

# Summary of Progress Report: October 2010 to September 2012

## BOP Community Response Forum

### Overview of Forum Progress and Achievements

#### 1 Background

Over the past two years, the BOP Forum has worked with the communities of Kawerau, Opotiki and Whakatane. The key message from these communities has been their desire for “real” community input into funding decisions made by the various Government agencies. In this vein, we have found examples of successful community action, enabled by innovative funding processes by Government, in particular the Youth Social Sector Trials in Kawerau. We have also found real issues that need to be addressed in a range of other aspects in funding of the community sector.

#### 2 Priority Communities

Kawerau, Opotiki and Whakatane were selected as priorities because they: had some of the poorest social outcomes (in particular for Maori); were a manageable size; already had good connections within the BOP Forum; and were at a point where they were ready or willing to engage.

#### 3 Community Engagement

Our method of engaging with communities is based on principles of participative appraisal which approach is guided by the following principles:

- working in a way that encourages and strengthens local communities and families
- focusing on strengths rather than issues - what's offering not what's missing
- being inclusive - using techniques that facilitate two way conversations with community members
- partnering with the community and others who have undertaken similar work.

We have facilitated large public meetings and smaller focus groups engaging with a wide range of stakeholders including iwi, FACS providers, other NGO providers, users of the services, local councils and government agencies.

#### 4 Summary of Achievements 2010-2012

Our key achievements have centered on recommended changes to the current funding model; and development of a robust engagement process. We have been careful to ensure that our engagement with communities has met our principles of engagement. The process has left our Forum with an assurance that our recommendations reflect what the community wants and the objectives of the CRM.

We have invested significant effort into developing our strategic recommendations to change the current funding model. Although these recommendations seek fundamental changes, we consider that if implemented, greater wellbeing for communities will be delivered as well as the effective social services sought by the Minister.

The Forum has also accomplished the following in each community:

##### *Kawerau*

Shortly after the CRM process began in Kawerau, it became the focus of increased Government activity. In response, we changed our focus from a community wide approach, to one of improving relationships between key providers, as we found gaps in collaboration

and communication between providers. This was done through a series of facilitated provider and stakeholder hui. In a recent meeting with key Kawerau stakeholders, the Forum was pleased to find that there had been significant improvement in provider relationships.

We also found that a 'circuit-breaker' collaborative team approach was needed to address crisis issues in Kawerau. The Youth Social Sector Trials fit this bill well in the target age group and we support measured expansion of this approach in Kawerau, as well as application in other communities.

#### *Opotiki*

In Opotiki, we found that the Whanau Ora initiative has already helped foster greater collaboration in the community, particularly for those organisations involved (a number of these organisations are key MSD providers in the region). The community has seen the benefit of all social sector providers working together and sharing their skills, expertise and knowledge. There is enthusiasm for growing this model across the community, and we are supporting this process.

#### *Whakatane*

The Forum is at an early stage of engagement within the Whakatane community, but already we have found enthusiasm to develop a stronger community sector leadership which aligns to the objectives of CRM.

## **5 Issues or Challenges**

We have faced a number of challenges, the biggest of which has been the uncertainty of the CRM process, as it has developed and changed over the 24 months; however, we have continued in good faith to do our best for this kaupapa

The biggest issue for us is that the learning from our dialogue with communities and our associated recommendations have not yet been reflected in any changes to funding practice in FACS or MSD.

Other issues the Forum identified include:

- The focus by FACS (MSD) on national programmes. There is little or no regional decision-making of the main programmes, little discretionary funding at a regional level, leaving little room for innovation or adaptation.
- Linking CRM with other initiatives e.g. Whanau ora, White Paper, Welfare Reforms and Youth Sector Trials – how does it all fit it together? At times we have had to carefully skirt around potential duplication of effort, which could simply be avoided if programmes were co-ordinated by Government agencies.
- How to influence changes to longstanding, established Government funding processes that are not meeting the needs of the community. We can see changes that need to happen and have advised to that effect, but with no response from FACS & MSD.
- The CRM focus was too narrow, i.e. FACS funding. Communities often want to discuss issues that related to areas outside of FACS' area of responsibility.

## **Key Strategic Findings and Recommendations**

### **Community Centric Regional Funding Model**

By mid-2011, we had found in our communities that the FACS funding model did not effectively deliver on community priorities and did not allocate resources effectively.

In September 2011, we recommended a "funding model changeup" for FACS. We recognised this as ambitious, but consider it necessary to achieve the type of transformational change sought by the Minster. We anticipated that this model would need

ongoing development, and we have continued to develop a funding model based on a **community centric** approach, which includes the following aspects.

### *Community Accountability*

A key to the community centric model was the idea of community accountability. Currently accountability for FACS services is based on a traditional government framework of 'upward' reporting where providers report on contracted outputs to FACS, FACS reports these to its Minister, and the Minister is accountable to Cabinet. There is no mechanism for accountability to the community.

We have examined a model of dual accountability, whereby the community was part of the accountability framework. Providers and FACS would not only be 'upwardly' accountable, they would also be accountable to the communities in which their services were delivered. As a first step, we have recommended public reporting – whereby providers and FACS would publically report on the negotiated community outcomes achieved by providers for the community.

### *Rationale for funding decisions*

The Forum could not identify the process that FACS uses to determine priority communities of need and the specific services each community requires. The Forum considered that FACS' apparent reliance on TLA deprivation data alone has resulted in inequities of funding for communities and gaps in services provided across the region. We have recommended that the analysis of regional and community data from a range of quantitative and qualitative sources be used to underpin regional and community planning and their allocation of resources for the community sector.

### *Regional Funding Panel*

We consider that a regional funding panel would provide an effective mechanism to implement and manage a community centric approach. We have seen that this has been modeled successfully by the Community Response Fund panels and the Regional Funders Forums. We believe those models could be further developed to have greater responsibilities in analysis and planning.

The panel would be cross government and would include a process by which communities are represented. It would analyse the needs of communities and determine how agencies are responding to these needs, identify gaps, reduce overlaps and duplications, and develop a cross agency funding plan.

Other aspects of the Funding Panel that the Forum is considering, which requires further development, include the Panel:

- having the mandate to decide what programmes or services are needed on a community by community basis;
- holding a discretionary fund to support or expand regional initiatives to improve efficiency of service delivery;
- developing leadership groups identified by CRM to have input into panel decisions;
- developing a process to improve community accountability.

Other findings are reflected in our strategic recommendations made to the Minister over the past 24 months including:

- Improving the accountability of funders and providers to the community.
- Development of a transparent rationale for whole of Government funding decisions
- The implementation of a regional "whole of government" funding panel, reflecting the community, responsible for social services funding decisions within the BOP region;

- Development of a process by which local communities have input in to what is funded in their community.
- Expand and develop locally based initiatives that are effective – such as the Youth Social Sector Trials, Whanau Ora collectives.

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Peter Waru, Chair of the Bay Plenty Forum