

NORTHLAND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE COLLABORATION KAUPAPA INITIATIVE

A Case Narrative

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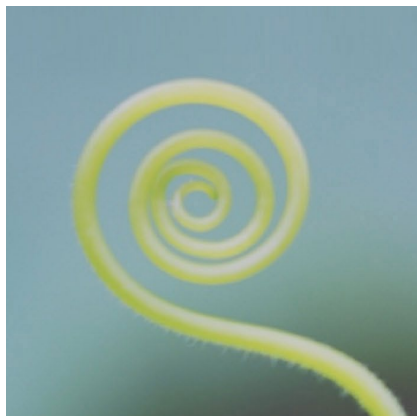
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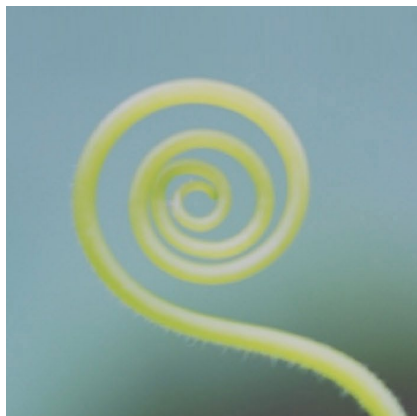
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Introduction

This narrative centres on a two and a half year collaborative kaupapa that has resulted in the 2019 formation of a trust-Te Kaupapa Mahitahi Hauora-Papa o Te Raki Trust. The mission of the Trust is to forge a new future for primary healthcare in Northland through a partnership between existing primary health organisations, the Northland District Health Board, iwi, clinicians and communities, with the aim to empower whanau, patient and community-led health and wellbeing decision-making, processes and outcomes. This collaborative kaupapa represents a ground-breaking health initiative in its scope, purpose, inclusion and process. Such cross system, paradigm-breaking initiatives are rare. This case narrative aims to make the core elements of such a venture visible - to those involved in the Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative itself, those in the health system more generally, those involved in delivery of health services in Northland, and all others aspiring to such goals.

The subject of this narrative is participatory, grassroots or so-called 'adaptive governance' and its focus is the very early stages of getting a cross system, paradigm-breaking initiative off the ground. We would argue that these early stages are often invisible to both internal and external eyes but utterly vital if any progress is to result. This particular initiative has just recently become visible with the emergence of a new primary care provider - Mahitahi Hauora PHO - which has grown from two existing primary health organisations, Tai Tokerau PHO and Manaia PHO. It carries huge aspirations for the health of the people of Northland. The years preceding the emergence of Mahitahi Hauora PHO are the subject of this report as the spirit, ambition and synergy between stakeholders was forged then. The combination of this subject and this focus is unique. Internationally, and most certainly also in Aotearoa New Zealand, we are in the early stages of understanding collective, decentralized decision-making but are increasingly aware of its potential to address intractable and cross system challenges. Additionally early stages of pulling community, public sector and iwi groups together to embark on such an endeavor are rarely documented. The Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative is an exceptional exemplar and this case narrative an attempt to document at least some of the core learnings. Our hope is that the case narrative offers recognition to what has already been achieved in order to establish Te Kaupapa Mahitahi Hauora-Papa o Te Raki Trust but to also give direction, hope and support to others wanting and needing to undertake similar ventures in other contexts.



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Who are we

We are an interdisciplinary, cross-faculty and collaborative team from the University of Auckland who share a passion to support New Zealand's community and social sector through our various disciplinary expertise. We are committed to finding better and more respectful ways of doing research with Māori and Pasifika populations. We offer a wide range of skills and expertise in research methodologies, and we share a commitment to participatory approaches which seek to enable the aspirations of individuals and communities.



Brigid Carroll is Associate Professor in the University of Auckland's Business School and previously Director of the New Zealand Leadership Institute.

What we did

During 2017/ 2018 we met, sometimes multiple times, with core Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative leaders to understand the nature of this venture. This involved intense white board sessions where the timeline and trajectory of the Initiative was drawn and discussed. We conducted in-depth interviews with most 'start-up' members of this collaboration - at least once and sometimes twice. We transcribed the recordings and each of the team members individually analysed the material. We then met frequently as a group to discuss our findings and assemble this report. Early drafts of the report were debriefed with the same core leaders. We do not list the names of our interviewees so as to honour their confidentiality but we thank them for their willingness to share their extensive insight, passion, and care for the Kaupapa and all those connected with it. Any errors or misapprehensions are purely ours.



