



Collaboration for Whanau Wellbeing

Ngati Kahungunu ki Poneke Community Services

KOTAHITANGA MO NGA HAUORA WHANAU — WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE WHANAU WELLBEING

Collaboration and mutual outcomes create the genesis for whanau health and wellbeing and go a long way to address the needs of vulnerable, marginalised and hard to reach people. In 2013 Ngati Kahungunu ki Poneke Community Services was approved \$12,000 for a project that would:

- ⇒ develop quicker information sharing protocols for 'common' clients;
- ⇒ build a cohesive understanding of vulnerable, marginalised and hard to reach whanau ; and
- ⇒ identify opportunities for the development of prevention programmes that would address a range of needs.

Ngati Kahungunu ki Poneke Community Services identified three organisations to work together. They included Wellington Youth Aid Officers, Wellington Activity Centre, and ASB Sports Centre. These organisations/agencies shared a common client base and worked with the same whanau groups.

The first activity of the project saw the development and signing of memorandums of understandings (MoU). These documents outlined a principled approach to working together. The second project activity was to gain a better understanding of each organisation, the role they played and the significance of that role. Some of the funding was used to facilitate these discussions.

Jo Taite, Change Process Manager, Ngati Kahungunu ki Poneke Community Services, commented that “the willingness of organisations to come together and gaining their buy-in was the easy part”. There was a shared aspiration across the agencies that whanau and whanau wellbeing would drive all collaborative processes.

The challenge however was “how we would achieve this aspiration together” because the various pressures on each organisation limited meeting time and restricted the availability of managers. “Developing any type of shared arrangement requires time from everyone”, said Jo, “and finding mutually agreeable time was hard”.

In an attempt to gain broader input, Ngati Kahungunu ki Poneke Community Services extended an invitation to other services. It became clear that these services lacked systems and processes to mitigate potential risks. For example, the organisations lacked an overall risk management plan or health and safety policies and procedures for staff working with high-risk whanau. In addition to this, patch protection was a real struggle “as many organisations are fearful of losing their funding if they divulge too much about their services, what they do, how they do it” says Jo. “Although we all wanted the same thing I believe we needed to spend more time building trust and a common understanding of each other”.

Regarding the project outcomes Jo believes “we achieved what we set out to do and more!” The project opened dialogue pathways between services and strengthened relationships, particularly with the Wellington Youth Aid Officers. Jo has updated the Foundation that “we have strong and enduring relationships with the Youth Aid Officers and we are in constant dialogue about common whanau we support”.

The key learning opportunities for the project included “the need for all organisations to be clear about a common purpose, a shared understanding of the benefits but, for any organisation looking at working together, always to be mindful of the unseen challenges”. Jo advises “be realistic about what can be achieved and try to find partners who share your values or, at the very least, have a mutual respect for them”.

Finally, Jo says, “finding the right partners takes time. Be sure to include the people you are trying to help as the FIRST and most important partner. Hard to reach whanau know what they want, they may not know how to get there but they have their own ideas and if they are supported well they can develop amazing strategies for themselves”.



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