

WELLINGTON REGION COLLECTIVE IMPACT FEASIBILITY STUDY



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Exploring the potential for a collective impact initiative to make the Wellington Region 'the best place in New Zealand to raise a family'

A report to explore, assess and make a recommendation on the potential of a 'collective impact' initiative focused on the wellbeing of families in the Wellington Region. The report seeks to clarify 'public' perceptions and refines campaign objectives. This report was commissioned by an informal working group.

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Wellington Region Collective Impact Feasibility Study

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL FOR A COLLECTIVE IMPACT INITIATIVE TO MAKE THE WELLINGTON REGION 'THE BEST PLACE IN NEW ZEALAND TO RAISE A FAMILY'

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'Collective Impact' has been sweeping the non-profit world by storm, beginning in North America and gaining popularity in Australia and New Zealand. Collective Impact sees that no single organisation can create large-scale social change alone. A lot of social issues, such as poverty, inequality, and educational achievement, are 'complex problems' – the answers are not known and the 'problem' arises from the interplay of activities of various sectors. Collective Impact is about a group of people from different sectors working towards a common goal. Collective Impact presents itself as a fundamentally different, more disciplined and 'higher-performing approach' to achieving large-scale social change. The approach is defined by five conditions: 1) common agenda; 2) shared measurement; 3) mutually reinforcing activities; 4) continuous communication; and 5) backbone support.

This report seeks to explore, assess and make a recommendation on the potential of a 'collective impact' initiative to make the Wellington Region 'the best place in New Zealand to raise a family'. The concept's origins are in a desire for social change, and a desire to address issues of inequality. Through talking with 55 interviewees¹, this project sought to 'test the waters' for the proposed collective impact initiative.

Interviewees' perceptions

Collective Impact does not require every participant to agree with every other participant on all dimensions of the problem/issue that participants seek to address. But at a minimum, all participants must agree on the type of social problem they want to address in order to begin to build a 'common agenda'. Interviewees showed great diversity in terms of their perception of what the key social problems are in the Wellington Region. From the interviews, it is difficult to see what a collective impact initiative should focus on. Some themes discussed by interviewees included 'you've got the wrong idea', 'what problem?', racism and prejudice; poverty; inequality, disempowerment and self-efficacy; isolated

¹ For the purposes of this report, all people met with, who contributed their views and ideas are referred to as 'interviewees'. Interviews were conducted on an anonymous basis. See Appendix 5 for further details about interviews and interviewees.

families and the 'hard to reach'; drugs and alcohol; Wellington Region's economic problem; culture/mindset.

While it is possible to develop a common agenda among people who are interested in a collective impact initiative going forward, this may take some time and some skilled facilitators. One interviewee observed that:

"The concept of developing the next generation is a compelling one for most people."

There was also great variety in what people saw as key concepts and priorities that should be included in a common agenda that was about 'making the Wellington Region the best place to raise a family'. The wide range of concepts and priorities that interviewees discussed included education and life skills for parents, justice, sports, housing, violence, sexual abuse, health, education, community building, environment, transport (see further on pages 14-15). This same diversity of views also came through in answer to questions about 'game changers' and 'challenges facing families today'. Answers to these question included employment, community development, getting the right help, safety and security, time and social fabric (see further on pages 15-20).

People were certainly interested in the well-being of children. However, the question is not what drives people to be 'interested', but rather, what moves people from 'interest' to 'action'.

Refining 'campaign objectives': 'best place to raise a family'

Most (38 out of 55) interviewees had a neutral response to the proposed campaign objective of making the Wellington Region the 'best place to raise a family'. Several interviewees thought the concept was too vague and meaningless. It seemed difficult for many people to engage with the idea, hence the majority of responses were neutral. Ten interviewees did not like the campaign concept because "'best' sounds arrogant"; the phrase has "middle-class" and "nappy valley" connotations; the phrase "masks the issues". On the other hand, seven interviewees liked the concept because it was a "big picture agenda".

Interviewees were most attracted to the idea of people working together or "pulling together" for a common goal. Some people also thought the collective impact initiative would be timely due to many years of fragmentation and competition in both the public and non-profit sector.

There was a range of responses about what would be the appropriate geographic scope. Some interviewees thought that starting small with a local neighbourhood or small community would be better. Others thought that the Greater Wellington Region was the appropriate scale.

Some interviewees also raised a question of "who" this proposed initiative was aimed at – was it a targeted approach or was it a universal one? Some interviewees were strongly of the view that it should be a targeted approach, while others thought several issues cut across socio-economic lines.

Assessment: Potential, Prerequisites, Collective Impact Framework

While there is fair potential for a Collective Impact initiative to get off the ground in the Wellington Region, caution should be taken. It will be easy to start a collective impact initiative, but it will be much harder to sustain it, and harder yet to achieve results or have an impact.

Some challenges to consider are:

- High risk of becoming “a lot of talk, talk, talk and no action”.
- Risk of the initiative being a bit of “us helping them”.
- Missing the “people’s voices” – in terms of the people with lived experience of some of the issues to be addressed, as well as the voices of groups that are often not heard.
- Lack of genuine long-term commitment.
- Collaboration is “dreadfully difficult to manage”.
- Collaboration is difficult to do for all participants.

As one interviewee said:

“My concern about doing a collective impact thing is that it will end up as an exercise for the well-educated middle-class people who get a great deal of satisfaction out of this model...”

There are generally ‘three prerequisites’ for Collective Impact: influential champions, adequate financial resources and urgency for change. Currently only prerequisite number 1 – ‘influential champions’ is clearly fulfilled. Financial resources could potentially be fulfilled but due to the limited interview list, it was not possible to assess this. Urgency for change is open to debate – some people saw that the time was ripe, while others did not see an urgency for change.

The Collective Impact model itself should also be assessed with a critical eye. While many communities rush to replicate the Collective Impact model, the reality is that many Collective Impact initiatives end in failure or have very little impact. What is discussed and heralded in Collective Impact circles are only the ‘success stories’. In reality, the ‘magic’ and ‘allure’ of Collective Impact fades quickly and the reality of the difficulties around collaboration quickly emerge. The heavy focus on data and measurement is also questionable as this can produce dependency on less reliable data and result in “great numbers but really miserable information”. Collective Impact also overlooks the role of individuals. By far, successful collaboration is not dependent on systems and frameworks, but by the characteristics and attributes of the individuals involved.

Recommendations and Paths Forward

There are two key recommendations for the Working Group:

1. **Review what you aim to achieve:** The group, whether it is the current group, or a different composition of new members plus current members, needs to have a clear and common purpose. Know your purpose as it will be the anchor when things get tough.

2. **Do some self-reflection:** The skills and attributes of the individuals involved in a collaboration will determine success or failure more than the perfect strategy or plan. It is people and their relationships that count. It may be useful for individuals involved to do some self-reflection about attributes like open-mindedness, patience, flexibility, empathy, respect, self-awareness.

In terms of paths forward or options to consider, I have suggested five different options. Options 1, 2 and 3 are the more particular/specific ones. They may seem counter-intuitive to what Collective Impact is about but I have suggested using a 'Collective Impact mindset' of 'working together better' to do some very specific and tangible things:

1. Support an existing community initiative, for example:
 - Anti-P campaign in Porirua East;
 - Common Unity Project in Eponi, Lower Hutt
2. Focus on sports.
3. Focus on a narrower social issue—youth justice and youth offending.
4. Do further exploration about what is out there already and how people could work together better.
5. Continue with your original idea inviting others to join in further dialogue and discussion to refine the idea and get clear about the purpose.

1. WHAT IS 'COLLECTIVE IMPACT'?

'Collective Impact' has become a hot topic in the non-profit world and now increasingly in the public sector² too. Many communities, groups and not-for-profits (NFPs) have begun pursuing Collective Impact strategies, or defining their existing efforts as Collective Impact.³ But what are we talking about when we say "Collective Impact" or call something a "collective impact initiative"?

A 'Collective Impact Initiative' is the 'long term commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to work toward a common agenda for solving a specific/complex social problem'⁴.

While collaboration is nothing new and the social sector is filled with different types of partnerships, networks and other types of joint efforts (see Appendix 1), Collective Impact seeks to present itself as 'fundamentally different, more disciplined, and a higher performing approach to achieving large-scale social change'⁵ It is therefore an approach or a framework for organising activity, ideas and people. This approach/framework is defined by five conditions, as articulated below:

The Five Conditions of Collective Impact

Common Agenda	All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.
Shared Measurement	Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	Participating activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

² Deputy Prime Minister Bill English first mentioned 'collective impact' in a speech made to the Institute of Public Administration New Zealand February 2013, where he says in part 'when we start considering collective impact, it's focussed on what we can together actually achieve' cited in O'Leary (2014). Some interviewees noted that English is a keen advocate of collective impact, one interviewee commented that "the term – 'collective impact' – will soon be colonised by the public sector."

³ Paul Schmithz, *The Real Challenge for Collective Impact*, 2012, writing about the United States. In New Zealand and Australia several 'collective impact initiatives can also be found. For New Zealand examples see Appendix 4.