Christa Fouché is Professor of Social Work at the University of Auckland and Director of Pūtahi Rangahau Ngātahi, a Centre that builds evidence of promising practices in communities through affirming partnerships.



Jennifer Curtin is Professor of Politics and Director of the Public Policy Institute Te Whare Marea Tātari Kaupapa at the University of Auckland.

Why a Case Narrative?

The Kaupapa Collaborative, as one of our interviewees told us, is woven from the experience of each person; no two experiences are identical, but all are necessary to understand, to provide texture and meaning

“it needs to get it’s knitting going, and then you can weave other parts into it”

We decided to use a case narrative format to weave together, honour, protect and be faithful to the experiences and stories that we were privileged to hear

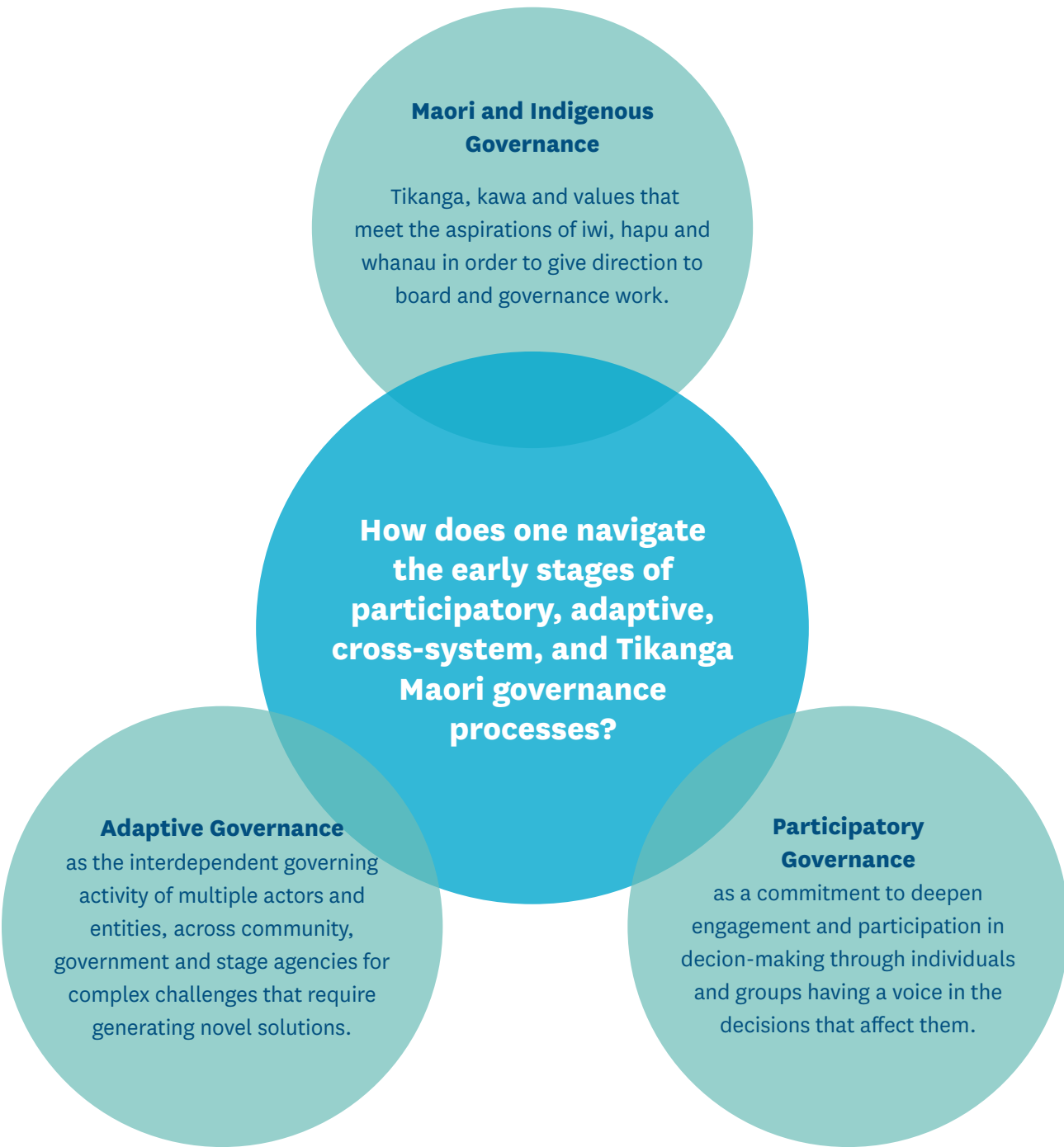
Case narratives don’t have clear starting or ending points; it embrace contradiction and difference, welcome voice, emotion, and bodies, range across past, present and future, and above all probe layers of meaning

