might be achieved in terms of a planned strategy based on the validity and relevance of 'community' knowledge, the importance of networks, trust and confidence in each other and developing enough support to mobilise influence from the 'bottom up' in fact rather than in rhetoric (Turner, 2009).

The Recipe:
**Input**
Outside input (esp funding) as stimulus at an early stage for the partnership seems established. Inside inputs will be involvement of as full a range as possible of all local stakeholders. Difficulties always seemed to arise over those not included – or at least not fully included. While boundaries, who is in and who is not, seem inevitable it seems important to engage as many relevant people as possible and be aware of the negatives as well as the positives involved.
**Process**
Building social capital and relationship building - to establish relational trust - this takes time to develop and to allow different knowledges to be accepted and valued – linking both competence and relational trust – validating and accepting the relevance of both forms of knowledge – that of locals who participate and that of experts who have abilities to share. As Community Development practitioners know well – networking is the key.

Successful building of community power resources through the involvement of all available stakeholders as noted above but also the value of explicitly giving major attention to building power through bringing together local knowledge, community networks and mobilisation (political) capacity. The additional element we add here is that this also becomes an actual strategy to empower the community. As in conventional community development, successfully building of community power resources is achieved by the inclusive involvement of all available stakeholders in a transparent process which deals with and works through power/knowledge conflicts, builds group relationships and brings pressure to bear on the agenda level.

Incidentally, we have some confidence in this formulation as the (Healey et al. 2001) definitions of knowledge/relational/political capital as a social process coincide with the identification of management strategies according to targets (stakeholders), cognitive interaction between actors and the 'game' (bargaining process within the network)(Kickert et al.1997). This stresses again the negotiated and renegotiated nature of any common vision and objectives seemingly essential for ongoing stability.  The point here is that, if civil servants do not or cannot heed the advice for empowering practice, and there is considerable evidence both within New Zealand and overseas that they often do not, for whatever reason, the community can make them conform. In all of this, however, as in the many other studies suggesting community action works better when power disparities and conflict is brought out into the open and confronted, this model provides guidance on how this might be done.

Similarly, the establishment of trust within partnerships is often blandly evoked but rarely analysed. It can be defined as based upon goodwill between partners and a mutual confidence in one another. This trust takes time to develop and depends upon a mutual belief in a shared vision, interaction and the proven competence to deliver.  Again these forms of trust are built over time. Time is clearly required for trust building but it is rarely on government agendas.

**Outputs**

Developing locally defined organisational structures be they networks, or locally controlled organisations as they are accountable to the local community through mutually agreed processes.

**Outcomes**

In terms of major overall change (as ultimate outcome) when action is restricted at the decision level then the challenge has to be escalated to the agenda level. When action is not so restricted (by a more permissive agenda) then change can be achieved by outputs which turn into the outcome of extending that agenda in new directions. Although not covered by these case studies a previous study suggests that change at agenda level can even produce structural level change (Shannon, 1982).

**Conclusion**

The reason for the current fashion of partnerships is not, of course, because of sheer goodwill – but mainly because the old system simply did not and probably cannot deliver. In that sense, the "centre" requires deliberative governance as much as the margins.  However power strategic empowerment action in community partnerships is required if their potential is to be realised in terms of equity and self-determination.  We have suggested here a possible way to mobilise so that it can be achieved based around development of social capital  but the approach requires considerable development especially to institutionalise and imbed it. Moreover significant effort is involved. While considerable "value" can be added by community involvement in governance this can be at great cost to those from the community who take part in it as seen in these cases and in other research (Future Perspectives Cooperative 2006). This programme suggests that the outlines of a general strategy can be presented which will make this more likely.

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