⁴ Kania and Kramer in their 2011 landmark Stanford Social Innovation Review article "Collective Impact" describe what a Collective Impact Initiative is. This is the article that is seen to have 'started it all'.

⁵ Hanleybrown, Kania & Kramer, (2012) 'Channelling Change: Making Collective Impact Work', *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, p.2.

Continuous Communication	Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.
Backbone Support	Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organisation with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organisations and agencies.

Collective impact proponents talk about ‘lasting solutions’ to ‘complex social problems⁶’ on a ‘large scale’. They say that no single organisation can create large-scale social change alone. Large-scale social change, therefore requires organisations – from various sectors – to coordinate their efforts and work together toward common goals. Hallmarks of collective impact include:

- Addressing ‘complex’ rather than technical problems (see Appendix 1).
- Cross-sector alignment with government, non-profit, philanthropic and corporate sectors as partners.
- Organisations actively coordinating their action and sharing lessons learned.
- Data – lots of it.

‘Collective Impact’ is a framework/approach defined by five conditions.

The Three Prerequisites for Collective Impact

It is also widely espoused in the Collective Impact literature that three prerequisites must be in place before launching a collective impact initiative: influential champions, adequate financial resources and a sense of urgency for change. These conditions are seen as needed in order to bring people who have never worked together into a collective impact initiative.

Influential Champion(s):	This is seen as the most critical factor – an influential champion or champions commanding the respect necessary to bring CEO-level cross-sector leaders together.
Adequate financial resources:	For at least two to three years. Original proponents suggest this should be in the form of at least one anchor funder.

⁶ See Appendix 1 for a discussion of what a ‘complex problem’ is.

Urgency for change:	There must be urgency for change around an issue. Has a crisis arisen to convince people of the need for a new approach? Has there been media attention highlighting the severity of a problem? There must be something to create the sense of urgency to persuade people to come together.
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2. 'PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS' / INTERVIEWEES' PERCEPTIONS

This section of the report addresses some of the questions listed under “Public Perception” asked by the Working Group in the original project brief⁷:

- What do a wide variety of people think are the “game changers” that will make a difference?
- Is it possible to create a common agenda to improve life for children and families; and what would be the key concepts and priorities?
- What drives people to be interested in the wellbeing of children?

However, as a prerequisite to answering these questions, another question needs to be asked:

- “Make a difference” to what exactly? What is the complex social problem that needs to be addressed with a collective impact initiative?

Note that I do not regard the findings from the interviews as ‘*public perceptions*’ but rather these are *interviewees’ perceptions*. The interview list was a selection of mostly senior and ‘influential people’ who are seen as leaders in their field or sector. Most people interviewed were well-educated, ‘fortunate in their lives’ and over 50 years old. This section therefore should be seen as ‘interviewees’ perceptions’.

2.1. What is the ‘complex problem’ we need to address?

Let us begin by seeking more clarity about the ‘complex social problem’⁸ that a collective impact initiative could seek to address. While complex problems are by their very nature difficult to ‘define’ and difficult to ‘frame’, we need to at least know what *type* of social problem it is. The Collective Impact approach recognises that not every participant needs to agree with every other participant on all dimensions of the problem. However, all participants must agree on the ‘problem/issue’ and have a common understanding of the problem/issue.

Collective impact condition 1: Common Agenda:
All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.

There is lack of clarity about the type of social problem we are seeking to address with a new collective impact initiative in the Wellington Region. While it is valuable to adopt a ‘strengths-based approach’ and a constructive approach by focusing the conversation on the ‘wellbeing of families’ in the region, this was often too vague for interviewees. Some interviewees did not perceive a problem at all. Some

⁷ See Appendix 5 for the original project brief.

⁸ Again, see Appendix 1 for a discussion of ‘complex problems’.

interviewees understood that underlying ‘making the Wellington Region the best place to raise a family’ was a desire to address poverty and inequality. Some interviewees understood this but thought the premise was fundamentally wrong.

Some key themes from the interviews in terms of initial reactions and perception of ‘the problem’ are below. This selection of comments from interviewees shows the huge diversity in terms of people’s perceptions, thinking and values. The following sections highlights some quotes from interviews under the following themes:

- You’ve got the wrong idea or What IS the idea?
- What problem?
- Racism and prejudice
- Poverty
- Inequality
- Disempowerment & self-efficacy
- Isolated families, the ‘hard to reach’
- Drugs and alcohol
- Wellington Region’s economic problem
- Culture/mindset

You’ve got the wrong idea/What IS the idea?

“It goes back to that there is nothing wrong here. There is an attitude of ‘you haven’t got what I’ve got, so you must be in poverty’. We don’t see ourselves in poverty.”

“We need to be really clear about what it is that we really want to change.”

“We first need to understand the nature of the problem. People are always trying to fix a problem when they don’t understand it. We have to spend time understanding the nature of the problem...I believe that it will cut a lot deeper than some people might realise”.

What problem? (Visibility of problems)

“There are lots of issues in society that are invisible – domestic violence, child poverty... it’s not something they [businesses] are aware of...I’m sure there are lots of areas where there is deprivation but it’s not visible to me on a daily basis. I’m not even sure if there is a particular problem in Wellington.”

“It already is pretty good. I’ve lived all over New Zealand with children. The Wellington Region is an incredibly family-friendly place...The quality of schools and choice, access to the harbor and scenic areas, we’re blessed really.”

“To varying degrees, poverty and inequality is ever present in society.”

Racism and prejudice

“If we’re talking about disparity and inequity, then we need to be asking who are ‘they’? What do ‘they’ look like? And inevitably they don’t look like the people around the [collective impact] table.”

“There is not one law for all. If you’re white you get a slap on the hand. Me, because of my family background and what I look like – I get GBH [grievous bodily harm] ...If these families want to move along in life, in five years, twenty years, it’s always on their record.”

“It’s the attitudes that are actually the barriers...People don’t go and get help because of the judgment. If you go down to WINZ there is instant attitude of the receptionist towards people on benefits. I stay at home because then I don’t have to deal with people who put me down because I’m already down enough.”

“There is today a sense of shame in saying ‘I am poor. I am hungry. I need some help’. We have created this sense of shame. It is not good to have parents feeling shameful. It is dangerous for them and their children.”

“A campaign like this won’t necessarily address the deeper issues – the racism that exists.”

Poverty

“Some say there’s absolutely no question there is a problem [poverty]. Some say ‘well it’s their own fault’...but there is a growing sense of acknowledgement and awareness that it needs to be tackled.”

Inequality

“There is a sense that the gap is getting bigger than we’re comfortable with.”

“We need to be closing the gap and lifting the bottom up.”

“We have a rock’n’roll economy but a heck of a lot of people can’t hear the music. We need to find out why it is they are locked out.”

Disempowerment and self-efficacy

“Child poverty, poverty – are all manifestations of people who don’t feel they have the power to do what they need to do. They don’t have a sense of efficacy in their own lives. People do want something to be different for them and for their kids.”

“Sense of ‘hopelessness’ among a whole section of the population, across the country. [For example,] the rate of self-harm and suicide is incredibly high among young Maori men.”

“The problem is to do with belief. How I feel about myself... When I am defined by an external currency – i.e. money – then I have nothing to define myself. I am isolated and then I try to parent from that place.”

“We are disempowering more and more parents when we do this sort of thing [lunches in schools]. Does providing children with lunch become a corporate or state responsibility? While we do need to address emergency situations, we should not make people dependent on handouts. We have taken away their dignity and responsibility.”

“The problem is disempowerment. There is a shared understanding of this in the NGO sector, there is a frustration in the NGO sector as we are at the receiving end of the frustration that comes from families...But there is not a shared understanding beyond the NGO sector.”

Isolated families, the ‘hard to reach’, high needs families

“Isolated families and unsupported families is the issue. The biggest issues for these families is confidence, engagement and relationships. ‘High-needs families’ are the ones with no relationships in the community.”

“We should want everywhere in New Zealand to be the ‘best place to raise a family’ – because a lot of ‘high-needs’ families are transient.”

Drugs and alcohol

“Child poverty is another symptom of the main problem: drugs and alcohol. People could be good functioning people if they were not under the influence.”

“People escape reality by drinking...There is a bottle store at every corner in Porirua.”

“P is massive here, right now. Where’s the rehab centre? Where’s all the media and attention on p?”

Wellington Region's economic problem

"If there is one problem, by far it is the economic problem. Wellington is not making the transition to a new economy. Everyone's leaving or intending to leave. We have relied on the expansion of the government sector for our growth, while the focus internationally is to make government smaller, not bigger."

"We need to be building a consensus about what Wellington's growth and success story would look like."

Culture/Mindset

"The problem is self-image or it's a 'position in society type issue'. Maori and Pacifica values are so different from Western values. I know someone who was a teacher, he said the most destructive thing is seeing extremely bright kids dumb themselves down so they don't stand out above the crowd. There is a 'keep with your peers' mentality, and if that means reducing your success, you do so."