In constructing a narrative, you leave stories untold, but you offer one in service of the past, present and future

“You will not get two conversations that is even remotely the same I don’t reckon.”

Rethinking Governance

The early stages (pre-formal) of the Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative is positioned at the intersection of three kinds of contemporary governance: Maori (indigenous), participatory and adaptive governance. The three kinds overlap in their commitment to bringing the voice of the ‘frontline’ (those most impacted by the challenge) to the forefront of decision-making processes, to participate in engaging with the complexities of the challenge, and collaboratively seeking innovative solutions.



Our case narrative seeks to engage with the question in the central overlapping circle.

A Policy Context: Primary Care and Systemic Change

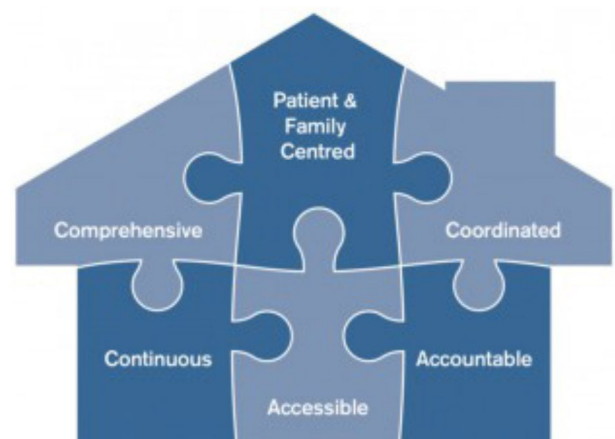
Internationally:

Through the Social Development Goals, the world has committed to an ambitious development agenda aimed at improving the health and well-being of all people. The health-related sustainable development goals (SDGs) can only be sustainably achieved with a stronger emphasis on Primary Health Care. Primary Health Care is a whole-of-society approach to health that aims equitably to maximize the level and distribution of health and well-being by focusing on people's needs and preferences as early as possible along the continuum from health promotion and disease prevention to treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care, and as close as feasible to people's everyday environment. One of the underlying principles is that efforts to advance health and well-being are anchored in and informed by the community (WHO, 2018).



Nationally:

The New Zealand Government has a commitment to improving access to primary health care. A strong primary health care system is central to improving the health of all New Zealanders and reducing health inequalities between different groups. The launch of the Primary Health Care Strategy in 2001, followed by the establishment of primary health organisations (PHOs), set the direction and vision for primary health care services in New Zealand. Delivery of 'Better, Sooner, More Convenient' (BSMC) services, expected integration of primary health and secondary care, an increased range of services in community settings, and greater collaboration to address prioritised vulnerable services, and achieve efficiencies. The New Zealand Health Strategy recognises the need for change and the challenges faced by the health system (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and Ministry of Health, 2017).



Locally:

Delivery of health policy and services is underpinned by a long history of bureaucratic legacies, that seldom fit contemporary local landscapes. As a result, there have been shifts at local levels in the way policies are designed and delivered, where principles of co-production, co-design, partnerships and collaboration across sectors inform outputs, outcomes and practices. In New Zealand, such initiatives are still fledgling, and require funding, patience, and trust-rich relationships between stakeholders and communities. The ultimate goal is to be transformational in the way core services are delivered to communities and to create system-change along the way.



Northland:

Over the next 20 years, the health needs of the Northland population will increase as a result of population growth and ageing, and increasing prevalence of long-term conditions. Compared to national socioeconomic measures, Northland's population is significantly disadvantaged, most notably Māori and rural populations. The forecast future escalation in demand will mean services will need considerably increased capacity, but this cannot simply be 'more of the same' if population outcomes are to improve, and inequities are to reduce. The need for change is compounded by medium to long-term forecasts of supply-side constraints in operational and capital funding, and availability of workforce. Together these factors point to the unsustainability of the Northland health system in its current form. Future-proofing requires different resource allocation patterns, and adoption of new ways of working that improve access, make better use of the available workforce, and improve service performance (Northland District Health Board, 2012).



A Storyline of Paradoxes

“They’ll go: ‘You’ve got no idea what you’re doing then?’

I’ll say: I’ve got the idea of knowing what I’m doing. I’ve got behind me an end-to-end process to make it happen;

what has to be done where, who we have to involve, what bits of this thing need to be sorted out to make it happen,

and here’s the operating models for how it might operate.

It’s all there, but what ... you don’t seem to understand, is that we have to do this bit first; we have to go to our communities and ask them, and then we’ll be able to work out how to best operate it and how you would do that.

And, actually by the way, it’s not about you; it’s not about where your job is, because you aren’t relevant.

What’s relevant is resolving the concerns of communities.”

[interviewee]

We present this report in the format of five paradoxes.

Paradoxes are statements which seem to contradict themselves, involve an ‘and/and’ logic, or play on oppositions, but nonetheless represent some form of truth. Paradoxes flourish in contexts of complexity and adaptability and the Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative represents exactly such a context given it requires:

- diverse entities to engage with each other
- a status quo breaking aspiration
- a non-linear pathway
- no certainty of resource, policy, or mandate
- a long-term trajectory but short-term deadlines
- the need to redistribute power and voice

This narrative speaks to the need to build capacity to work with paradox, certainly claim it, and even sustain it. It invites us to suspend our desire for clarity, order and certainty.

The overarching theme is that this collaboration found ways to create significant movement through a minefield of paradoxes. Our biggest hope is that those who come after them, and others on similar endeavours, learn from such an experience.

The Core of the Narrative: A Ground-breaking Kaupapa

Kaupapa has multiple meanings including:

- purpose or plan
- platform or floor
- raft
- main body of a cloak



Kaupapa is a foundation, set of principles and guide. It is the Kaupapa which:

- sustains the action,
- directs attention to 'why' to keep going when things get tough,
- offers clues on 'how' to proceed when it isn't clear
- holds people to 'what' matters the most.

(Te Kawehau Hoskins & Alison Jones, 2017).

“allows you to sort of go in; deep dive and look at the realities, as well as come out, in terms of the governance and the leadership. There’s always a point; there are points you can refer to in the process”

The Kaupapa was intentionally paradigm breaking

From the interviews:

“it’s a shift in paradigm; it’s a shift in how traditional models have worked in providing and funding”

“if you’re going to run it like [in a safe way], it will fail in the aspirations of what the intent was. It will have a moderate success, probably go in the right direction, but it will not do what we set out to do. It will just be incremental gain.”

“shoot for the stars, because I think if you don’t..... you will erode the vision, so it becomes but a shadow of other models”

“We’re trying to change something fundamentally embedded within our society. It can’t be just band aid. This is the risk of the whole thing.”

Paradox One: An Unchanging Pinnacle and a Changing Path



“the tides are coming in and out, [but there is] the stability of the mana, manaia; because no matter what’s going down they’re always there.

The pinnacle doesn’t shift its axis that pinnacle still stays there. It’s there. It’s solid.”

[Interviewee]

The interviews highlighted three core pinnacle

The Treaty of Waitangi

“The manaia in this initiative is for me to have an absolute outcome that is reflective of the maturity of treaty partners in 2018/2019 and beyond”

(Interviewee)

Patient / Whanau led

“They’re an incredibly under-utilised resource, the whānau and the patients. They’re the people that have got the interests in the stuff.”