2.2. Is it possible to create a common agenda? What would be the key concepts and priorities?

Yes, it would be possible to create a common agenda. However this may take some time and some very skilled facilitators. Here are some comments about finding a common agenda:

"You need a centre-point, a meeting point. For us, here, it's putting the needs of children first. We have a really diverse group – gang mums, Muslim mums ... the place where we overlap is our children."

"People do do everything for their kids."

"The concept of developing the next generation is a compelling one for most people."

"I would like to see it more about a region where children and families can flourish and grow."

"Find a platform that everyone can buy into, provided that it's flexible enough for people to interpret in their own way...What does the group want to create in the region? 'Loving and sharing families'?"

"If Wellington was the best place to raise a family, what would it look like? What do adults/parents value? What do children value?"

There was huge variety in what key concepts and priorities could be included in a common agenda that was about ‘making the Wellington Region the best place to raise a family’. Concepts and priorities that interviewees talked about were (some of these are expanded on further under Section 2.3 about “game changers” and things that will make a difference to families):

- Education/life skills for parents: basic literacy and numeracy, life skills, mentoring.
- Employment/Work: type of employment and quality of employment; decent wages, family-friendly policies, flexible working options.
- Justice: how a criminal conviction when you are younger is a barrier to work for the rest of your life; giving people opportunities and second chances.
- Sports, culture, recreation: sports, kapa haka important for building relationships and community.
- Drugs and alcohol: P (methamphetamine) was cited as a huge issue in all low socio-economic communities, absence of rehab centres or waiting list for rehab programmes is a key issue.
- Community building: seed funding for little things in local areas, gardens, activities in schools.
- Parenting: a focus on parenting skills and support for parents in a non-judgmental way, helping people to learn things about themselves in a context that fits with who they are and their community.
- Education for children: quality ECE (early childhood education), primary schools, secondary schools.
- Health: mental health, obesity, nutrition, access to primary health care, the importance of family health care practitioners because often families lack confidence.
- Housing: warm, insulated homes, a WOF for rental housing.
- Violence and Sexual Abuse: addressing domestic abuse, child abuse and sexual abuse.
- Self efficacy: developing people’s strengths and the strengths and assets in communities.
- Environment: creating a CBD environment that was welcoming of families, green park access.
- Transport: free public transport for people with a Community Services Card.

2.3. Perceptions of ‘game changers’ that will make a difference and ‘biggest challenge facing families today?’

What do people think are the ‘game changers’ that will make a difference? This depends on the question ‘Make a difference to what?’ I have assumed, for the purpose of the interviews and this section, that it is about ‘making a difference to families’. However, the range of interviewees’ exposure and understanding of families varied. For some interviewees it was about making a difference to “the families that need it most”, for other interviewees it was about “all families in general” or the families they knew.

Also, what is the biggest challenge facing families today? This question elicited a huge variety of answers and actually elicited the same question of “Which families?”. It was not clear if there was a big

challenge that was common to all families. Some interviewees openly acknowledged and were aware of the limitations of their knowledge of challenges – saying that they could only speak for their own family or families they knew.

Below is a sampling of answers from interviewees about the “game changers”, what would make a difference to families, and the big challenges facing families today. Again, it shows a huge diversity in people’s perceptions, knowledge, experiences and values.

Life skills and knowledge, mentoring, parenting skills, adult education

“Education in the broader sense – life skills, mentoring, parenting skills. Education for the adults and parents, as well as education for the kids.”

“There is a big gap [and need] in terms of mentoring for life skills.”

“Education for parents in terms of basic literacy and numeracy. If parents can’t read, and we’ve become a society that provides help through information and pamphlets – how can the parents who need help, find it?”

“There’s no child poverty. It’s just shit priorities, shit budgeting because people are uneducated [in terms of life skills]. There is no reason you can’t survive on a benefit.”

“Parenting skills – no one’s ever shown them good parenting or mentoring. Through parenting you learn a lot about yourself. Focus on parenting skills – it’s the small things that will make the biggest difference.”

“Going alongside parents and supporting them with parenting. Not doing it for them but working alongside them, that would make a real difference”

Community development/Generating leadership from within “hard to reach”

“We don’t look at mobilising change street by street, community by community. The message we give these people is ‘You don’t have a solution to your problems – we’ve got it’.”

“What is most useful? When our community get up and do things themselves.”

“Has to be something about growing people’s confidence so that they can take charge of their lives.”

“Generating our own solutions. It doesn’t belong to anyone other than the people in our community...”

“The biggest difference to be made is in the communities by the community.”

Sports

“The importance of sports, culture and recreation for communities and families. It is a really important way to build relationships in your community. The ‘high-needs’ families don’t have those relationships. But if their child starts playing sports, or doing kapahaka, the parent comes along...start being involved...relationships begin to be made.”

“Bring in league again into our community. If we had seven teams here, from the premiers to the juniors, that’s about 1000 people involved per team, so 7000 people involved in sports.”

“There’s a saying ‘A kid in sport stays out of court’. There are very few serious young offenders that I see that are involved in organised sporting activities or, for that matter, in any form of community based activity.”

“Get people into sports, especially with their children, so they have less time for drugs and alcohol.”

Employment/Jobs/Income

“Work. What people really want is decent work with a decent income.”

“The biggest challenge facing families today? Employment.”

“Quality jobs and real jobs. Work where people feel they are contributing.”

“The biggest ‘game changer’ in my life was getting a job. It exposed me to people outside my circle.”

“When parents are working 12 hours a day to make ends meet, they have no time to be with their children. Who looks after the children?”

“Who wants to employ a convicted rapist/murderer? Who is going to employ you if you have GBH (grievous bodily harm) on your record? After twenty years people’s records should be wiped.”

Education/Schools

“Schools are not the reason for the failure but we’re a huge part of the solution.”

“Schools used to be the heart of communities. Today they are centres of learning where you drop your kids off and are not involved. We’ve got to use what we’ve got – and make our schools into hubs for communities.”

Housing

“Housing is a hot topic right now. It’s seen as the ‘game changer’.”

“Housing is important – when children go to a local school, local doctors, and they are settled and have a sense of identity. Who do I belong to? What is my community? What is my tribe? Really look at housing – who is itinerant? It’s about identity and community.”

Affordability

“The affordability issue has been around for 20 years.”

Too many services/organisations

“People have become accustomed to being ‘service-provided to’ ...If I was a hungry-broken mother, there are 53 different organisations in Lower Hutt that I could go to. There is lack of collaboration between them, and a doubling up of funding.”

“There are about 400 organisations working in Porirua. What are they all actually doing? A couple of them work with everyone including people on the borderline. But how many others will work with gang members?... These organisations, with their contracts – the real problems don’t fall under their contracts. What people actually need help with is not covered.”

Getting the right help

“People are too scared to ask for help. Asking for help destroys families. Your kids end up in care and protection on six different meds...”

“People are not going to open up. If you do, the next minute, your child is uplifted. People won’t ask for help because of the repercussions...And parents can never tick enough boxes to put it right. No matter how many courses you do, it’s still not good enough to get your kid back.”

“To ask for support means there is a problem. Then you get a ‘section’. Deny everything in a FGC (family group conference) because there’s no solution. If you agree to something in a FGC, then it’s six months to the next process and then another 6 months to the next process. In the meantime your child is put with different families.”

“There’s one programme for domestic violence out here and it’s for the women [who have suffered domestic violence]. Where’s the one-on-one counselling for people who commit violence?”

Time and family/social fabric

“Time to be together as a family. There are so many distractions and pulls on people’s time these days. Families don’t spend time together.”

“How much family structure is still there to support kids these days?”

Addressing prejudice and assumptions, culture and values

“We need to raise children with values who connect with communities outside their own. We need more tolerance, compassion and understanding. I am quite concerned about the attitudes of [people from middle class suburbs] towards people who are poor.”

“It’s about value and valuing people for what they do at every level. That there’s no hierarchy. That no matter what you do, what you do is important and integral to the whole.”

“We need to ‘turn off the greed tap’; change the whole philosophy of this country in terms of world view and what we value.”

Safety and Security

“The biggest challenge facing families is security and safety...I think lack of policing is the biggest problem.”

“Safety and awareness. The world has changed so much and parents often are not very savvy about the risks and threats out there, for example rape, cyber bullying, gangs, social media, etc.”

Change to Government-NGO relationship

“Cultural change to a culture of partnership – that implies giving up of power by the powerful and taking up of power by the powerless.”

“We need to deal with a history of lack of connectivity between the community sector and government. How do we build effective relationships between the community sector and government?”

“Too often the government decides what problem it is [they’re] trying to fix and then buy the solution [from NGOs]. The problem is the issue was not defined in the right way in the first place.”

2.4. What drives people to be interested in the wellbeing of children?

People are certainly ‘interested’ in the wellbeing of children. The question is not what drives people to be interested, but what drives people to action?

“What we have not yet learnt is how to move people from ‘intellectual interest’ to action. We have to be telling stories about how we can change things, the difference we can make... As Joseph Stalin said ‘One death is a tragedy. A thousand deaths is a statistic’.”