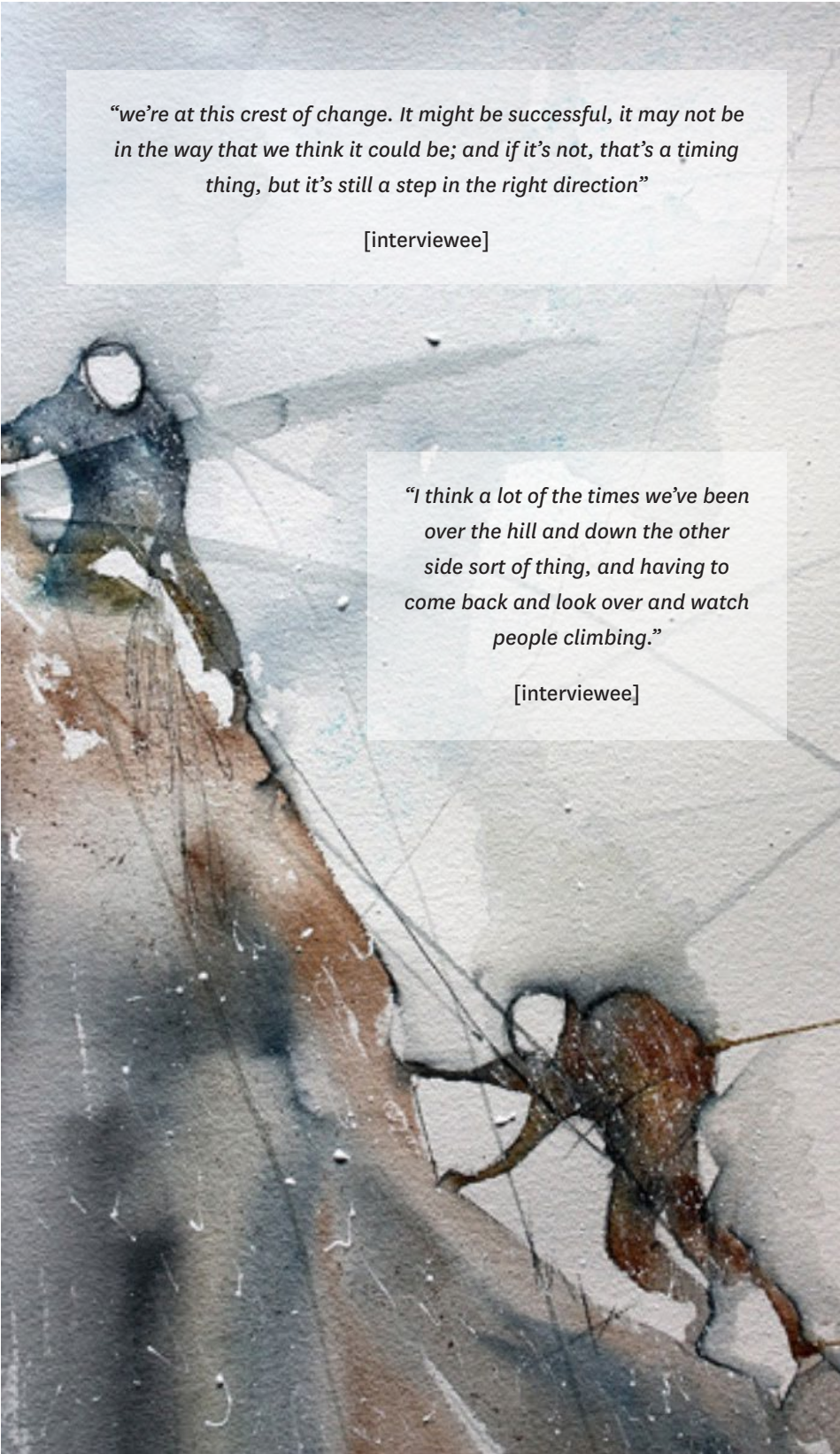
(interviewee)

Equity

“... through narrative, through the storytelling, through the evidence of information we can get to the point where a fairer distribution of resource can be achieved”

(Interviewee)

Paradox Two: Climbing Further and Turning Back



"we're at this crest of change. It might be successful, it may not be in the way that we think it could be; and if it's not, that's a timing thing, but it's still a step in the right direction"

[interviewee]

"I think a lot of the times we've been over the hill and down the other side sort of thing, and having to come back and look over and watch people climbing."

[interviewee]

This Process..... Like Climbing a Mountain

"Let's say we are trying to climb a mountain and the top was the final product.