People do not need more data or information to take action. They need to be “moved”. And then they need an easy and constructive avenue to engage in and achieve the change they want to contribute to.

2.4.1. What drives the business sector to get engaged in ‘Collective impact initiatives’?

Regarding the question of business sector engagement, others have commented that the hardest people to engage in any collective impact is the business sector/private sector. From the interview results, I would concur. Below some comments and advice from interviewees about getting businesses on board:

“What does it take for businesses to get engaged? When it starts impacting on their franchise...You have to link it to their business objectives otherwise it is very difficult for a corporate to get inspired. There must be something in it for them.”

“There must be solid business reasons, not just social justice reasons. For example, the Southern Initiative in Auckland and the Tāmaki Redevelopment...the business sector was keen to get involved because Auckland has a growing economy and businesses see that they can’t grow unless they can get access to good workers and ensure that workers are well and settled.”

“Get the right type of people on board – people, who are loaded and with credibility in the business world – the heavy hitters. Create a crowd mentality...so it’s like you’re a social leper if you’re not involved, e.g. ‘You guys don’t care about Wellington?’”

“My sense is that you’d have to demonstrate there is a need before you can mobilise investment of time, energy, resources. There are lots of (social) issues, but what’s the

incentive for businesses to get involved? ...Would they invest in a problem that they don't think is their problem? No. Would they invest in something they believe will grow the economy and attract more highly skilled workers and more businesses? – Yes.”

While it is possible to refine and reshape the collective impact initiative to get businesses involved, we might lose sight of the original purpose of the initiative. To reshape the initiative to make it more attractive to the business sector would involve focusing on the families that the business sector currently want to retain or attract to Wellington. Several interviewees explained that there is a skills shortage in the 'higher skills' areas, such as ICT. The business sector would therefore be interested in a campaign that was about highlighting that Wellington was a great place for families – livability, access to harbour and green areas, parks and recreation, and quality schools in middle-class suburbs. As one interviewee said:

“Great place for families – parks, compactness, access to harbour, recreation...all this fits with their attraction and retention of high-skilled workers. But if you don't change the metrics for the hard to reach, you won't have hit the nail on the head.”

3. REFINING ‘CAMPAIGN’ OBJECTIVES: “THE BEST PLACE TO RAISE A FAMILY”

The project brief included three questions to do with refining campaign objectives:

1. Is the idea too ambitious or too modest?
2. What parts of it are the most compelling?
3. What would be an appropriate terms of reference for the campaign?

This section will address questions 1. and 2., although It is not appropriate to answer question 3 at this stage regarding a ‘terms of reference’ for the group. I will however address other questions that are necessary for refining the ‘campaign objectives’:

- What did interviewees think of the concept ‘best place in New Zealand to raise a family’?
- What did interviewees think of the geographic scope – ‘Wellington Region’?
- What did interviewees think about ‘which children and which families’?

3.1. Responses to concept: “Best place to raise a family”

There was a fairly even distribution of responses to the concept/idea of making the Wellington Region “the best place to raise a family”. This analysis focuses on interviewees’ responses to the phrase/idea of ‘best place to raise a family’. Please note that this is not about interviewees’ responses on whether they think it is a good idea to work on the wellbeing of families, or social issues like poverty, inequality, at risk youth, etc.

The distribution of responses is as below:

- 38 out of the 55 people consulted did not have a negative or positive view on the phrase – they were either neutral, did not mind it, did not engage with it, or thought it was “lovely but meaningless”.
 - 10 of the 38 who were neutral, thought it was “too vague”.
- Ten people did not like it, or had a strong negative reaction
- Seven people did like it, or strongly liked it.

The majority of people did not have a positive or negative reaction to the concept of ‘best place to raise a family’. They did not think it was too ambitious or too modest. Rather, they did not understand it, or questioned what it meant. Several people said it was “too vague”, others said it was “too ambiguous and hard to pin down”. People saw that it was quite broad, too open ended, and that the scope was too wide. Some comments below:

“What does it mean? What has to change? It is too amorphous and does not offer a constructive way to achieve it”

“It is hard to say ‘no’ to. But why would I invest or get involved?”

“The big picture is nice, everyone can engage in it. But sitting underneath it is the more compelling and thorny issues that will be harder to get people to collaborate on. For example, what will be the key measures? Will we target our energies? What and who will we target?”

“It’s an aspirational goal but if you spread your focus too wide, you won’t achieve anything.”

“Well, it’s a lovely concept, but meaningless really.”

Nearly a fifth of the interviewees disliked the concept of ‘best place to raise a family’. Some others, while neutral on the concept, also advised similar cautions. A selection of comments below:

“I don’t like the word ‘best’ because it is saying something about other places to start with.”

“It’s so arrogant. Why does someone have to be the ‘best’?”

“It doesn’t light me on fire. It sounds cliché.”

“I’m very suspicious of top-down branding and things like ‘Absolutely Positively Wellington’. It does not engage the grassroots. It is inauthentic and I advise caution from a PR point of view.”

“It has ‘nappy valley’ connotations. It has taken Wellington a long time to get away from the ‘grey-cardigans/government bureaucrats’ image of a boring place. ‘Best place to raise a family’ comes across as very middle-class – it sounds like it is about sports fields, SUVs and soccer mums.”

“It masks the issues and you therefore need to be careful you don’t lose it.”

“It lacks context. It’s a risky place to start.”

About an eighth of interviewees really liked the concept of “best place in New Zealand to raise a family”. Some of their comments below:

“I like the big picture agenda of it. It is not too ambitious in terms of agenda but may be in terms of size.”

“If you’re going to dream, you got to dream big.”

“It’s not too vague. You create your own space in it.”

“It’s vague but I thrive in chaos.”

“It’s positive, it’s about families – it could work.”

3.2. What did interviewees find most compelling?

People liked that it was about “drawing together” as a city or a region. Several people liked the focus on wellbeing. Some people liked that it was about ‘families’ and not children or child poverty, while others did not like how it “does not hit an issue head on” – i.e. “we shouldn’t be scared to talk about poverty”. Below are some comments on what people liked most about the proposal/idea:

Timeliness

“We’ve had thirty years of fragmentation and competition. In the last few years we have realised we need to work together.”

Pulling together/working together

“I like the idea of the city pulling together.”

“For this thing to be of any use, is it’s ability to pull people together.”

“It can be incredibly isolating out here. It would be amazing to have a network of people with a shared vision for change.”

3.3. Responses about the geographic scope

There was a range of responses to the question of geographic scope. The distribution of responses was in line with an average ‘bell curve’. A small number of people thought it was absolutely necessary that an initiative should be on a large regional scale. At the other end, a small number of people thought it was far too big, and that a collective impact initiative should be in a much smaller geographic area, such as a neighbourhood. The majority of people did not have a view on geographic boundaries or they suggested the geographic scale needed further thought.

A selection of comments below:

“A Wellington Region approach – my question is how would it manage differences? The average profile is not the same. There are hugely different suburbs, mixes of children and mixes of families.”

“You need to think through this one carefully. I’m not sure if you’re better off starting with a smaller area but a big picture; or starting with the wide region but a smaller number of specific things you want to change.”

“My concern is the size is huge. Even in Porirua it is a huge challenge to get people talking together and working together.”

“The region is too big. Choose a small geographic area of about 50,000 people, like Stokes Valley.”

“I have been thinking about how this could actually work, and I can only see it working if it is a region wide network of say 20-25 smaller collective impact initiatives.”

3.4. Improving life for children and families – Which children and which families?

“Who do we need to impact? Who are we targeting with this collective impact initiative?”

Often interviewees would ask if this was targeted at certain families or not? My response was “Not at this stage but I would be interested in your views on whether it should be targeted or not.”

Several people were very passionate that a collective impact initiative should be targeted, see responses below:

“We should be asking: What will make the biggest difference to those who need it most?”

“It should be for the toughest, most challenged and most marginalised. If you want to make a difference, the best progress is to work with the toughest group – and do so unashamedly and explicitly.”

“A universal approach assumes that everyone to some degree is in equal need. A universal approach in the Wellington Region would be a waste of time and resources. For the great majority of Wellington youth, they’re doing okay, especially relative to the rest of New Zealand.”

“We need to recognise the diversity of the population and what resources and effort is needed.”

A smaller number of people thought a collective impact initiative should adopt a universal approach. A few interviewees cited that several issues such as sexual abuse, child abuse, domestic violence, attitudes towards girls and women cut across socio-economic lines. These ‘invisible’ issues were very important and often not addressed as people “turn away from what they don’t want to see.” Some comments below that suggest a universal approach would be better:

“Violence and abuse happens behind closed doors...Sexual abuse, molestation, attitudes to females and sexism...It happens to children, in families, in all suburbs – rich or poor.”

4. ASSESSMENT: POTENTIAL, PREREQUISITES, COLLECTIVE IMPACT FRAMEWORK

This section provides an assessment of the potential proposed collective impact initiative to make the Wellington Region the best place in New Zealand to raise a family. I have divided it into three parts, assessment of:

- the potential for the proposed initiative in the Wellington Region
- whether the prerequisites for Collective Impact are in place
- the 'Collective Impact Framework' more generally.

4.1. Potential of the proposed initiative: challenges and opportunities

There is fair potential for the proposed collective impact initiative to “get off the ground”. There are a number of interviewees interested in being involved; several people are passionate, knowledgeable and would bring new things to the table.

However, I would advise caution as people love to connect with others and be with like-minded ‘movers and shakers’. It will be relatively easy to get people “on board” but what is the destination? And will the people who get on board be able to come to an agreement about the destination? Will you be able to find a “common purpose”? Are the people who are on board the ones you need? What about people who do not get on board? Or the people you do not want to invite in?

My assessment is that going forward with a collective impact initiative will be extremely hard work with questionable ‘return on investment’. The ‘return on investment’ could be amazing but it will *all depend on what the goal is, as well as on execution*. Or the return on investment could just as likely be very. There are no guarantees.

“Collective impact focused on the wellbeing of families? – Well, it sounds like a great idea but it depends on the execution.”

I have attempted to summarise likely challenges, as well as the corresponding opportunity. The quotes in the below table are from interviewees. My current assessment sees several challenges/weaknesses and risks. Although it does have the potential to succeed, I would ask the question, “succeed for whom?”

4.1.1. Table of Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges (weaknesses and risks)	Opportunities
<p>High risk that it becomes “a lot of talk, talk, talk and no action”.</p> <p><i>“I worry that we talk a lot, when it’s the actual doing that needs to happen.”</i></p>	<p>Find some talented and skilled facilitators.</p> <p>Get really clear about what it is the group wants to do.</p> <p>Be suspicious of a complex approach, too much measurement or data.</p> <p>Keep it simple!</p>
<p>Risks being a bit of ‘us helping them’.</p>	<p>Rethink what you are trying to achieve.</p>
<p>Missing the “people’s voices”.</p> <p><i>“The problem is – the ‘who’s who’ that’s around the table aren’t the <u>who</u>” [who it impacts on most].</i></p> <p><i>“Unless you get buy-in from the community, it’s just another ‘doing to’ – they don’t have ownership of it.”</i></p> <p><i>“The goal can’t be set by self-appointed pointy heads.”</i></p>	<p>Go into the homes and communities of the people you think need help and ask them what they want, or what ‘best place to raise a family’ means to them.</p> <p>Find those voices that have not been heard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offenders’ voices • children’s voices • homeless voices • LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex) voices • Unemployed voices <p><i>“Your plan becomes better as a result of these people’s engagement.”</i></p>
<p>Lack of genuine and long-term commitment.</p> <p><i>“You’re going to need 5-10 years to do this kind of thing.”</i></p>	<p>Examine your own drivers, assumptions and commitments.</p> <p>Why are you involved and what do you believe you can achieve together?</p>
<p>Collaboration is “dreadfully difficult to manage”.</p>	<p>Opportunity to explore a new way of leading and encouraging emerging leaders.</p> <p>Literature on collective impact suggests that successful leaders in these situations are not</p>

It will require a different kind of leadership style.	defined by the “quality of decisiveness, but the quality of inquiry.” ⁹ (See also Appendix 2).
<p>Collaboration is difficult to do, for everyone involved, not just the leaders.</p> <p>It requires all participants to be ‘collaborators’ and work in a different style.</p> <p>Some likely things that will get in the way:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Individual egos, pettiness, power differentials among the group, ‘human nature’.</p>	<p>Opportunity to depart from usual way of doing things and shift mindset.</p> <p>An opportunity for all involved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • become more mindful, • become more self-aware, • grow our emotional intelligence, empathy, • grow our ability to engage with others authentically, • grow other personal attributes needed for collaboration (See Appendix 2)
Could be seen as or become a new lobby group.	<i>“In setting this up, be aware of people with existing ideas who may see this as a way to resuscitate their own ideas.”</i>
Could be seen as, or become, “just an advertising campaign for Wellington” – something superficial and lightweight.	Again, get really clear about what it is the group wants to do –i.e. purpose.
There is a high risk that this could become a “smorgasbord list with mixed commitment.	Again, get really clear about what it is you want to do – i.e. purpose.
<p>There are already a lot of assumptions to begin with.</p> <p><i>“What you’re trying to do is impossible because there are too many different levels of understanding”</i></p>	

⁹ Kania and Kramer, ‘Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity’, Stanford Social Innovation Review. There is much more discussion and literature about ‘adaptive leadership’ – a different model of leadership from the ‘strong-person/charismatic leader’ model of traditional leadership. See also Appendix 2 for further on common characteristics of effective backbone leadership.

4.1.2. Interviewees' comments on challenges and risks

Several interviewees expressed some concerns about the proposed approach and highlighted risks for consideration. Below is a selection of some insightful and thoughtful comments to encourage further questioning and inquiry:

"The 2/3 to 1/3 formula applies. The 'one-third' is people who don't have the capability or confidence to engage in the conversation and dialogue that everyone else is engaged in. They [the 'one third'] are the people who need it most, and are left out of it. It could end up expanding the gap between the two groups rather than closing the gap..."

"My concern about doing a collective impact thing is that it will end up as an exercise for the well-educated middle-class people who get a great deal of satisfaction out of this model... When they try to engage the one-third that is marginalised, that group will feel like stuff is being done to them. They were not part of it from the outset."

"There is a lesson in here about collective impact. What does it mean for them [the marginalised and hard to reach]? What things might they want to do?"

"I have mixed feelings. It is a group of great people with good intentions coming to help "us" – assuming that we want help/need help. If you really want to help, then encourage these people [‘the marginalised, the hard to reach, the poor’] to have their own discussions and develop solutions."

"There has got to be co-creation/co-design of the solutions. Otherwise it is just the same old, same old."

"We see these things come and go but for our community very little changes. Six to seven years ago 'Public-Private Partnerships' were all the rage, now it's 'Collective Impact'... As someone who has been around for a few decades, I am really skeptical about where the next big thing is coming from."

4.2. Prerequisites for collective impact: Are they in place?

Collective Impact theorists say that three preconditions/prerequisites must be in place before launching a Collective Impact initiative. As discussed in Section 1, you need: influential champions, adequate financial resources, and a sense of urgency about the issue. Below an assessment of the current state:

Prerequisite/Precondition needed for Collective Impact	Assessment of current state
Influential Champion(s):	Yes, there are some very 'leaderful' people involved in the Working Group already. Furthermore, some other influential people are very interested in participating in future dialogue and work.
Adequate financial resources:	<p>The current feasibility study did not find any good leads in terms of possible financial resources to fund a collective impact initiative or backbone co-ordination/organisation.</p> <p>This may be due to the limitations of the interview list. There was only one interviewee from central government, none from local government and none from the philanthropic sector. My assessment is that those sectors are most likely to fund this initiative than corporates or a private major donor.</p> <p>One interviewee said: <i>“Corporate funders are not going to fund radical change. This collective impact initiative is quite challenging of the status quo.”</i></p>
Urgency for change:	<p>This is questionable. Some people saw that the time was “ripe for change” (with the recent focus from the Prime Minister on child poverty, and the attention that child poverty has in the public eye).</p> <p>Others said that they did not see a sense of urgency even though change was needed.</p> <p>One interviewee said: <i>“It’s always been ‘urgent’. We’ve been in ‘crisis mode’ for two decades and we’ve made no headway.”</i></p>

4.3. Collective Impact Framework: Pros and Cons

While this is perhaps beyond the project brief, it is important to at least question the starting point. Why start with 'Collective Impact'? Is this the best model/framework to adopt? It is good to critically examine the model even while many other communities rush to replicate it.¹⁰

My very brief and cursory assessment of the 'Collective Impact Framework' is as follows:

Pros of using the Collective Impact Framework:

- ✓ At its simplest level, Collective Impact is about 'working together better'. It is based on the premise that we can achieve more together, than we can alone. This fundamental idea is a powerful and catalytic one.
- ✓ It is seen as a 'new' approach and a 'different' approach. People are interested in a different way of working and become energised by a potential new solution to age-old problems of social-change. It excites people.

Cons of using the Collective Impact Framework:

- ✗ Starts from a 'deficit-model' and it is hard to get away from that, despite attempt to focus on shared vision or goals. It is about addressing a specific social problem.
- ✗ Key participants and the majority of participants in a collective impact initiative are people from institutions and organisations, not people in neighbourhoods or communities.
- ✗ Unspoken but underlying view which sees members of communities as either:
 - Token representatives or
 - Focus group participants
- ✗ Collective Impact is still about doing things for or to the communities, not *with* communities. This is a critical distinction.¹¹
 - How can members of communities be active leaders and producers of change?