Like, every bit of a climb, you have to reach base camp, don't you, every time you go up.

At times, as you're looking for your next base camp you're going to come across crevasses and things where it gets icy.

You don't expect it to be just a straight walk; there's going to be bits in between. I think we have continued to gain altitude slowly and surely.

Just being determined to get to the top and had the expectation all the way along that it was going to be difficult.

We didn't even know what was coming ahead; what it would have been like going up.

They're not sure what's going to happen next, but they know where they want to get to and they're actually going to have a rest or a break somewhere along the way."

Paradox Three: Managing Progress and Making Meaning

Managing Process

"I'm very methodical and logical in my thinking too."

"I need to see a pathway A + B"

(Interviewee)

"What I'm advocating for more, is greater efficiency through this; better planning and better outcomes"

(Interviewee)

"If you don't have enough goodwill you have to compensate operationally with almost perfect operational delivery at centre and that takes time"

(Interviewee)

"Underpinning this is a whole series of detailed work packages, detailed governance and approach to governance."

(Interviewee)

Making Meaning

"And, so I'm very careful, very careful, and maybe sometimes too careful and too cautious, that people need time sometimes to make the shift."

(Interviewee)

"There's creating the space and time for that; to have the maturity of thought, and develop consensus for disagreement, and that process."

We're so used to trying to push things, and it's not informed discussion."

(Interviewee)

"I don't want a partial decision to move forward. I want everyone to move forward freely; because if we do, no-one can break that strength. No-one."

(Interviewee)

"Generally, it's as lack of engagement; I think we're not asking people what matters to them."

(Interviewee)

Paradox Four: Building Trust and Seeking Conflict



"We had a couple of discussions where some hard issues were dealt with. I think it's been the feature of this kaupapa mostly. You know how it is... when you address a hard issue, you don't want to ..., but then you do and transparency leads to peace in a way doesn't it..... it's a bit like a 12-step programme in a way."

(Interviewee)

Paradox Five: Building Trust and Seeking Conflict

Holding On

“The control model is being where we’ve always been in health, that is not going to work.”

“They just want to know ‘how am I going to do it’, and ‘what’s my job going to be’, and ‘is my job safe’, and ‘how important would I be in the structure’, or ‘how many people will I be controlling’. We’re saying, we’re not going to tell you any of that because we don’t know yet.”

“At times it gets lost in operational detail and competing interests and the like. You lose sight of it and you’re very likely to lose the value of the initiative I would suggest.”

Letting Go

“For me I can give up control; I can give up form. I don’t care, as long as it works.”

“It’s the shifting of the paradigm and the balance of power, if you like, if you have to think of it in those terms, which you kind of do at this point. And that’s why our roles become immaterial because it’s the momentum of the model that will carry it.”

“I think everyone knows something is going to change, and everyone has to give something, and everyone’s going to lose something.”



Findings: Responding to Paradox

Paradoxes should not be resolved or even eliminated over time

- The Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative skilfully navigated five paradoxes: An Unchanging Pinnacle and a Changing Path; Climbing Further and Turning Back; Managing Process and Making Meaning; Building Trust and Seeking Conflict; and Holding On and Letting Go
- The research on paradox warns us against eliminating paradoxes, as this may result in the oversimplifying of very real tensions, thus leading the system to focus too narrowly on a limited number of too instrumental goals or measures

Research proposes we embrace and sustain paradox

- The Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative continued to orientate itself, and its purpose towards paradigm and system change despite, and amidst, paradoxes.
- The two poles of a paradox should ideally be maintained at as minimal level as possible. At that level, they retain their generative power by keeping the system “on its toes, in a state of continuous awareness of its own contradictions” and thus able to continue to orientate to paradigm and system change (Clegg, S., de Cunha, J, & e Cunha, M. 2002, p. 487)

Over the trajectory of a challenge the intensity of paradoxes can shift

- Those involved become more adept and practiced at the challenging and contested poles of the paradox. With the Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative, this represented (on the right) a changing path, turning back, making meaning, seeking conflict and letting go.
- In so doing these can be claimed as essential components of the collaboration repertoire (Heifetz R., 1994).