¹⁰ Paul Schmitz notes that Emmett Carson, CEO of Silicon Valley Community Foundation, "opened the door to critically examine the model as many communities rush to replicate it". While Schmitz does not agree with Carson's criticisms, he does raise three concerns of his own. Paul Schmitz, 'The Real Challenge for Collective Impact', http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-schmitz/collective-impact_b_1920466.html

¹¹ Paul Schmitz, 'The Real Challenge for Collective Impact'

- ✘ Heavy focus on data and measurement. Collective Impact proponents tout that ‘shared measurement is the foundation of successful collaborations. If collaborations cannot measure impact they are at a high risk of failure.’¹²

Collective impact proponents “approach the problem of ‘collective impact’ the way General Motors or General Electric might...data are remarkably useful in identifying failure, and failure, once identified, can sometimes help solve deeper problems. But, like GM, such strategies may become ‘energy addictive,’ and produce more dependency on less reliable data resulting in lots of great numbers but really miserable information. And the cost of redundant data collection is appalling...In contrast, there are some remarkably simple tactics that achieve far more strategic impact...Stick to the simple stuff and you can solve huge problems cheaply and efficiently.”¹³

- ✘ Collective Impact presents itself as ‘disciplined’ but in practice adds a lot of work and complexity. (See above comments on data).

- ✘ Over-promises and under-delivers.

The kind of collective effort that Collective Impact theorists propone is actually “harder to muster, far harder to manage, and harder still to yield tangible and meaningful results from than their indicating”.¹⁴

- ✘ “Magical Thinking”: The reality behind the much-heralded trend in collective impact is that many are ending in failure.¹⁵ Collaboration is really difficult work. The ‘magic’ and ‘allure’ of Collective Impact soon fades.

As Geoff Aigner explains, the “three trolls of collaboration” soon arrive:

- **Control:** For collaboration to actually work, it requires people to give up some control and power. Without this, there cannot be genuine co-creation.
- **Competition:** Often lies in the shadows as people avoid discussing this openly.
- **Commitment:** When people encounter the trolls of competition and control, that is often when they find out just how committed they really are to the collaboration.

¹² Description of a workshop on ‘Shared Measurement’, from <http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/workshops-to-assist-collective-impact-initiatives/>

¹³ Joe Beckmann Somerville, MA 19 March 2011, comment on David Bornstein, ‘The Power of Partnership’, March 2011 <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/10/the-power-of-partnerships/>

¹⁴ David Griesing Philadelphia 12 March 2011, comment on David Bornstein, ‘The Power of Partnership’.

¹⁵ See Geoff Aigner ‘Collaboration: Getting beyond magical thinking’.

- ✘ The Collective Impact framework overlooks the role of the *individuals* in a collaboration.
- ✘ Collective Impact places too much emphasis on systems, processes, data, a backbone organisation, when it is people – the individuals involved who determine whether it succeeds or not.
 - What is the role of personal leadership by all participants involved?
 - What is the role of individual attributes to the success of the collaboration?
 - It is people and their relationships, which determines whether

5. RECOMMENDATIONS & PATHS FORWARD

5.1. Key Recommendations

Recommendation One: Review what you aim to achieve

The group, whether that is the current group, or a group with different members/new members, needs to have a clear common purpose. It is better if this purpose is well defined and achievable. *Know your purpose* because it will be your anchor when things get tough.

These are the three questions the group must be able to answer, whichever direction the group decides to take:

- Why are you doing this?
- Why does it matter?
- Why is it needed?

Recommendation Two: Do some self-reflection

Like others, I see that it is the skills of the collaborators involved which makes the biggest difference to the outcome – not the perfect strategy or plan of action. When you have a common purpose, the key determinant of success or failure is ‘people and their relationships’.

Individual attributes and interpersonal skills are far more important for successful collaboration, than group process skills, strategic leadership skills and technical expertise/skills.¹⁶ This was a surprising result to researchers (see Appendix 2 for further discussion about this).

It may be helpful for individuals involved to self-reflect and consider to what degree they possess some of the personal attributes that encourage collaboration. These attributes include: open mindedness, patience, self-confidence and risk-oriented. Other attributes that are seen as important for collaboration are: being flexible, unselfish, persistent and diligent, tactful, empathetic, trustworthy and trusting, respectful, self-aware and goal-oriented. For a fuller discussion of this see Appendix 2.

5.2. Paths forward: Options to consider

From my position as an external professional who has conducted the interviews, I currently see five different paths forward/options for you to consider:

1. Support an existing community initiative, for example:
 - Anti-P campaign in Porirua East;
 - Common Unity Project in Eponi, Lower Hutt.

¹⁶ O’Learly & Gerard (2012) *Collaboration Across Boundaries*.

2. Focus on sports.
3. Focus on a narrower social issue—youth justice and youth offending.
4. Do further exploration about what is out there already and how people could work together better.
5. Continue with your original idea inviting others to join in further dialogue and discussion to refine the idea and get clear about the purpose.

Option 1: Support an existing community initiative (using some ‘collective impact’ ideas)

Options 1 and 2 are the ideas that have come from the so-called ‘hard to reach’ or ‘marginalised’ or ‘poor’ communities. These options focus on assets of a local community and a local community’s own strengths. Option 1 is about supporting initiatives that generate leadership and change within a community. Through the course of my interviews I came across two such initiatives: the beginnings of an Anti-P campaign in Porirua East, and the Common Unity Project in Epunui, Lower Hutt.

I suggest, using Collective Impact’s underlying principle of pulling different people together to work towards a common goal. Use a collective impact mind-set to help support these existing local initiatives to have an even greater impact. Assist by getting other necessary parties and organisations involved. Or champion/influence other parties to do things that would assist the common goal. Help these community leaders to make “forward and backward linkages”. The aim would be to help these initiatives have greater “collective impact” than they would if they were doing it alone.

ANTI-P CAMPAIGN IN PORIRUA

One thing that came across, when I met with people in Porirua East was that they were excited and keen to talk about their strengths and talents. Some comments highlighting this were:

“We’re all good at doing stuff”

“The most useful thing is when the community gets up and does stuff for itself!”

Dennis a local resident and community leader in Waitangirua is starting a movement/campaign about “the changes that aren’t happening [that need to happen]”. He says, “the first thing to deal with in Porirua East is P, we’ll start with one issue and then go from there”. He and other community leaders see P as the urgent and critical issue in their community – an issue that no one else is addressing. When asked if he would be interested in being involved in a region-wide group/project about making things better for families (i.e. this collective impact proposal), his response was to ask me if the Working Group “would be prepared to support what we’re wanting to do”?

The essence of the question then, that Dennis is asking, is this – are you prepared to support what people in ‘hard to reach’ communities want to do? Not do it for them, or come in and take over? But do it *with* them?

COMMON UNITY PROJECT, LOWER HUTT

The Common Unity Project Aotearoa is a “community-based urban farm project, which grows food, skills and leadership with local families” at the local primary school in Eponi, Lower Hutt. The school is a small low-decile school. Julia Milne and others started the project in 2012. They have converted an old soccer field at Eponi Primary School into a thriving community vegetable garden and orchard. Alongside this, there is a range of activities such as sewing, knitting, playgroup, fitness classes, craft and a recycled bicycle library. All of this was parent-led, “stuff that parents wanted” and the community has come together to organise themselves.

The project is based on principles of reciprocity and community-led development. They see that everyone has something to offer; everyone has some strengths and talents to share.

[At the time of writing] Common Unity has plans to build a community kitchen next to the garden and would love some support to achieve this goal.

Option 2: Focus on sports

Set a goal of ensuring all families and communities across the Wellington Region (children or parents or both) have access to sports and are playing sports. From the interviews, families in Porirua East say that they would like Rugby League to come back. They explained that it was a hit in the 1970/1980s but some financial difficulties with the club meant it collapsed. This invites further inquiry and exploration. Then action.

Several other interviewees spoke about the need to focus on a few “simple” things – that in fact, have a much greater ripple effect. Sports was seen as key to building relationship and developing communities.

It may be useful to call it a “Collective Impact Initiative” but equally, it does not need to be called that. Local communities, local government, sporting authorities, businesses could all be involved. Use the principle of “working together”, pulling together to unify efforts towards the common goal of getting more people and families into sports.

Option 3: Focus on a narrower social issue – youth justice and youth offending

If the Working Group would still like to use the Collective Impact Framework, then focus in on a much narrower social issue. I suggest youth justice and youth offending for two reasons: 1) there is some

willing, and useful, people with expertise who have an appetite for this or can help; 2) it is about the toughest, most challenged and most marginalised group; 3) it is defined and measurable but also involves many facets that impact on these families.

One person in the justice field explained that looking at the statistics, it is a manageable number of families to work with – about 300 families across the Wairarapa, the Hutt, Porirua and Wellington. It would be important to use the right approach.

“It’s quite patronising to say ‘but they’ve got to want help’. Of course people want help – but you’ve got to use the right approach. Get the right people to be knocking on the doors. Not outsiders...I’ll tell you a story – two young white lawyers wanted to help people in a poor neighbourhood who were forced into mortgagee sales. They looked out for foreclosure signs on houses and went knocking on those doors. However these well-meaning white lawyers were turned away. Compared with, when the Maori and Pacifica receptionist and community worker from the law centre went knocking, the doors were opened and people poured out their stories. You’ve got to have decent, good people who are preferably of the same area, and who are trusted by those you’re trying to help.”

“Help – it’s about how it’s done and how it’s delivered. People want people to be alongside them for the long haul.”

If you proceed with this option, there are a lot of groups and people working in this space, the following groups/people are recommended to start with:

- WellTrust,
- Challenge 2000,
- Billy Graham and his two Boxing Academies,
- Police Youth Aid,
- CYF

Option 4: Further Exploration

Under Option 4, questions to be asking would be:

- Who is doing good stuff already?
- How could they do it better together?
- Who could facilitate it?

Help groups or people who are already doing ‘good stuff’ connect with others so they can do it better together. As in Option 1, make some ‘forward and backward linkages’ for these groups/people. For example one interviewee explained that it was very useful and helpful to connect one organisation that

was working with troubled boys, with another organisation that connects adult male mentors with young people. The two groups were not aware of each other, but their work was very connected.

Option 5: Continue with current idea

If the Working Group members wish to proceed with the current idea, I recommend the following:

- Ensure it is a “co-creation”. Involve the people that the initiative seeks to have an impact on. Involve the funders too. The most commendable aspect of Collective Impact is simply “people achieving more together than they could alone”.
- Find new ways to engage communities. Consider how to get a greater diversity of people to join the collective impact table. Give thought to how to involve people with lived experiences of the issues that you want to make an impact on.
 - Consider the question of *“how can collective impact initiatives move beyond the usual ways of having ‘marginalised communities’ as token representatives or focus group participants?”*
- Find some really wise and very skilled facilitators: “skilled people for weaving, pulling together the narratives.” People to assist you with the task of finding/clarifying a common purpose.
- Invite other interested people into the tent for conversation about common purpose.
- Spend some time to arrive at a clearly defined and articulated common purpose. (as per Recommendation 1 above)
- All individuals involved, including any new people, should be encouraged to do some self-analysis about their strengths and skills with regard to “collaboration” (as per Recommendation 2 above).
- “Embrace the uncertainty of the journey, even as you remain clear-eyed about the destination...Be intentional in your efforts and curious in your convictions.”¹⁷

¹⁷ Kania and Kramer, ‘Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity’

APPENDIX 1: MORE ABOUT ‘COLLECTIVE IMPACT’

Two types of problems: ‘technical and complex’

The “collective impact” approach sees that there are two types of problems: technical problems and complex/adaptive problems:

Technical problem: Some social problems are technical in that the problem is well defined, the answer is known in advance, and one or two organisations have the ability to implement the solution. For example, where to put a school, build a hospital, fund a college scholarship. This does not usually require the formation of a collaborative to address this problem.

Complex/adaptive problem: Other social issues – poverty, educational achievement, domestic violence, homelessness - are complex problems. The answer is not known, and even if it was, no single entity would have the resources or authority to bring about the necessary change. These problems arise from the interplay of governmental and commercial activities, not only from the behaviour of social sector organisations. Therefore, complex problems can only be solved by cross-sector coalitions that engage those outside the nonprofit sector.¹⁸

Explanation of Different Types of Collaborations¹⁹

Organisations have attempted to solve social problems by collaboration for decades without producing many results...

Funder Collaboratives are groups of funders interested in supporting the same issue who pool their resources. Generally, participants do not adopt an overarching evidence-based plan of action or a shared measurement system, nor do they engage in differentiated activities beyond check writing or engaging stakeholders from other sectors.

Public-Private Partnerships are partnerships formed between government and private sector organisations to deliver specific services or benefits. They are often targeted narrowly, such as developing a particular drug to fight a single disease, and usually don’t engage the full set of stakeholders that affect the issue, such as the potential drug’s distribution system.

Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives are voluntary activities by stakeholders from different sectors around a common theme. Typically, these initiatives lack any shared measurement of impact and the supporting infrastructure to forge any true alignment of efforts or accountability for results.

¹⁸ Kania & Kramer, 2011, p.39-40

¹⁹ Kania & Kramer, 2011, p.39

Social Sector Networks are groups of individuals or organisations fluidly connected through purposeful relationships, whether formal or informal. Collaboration is generally ad hoc, and most often the emphasis is placed on information sharing and targeted short-term actions, rather than a sustained and structured initiative.

Collective Impact Initiatives are long-term commitments by a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. Their actions are supported by a shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities, and ongoing communication, and are staffed by an independent backbone organization.

APPENDIX 2: CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATORS AND BACKBONE LEADERS

It is often discussed in Collective Impact literature that collective impact requires a ‘different type of leadership’ and a different way of working. There is also much evidence and research about the importance of leadership in collaborative endeavours. Rosemary O’Leary, Geoff Aigner and others emphasise that it is the skills of the collaborators involved which makes the biggest difference to the outcome – not the grand vision or perfect strategy.

Skill set of successful collaborators

The skill set of the successful collaborator, according to researchers O’Leary and Gerrard²⁰ include the following in order of importance:

- Individual attributes
- Interpersonal skills
- Group process skills
- Strategic leadership skills
- Substantive/technical expertise

Individual attributes and interpersonal skills was seen as significantly more important than what researchers thought would be important (strategic leadership skills and group process skills). The individual attributes that are important for collaborators are:

- ✓ Open minded: collaborators should be open to new ideas, to the ideas of others, to change, and to helping others succeed.
- ✓ Patience
- ✓ Self-confident and risk-oriented
- ✓ Other important attributes are: being flexible, unselfish, persistent and diligent, diplomatic or tactful, empathetic, trustworthy and trusting, respectful, and goal-oriented.
- ✓ Honesty and integrity, self-awareness, decisiveness, friendliness, a sense of humor and humility are also important.

Interpersonal skills that were identified as priorities for collaborators were:

- ✓ good communication
- ✓ excellent listening
- ✓ adept at working with people

²⁰ O’Leary & Gerard (2012) *Collaboration Across Boundaries*

Desired group process skills include: facilitation, negotiation, and collaborative problem-solving. Strategic leadership skills include big-picture thinking, strategic thinking, and facilitative leadership. Substantive/ technical expertise includes technical knowledge of the subject area, followed by project management and organizational skills.

Common Characteristics of Effective Backbone Leadership

It is often discussed in Collective Impact literature that collective impact requires a 'different type of leadership'. What is that leadership style? Below is a summary with examples²¹:

Visionary: "In addition to setting the agenda items, she has a very clear vision of where we need to focus and has the ability to drive focus towards those."

Results-Oriented "This is a really results-oriented staff, and they are constantly pushing the community and all of us to not just talk about something, but to act on it."

Collaborative, Relationship Builder "[Her] style is a collaborator, consensus builder, she works very well with partners. We do a good job with making everyone feel like they're important."

Focused, but Adaptive "[There is a] combination of laser focus, a willingness to listen to almost any idea, [and an ability to] cut to the chase and not act on every idea. They are so focused on being sure that whatever is done is focused on the end goal."

Charismatic and Influential Communicator "[She] is extraordinarily articulate and passionate about her work and...she is a true leader in the field."

Politically Savvy "Probably a little political savvy and more of an ability to filter what they say than I have. [He] understands when to listen."

Humble "[He] sees himself as a 'servant-leader'."

²¹ The summary and examples is from Inspiring Communities and Tamarack Institute (2014) *Knowledge Review: Collective and Collaborative Place Based Initiatives: What Works, What Matters, Why and Guidance for the Peter McKenzie Project*, p.45.

APPENDIX 3: COLLECTIVE IMPACT INITIATIVES IN NEW ZEALAND

From a preliminary internet search, below are some examples of 'collective impact initiatives' in New Zealand. These initiatives have stated that they are using a 'collective impact' framework/model. There may be other examples of collective impact initiatives in New Zealand.

Learning Auckland:

Its website explains that: 'Learning Auckland is a Collective Impact movement backed by Auckland Council and led by COMET Auckland, the city's education-focused CCO. The programme has been set up to bring about a long-term shift in cradle to grave educational achievement across Auckland. It is a ground-up movement for individuals, organisations and groups to work together to create positive changes that support learning and skills.'

The backbone organisation for Learning Auckland is Comet Auckland, a charitable trust. Learning Auckland was a presenter at the Collective Impact Conference in Auckland this year, see: <file:///C:/Users/Family/Downloads/Susan-Warren-and-Alison-Sutton-Learning-Auckland.pdf>

Thrive Hawke's Bay:

From its website: 'Thrive Hawke's Bay is a local initiative aiming to reverse the trends and allow all children and young people in our community to live to their potential. We believe that community, service level, structural and societal level interventions require a collaborative approach that doesn't only involve services but also involves parents, communities and government. We believe that a 'Collective Impact Initiative' supported by good evaluation technique using the 'Results Based Accountability Framework' will provide us with a tangible way to improve the outcomes for children and youth in our region.'

Shuan Lines is leading this initiative and presented at the Collective Impact Conference in Wellington earlier this year. See: <http://www.thrivehb.co.nz/>

Shine Porirua:

Its website says: 'We want every child in Porirua to shine'. The Shine initiative contributes to the Porirua City Community Outcome, 'Learning for Life'. The initiative improves co-operation among schools, colleges, communities and others contributing to local learning opportunities for children and young people.'