Managing risk over time becomes akin to a shift to the left

- If contested poles of a paradox are not held in tension, the initiative risks becoming status quo confirming, thus threatening the paradigm and system change aspirations and redistribution of voice and power.
- With the Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative, the tension with the poles on the right represented a shift from an unchanging pinnacle, climbing further, managing process, building trust and holding on.

Paradigm and system change require the capacity to create movement through contradictions and complexity

- In the first three years, Collaboration Kaupapa has, to a large extent, intentionally sought the full depth and range of each of the paradoxes. No interviewee reported that this was easy; in fact many reflected how difficult and at times personally damaging it was. However most understood that paradigm and system change required capacity to create movement, whilst keeping all stakeholders involved and intact.
- Those in the next phase of the Initiative can expect to have fewer pendulum swings between the left and right poles of the paradoxes and generally a less tumultuous journey. They need to be mindful of the paradoxes though; losing sight of the poles and the tensions they bring is the biggest threat to the paradigm and system change aspirations of this endeavour.

Lessons Learnt

Lesson 1:

Develop your **kaupapa** early and use it to anchor conversations, planning, negotiations, and struggles.

All members of the Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative could articulate the kaupapa and its meanings instantly; it was palpably a shared force between them.

- Enable a process to construct the Kaupapa through workshops with key stakeholders, forums which test and refine it, and consensus agreement around it. This may well take months.
- Capacity and willingness to contribute should form the backbone of any initiative, and it should build on community ownership, need and aspiration.
- Have the Kaupapa written down, bring it to meetings, evoke it often, make it present and active in conversations.
- The kaupapa becomes the touchstone for leadership; for chairing meetings and facilitating the process, particularly in terms of the role of an intermediary.

Lesson 2:

Seek an **intermediary** - an ‘outsider’ with sophisticated facilitative, governance, project management and relationship skills to specifically hold your kaupapa and to work alongside champions for the cause.

The Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative had leaders with unshakeable honesty and strength of character working alongside an intermediary to help drive focus and maintain momentum.

- Look for an intermediary with expertise and experience in cross system, complex stakeholder processes. Don’t be nervous of an outsider in this role if they have the rare expertise and experience in systems work.
- The role of the intermediary is to hold and articulate the kaupapa and they will need to do so even where that is inconvenient, uncomfortable, controversial and confronting.
- The intermediary is especially critical early on in a complex initiative while stakeholders form and connect to it and each other.
- The intermediary ensures that communications around process and progress is clear, concise, systematic to all stakeholders thus minimising potential points of contestation, disengagement, confusion and pressure.
- For the intermediary to successfully drive the focus and maintain momentum, there is a need for ‘absolute heroes’ with unshakeable honesty and strength of character to head up the kaupapa.
- At some stage the intermediary can (and should) phase out when the core leadership group are able to hold the kaupapa and themselves.

Lesson 3:

Inevitable to paradigm-breaking challenges is the requirement of all stakeholders to proactively **engage with loss** at some if not multiple parts of the process - whether that is loss of power, autonomy, resource, voice or knowledge.

The Collaboration Kaupapa successfully retained connection and contribution in these moments.

- Losses are inevitable in ground-breaking initiatives, given Crown, iwi, agency, community and private entities will always have some interests and agendas that do not map seamlessly together. Declare these from the outset and work through them respectfully and with visibility.
- The process of working through loss brings the need to engage with power dynamics between core stakeholders and entities which is normally a contested and difficult part of such an initiative. Some initiatives will need their intermediary to remain through this process.
- Acknowledging and working through losses will step up the need for the relationality, interdependence and care that has been constructed between stakeholders right from the beginning.
- An intermediary should only phase out when the core entities have grappled and worked through their losses together.

Lesson 4:

Expect to spend as much time on **relationships** as the project or process itself.

Members of the Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative spent as much time on the phone, in face to face conversations, and in catch ups as they did in formal procedures.

- There is a need to move beyond what might be termed affability or accommodation in order to engage with deeper meaning, identity issues and core values. Such a movement, while necessary, brings risk and requires a sophisticated level of relational skills from both intermediary and the core leadership team.
- Relational work will be the core (but not exclusive) responsibility of the intermediary - particularly in the early phases.
- The relationships are the work - not a distraction to it - throughout all phases of the initiative.

Lesson 5:

Pay attention to the **readiness** of individuals and groups to take the next step and if that readiness is not there yet then wait for it to arrive without forcing it.

The Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative walked both as a necessary tightrope and it became the hallmark of this initiative.

- Time moves differently when people are warming up to change and loss, as opposed to project milestones and deadlines. There has to be permission to pause, slow down, walk with those who need more time, and wait before moving into new decisions and phases.
- Readiness can be grown through different conversations with new stakeholders or through shared events and processes which create new meaning and energy.
- Don't confuse the engagement around different states of readiness, with loss of movement and energy. Sustaining momentum and energy remains vital through the integration of planning, assurance and stakeholder relationships.

Lesson 6:

Expect the make-up of your core group to **continuously change** as you start to move and act, learn more, and have deep conversations.

The Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative had significant changes to their core at the 18 month and the three year mark, which was both a challenge and their strength.

- Deep conversations will cause upheaval and disruption and challenge new norms and understandings.
- Dynamism and continuous change require the strength to admit mistakes and weaknesses, to learn individually and collectively from adverse situations, and the courage to engage with failures and disappointments as vital learning moments.
- Any trajectory in a ground-breaking initiative will be imperfect. Learning from such imperfections builds resilience and practical wisdom.
- New entities and stakeholders can be a source, not just of disruption, but renewed energy, support and purpose. However when new entities join, you can expect significant disruption and questioning.
- It is vital that core stakeholders don't leave. One of the roles of the intermediary is to slow the process down or sometimes speed it up to ensure core entities stay engaged in the initiative.

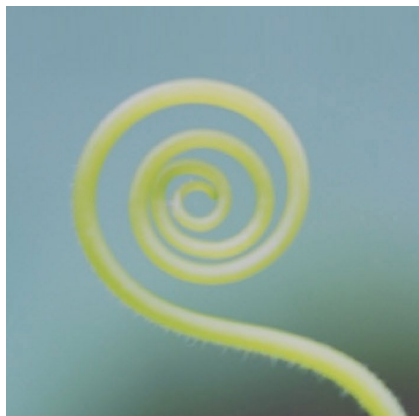
Lesson 7:

A **meticulous process** is, perhaps somewhat counterintuitively, hugely important when embarking on endeavours high in ambiguity, complexity and uncertainty.

Documentation, protocols and planning were regarded as essential for the Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative.

- Complex initiatives demand agility, adaptability and responsiveness more than compliance, documentation and process work, but a meticulous process should not be underestimated.
- In moments of conflict and contestation, it helps to have formal minutes, previously agreed on protocols, and time lines to revisit.
- Alongside the Kaupapa, begin and sustain heightened transparency through ongoing evaluation and monitoring processes, funding models, planning and assurance in order to hold clarity around accountabilities and vested and competing interests
- In the early stages it is particularly valuable for such process work to be held and led by an intermediary.





Conclusions

The CK initiative is unique and challenging, not only internally to itself, but to the policy context within which it sits. However, the broader ecosystem is no longer wholly hostile to paradoxical, legacy-disruptive ways of working. The post-settlement era and the Kaupapa Inquiries, including Wai2575, offer opportunities for a holistic focus on significant issues affecting Māori across the country. Alongside this, the government is looking to break down system silos, through legislative changes to the Public Sector Act, and in its desire to see intergenerational wellbeing and cross-agency policy design become the norm. This suggests that the lessons learned from the CK may find fertile ground for emulation by others. For those beginning on similar paradigm and systems change initiatives, tactics powerfully developed by the original Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative members may help in the navigation of complexity, contradictions and conflicts.

Acknowledgements

We thank members of the Collaboration Kaupapa Initiative who responded to our invitation for an interview and who graciously shared their precious time and extensive experience. We are humbled by your commitment and courage to forge a new future for primary healthcare in Northland and eventually in Aotearoa New Zealand. Kia kaha.

We are indebted to Nic Mason and her amazing ability to shape ambitious ideas into workable proposals; to Professor Cindy Kiro for patiently navigating pākehā colleagues through appropriate tikanga and for her enthusiasm and pragmatism to bring aspirations to fruition; and to Wes Fieldhouse who connected us with key stakeholders and key information, and who kept us to task. This project would have been infinitely less successful without your contributions.

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