Its major funders and supporters are listed as: Todd Foundation, Porirua City Council, Infinity Foundation, Porirua Foundation. See: <http://shineporirua.org.nz/>

APPENDIX 4: REFERENCES & USEFUL RESOURCES

Literature/Published Work

Aigner, G. 'Collaboration: Getting beyond magical thinking'

http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/SLA_Collaboration_Aigner.pdf

Children's Commissioner's Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty (2012) Solutions to Child Poverty in New Zealand: Evidence for Action. Available at:

<http://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/EAG/Final-report/Final-report-Solutions-to-child-poverty-evidence-for-action.pdf>

Family 100 Research Project (2014) *Speaking for Ourselves: The truth about what keeps people in poverty from those that live it*. Auckland, Auckland City Mission. Available at:

http://www.aucklandcitymission.org.nz/uploads/file/Family%20100/City%20Mission%20Family100%20Speaking%20for%20Ourselves_website.pdf

Herbert, R. and Mackenzie, D. (2014) *The Way Forward: An Integrated System for Intimate Partner Violence and Child Abuse and Neglect in New Zealand*. Wellington, The Impact Collective. Available at:

http://www.theimpactcollective.co.nz/thewayforward_210714.pdf

Inspiring Communities and Tamarack Institute (2014) *Knowledge Review: Collective and Collaborative Place Based Initiatives: What Works, What Matters, Why and Guidance for the Peter McKenzie Project*.

Kania, J. and Kramer, M. (2011) 'Collective Impact', *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Available at:

http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

Hanleybrown, F., Kania J. and Kramer, M. (2012) 'Channeling Change: Making Collective Impact Work', *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Available at:

http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/channeling_change_making_collective_impact_work?cpgn=WPDL-%20Channeling%20Change

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http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/embracing_emergence_how_collective_impact_addresses_complexity

Kretzmann, J.P. and McKnight, J.L. (2005) *Discovering community power: A guide to mobilizing local assets and your organization's capacity*. Asset-based Community Development Institute. Available at:

<http://www.abcinstitute.org/docs/kelloggabcd.pdf>

New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (2012) *Manurewa Young People and the Potential for Service Collaborations: A Qualitative Study*. Available at:

http://www.nzccss.org.nz/site/page.php?page_id=255

O’Leary, R. (2014) *Collaborative Governance in New Zealand: Important Choices Ahead*. Fulbright New Zealand. Available at: http://www.fulbright.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/axford2014_oleary.pdf

O’Leary R. & Gerard C. (2012) *Collaboration Across Boundaries: Insights and Tips from Federal Senior Executives*. IBM Center for the Business of Government. Available at:

<http://www.businessofgovernment.org/report/collaboration-across-boundaries-insights-and-tips-federal-senior-executives>

The Glenn Inquiry (2014) *The People’s Report: The People’s Inquiry into Addressing Child Abuse and Domestic Violence*. Report prepared by Wilson D and Webber M.

Web resources

General Resources on Collective Impact

Collective Impact Forum. A US-based network and website of resources, describes itself as: ‘for those practicing collective impact to find the tools, resources, and advice...a network of individuals coming together to share experience and knowledge to accelerate the effectiveness and adoption of collective impact.’: <http://www.collectiveimpactforum.org/>

FSG: Their slogan is “Reimagining Social Change”. FSG are seen as a well-known social impact consultancy. John Kania and Mark Kramer, authors of the original 2011 Collective Impact Stanford Social Innovation Review Article, are Managing Directors at FSG. <http://www.fsg.org/>

Collective Impact in Australia and New Zealand

Collaboration for Impact: ‘The site seeks to accelerate the adoption of system collaboration and Collective Impact in Australia. It does so by creating knowledge, network and tools; shining a light on successful Collective Impact initiatives; and building an Australian community of practice.’

<http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/>

Social Leadership Australia: This organisation provides “social impact consulting”. See:

<http://leadership.benevolent.org.au/programs/collective-impact-untaught-skill>

Collective Impact Auckland Conference, 29-30 October 2014, several informative conference presentations available at: <http://grow.co.nz/collective-impact-auckland/>

Collective Impact Wellington Conference, 12-13 June 2014, several informative conference presentations available at: <http://grow.co.nz/collective-impact-2014/>

Justine Cornwall & Donna Provoost, 'From Child Poverty to Child Wellbeing: What is the role of collective impact?' June 2014, <file:///C:/Users/Family/Downloads/Dr-Justine-Cornwall-and-Donna-Provoost-Addressing-Child-Poverty-workshop.pdf>

Flightdec: Websites that fly, 'Collective Impact in New Zealand', <http://flightdec.com/CollectiveImpact>

Learning Auckland. See: <file:///C:/Users/Family/Downloads/Susan-Warren-and-Alison-Sutton-Learning-Auckland.pdf>

Shine Porirua. <http://shineporirua.org.nz/>

Thrive Hawke's Bay.' <http://www.thrivehb.co.nz/>

Blogs, Opinions, Critiques on Collective Impact

David Bornstein, 'The Power of Partnership', March 2011 and associated readers' comments, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/10/the-power-of-partnerships/>

Peter Boumgarden & John Branch, 'Collective Impact or Coordinated Blindness?' 13 February 2013 http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/collective_impact_or_coordinated_blindness

Seri Renkin, 'Trust is the leadership currency of collective impact', 4 August 2014 <http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/trust-is-the-leadership-currency-of-collective-impact/>

Paul Schmitz, 'The Real Challenge for Collective Impact', 27 September 2012. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-schmitz/collective-impact_b_1920466.html

Other websites used during course of research:

Ministry of Social Development Ideas Bank, <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/investing-in-services-for-outcomes/ideas-bank.html>

New Zealand Family Violence Clearing House, <http://www.nzfvc.org.nz>

Violence Free Network Wairarapa, a network of some 40 organisations, including local government, police, WINZ, NFPs in Wairarapa. <http://www.vfnw.org/>

APPENDIX 5: PROJECT BRIEF, WORKING GROUP MEMBERS, INTERVIEWEES

Excerpts from 'Collective Impact: Making the Wellington Region the best place in New Zealand to raise a family: Call for Tenders' (September 2014)

Background

An informal Working Group of community and regional leaders has been working in the Wellington region to explore the concept of a campaign to make the region the best place in New Zealand to raise a family. The campaign would focus on the concept of collective impact as a way of engaging and focusing a wide range of people and organisations, many already working in the field of poverty reduction, child health and other related areas. The group is not yet legally constituted, so for the purpose of this tender is working under the auspices of UNICEF New Zealand...

The initiative is focused on families because they are fundamental building blocks of our communities and provide the context through which we can most readily improve child wellbeing. Family/whanau is also the relevant focus for Maori and Pasifika people. Issues impacting on children and families are complex and therefore require action by a variety of players, including but not limited to central government, local government, iwi, religious organisations, businesses, the education sector, the health sector, communities and parents.

The Working Group wants to encourage to the table a wide range of people committed to taking responsibility and making effective change. To this end they require a Feasibility Study to identify support, scope the potential for the campaign and investigate the overall appetite that the Wellington region might have to make a campaign of this nature successful.

Objective

Explore, assess and make a recommendation on the potential of this initiative by conducting a range of interviews with individuals and groups, then prepare a report that clarifies public perceptions, refines campaign objectives and begins the task of building a robust network of potential leaders and participants.

Specific Tasks

It will not be possible to interview everyone who might support the proposed campaign. Instead, priority should be given to those seen as potentially the most influential and germane to the project's success, and who can also draw in a wide range of other stakeholders...

The outcome of the interview process will need to establish the following:

Public perception

- What do a wide variety of people think are the “game changers” that will make a difference?
- Is it possible to create a common agenda to improve life for children and families; and what would be the key concepts and priorities?
- What drives people to be interested in the wellbeing of children?
- Inclination to participate in the campaign in any capacity (i.e. leader, volunteer or funder)
- Who else needs to be involved? Who is critical to success?

Refining campaign objectives

- Is the idea too ambitious or too modest?
- What parts of it are the most compelling?
- What would be an appropriate terms of reference for the campaign?

Optimal campaign structure

- Who might be potential leaders or champions?
- Which are key complementary or competing organisations or campaigns?
- What would be a possible budget and potential funding opportunities for a backbone organisation and associated infrastructure?

The following is a general overview of how an interview might take place:

Background (as required)...

These draft questions are general guides that might govern the interview and conversation:

- *Do you think a campaign of this nature could be successful?*
- *What would success look like to you?*
- *What do you think is the biggest challenge facing families today?*
- *If you could change one thing facing families today what would that be?*
- *What do you see as the biggest obstacle/challenge to achieve our goal?*
- *Who you think should be around the table to ensure success?*
- *What are the key strengths of the Wellington region that support raising a family?*
- *Who do you think could help fund or support a campaign of this nature?*

Working Group Members

This project was commissioned by an informal working group. At the time of this project (October/November 2014), the informal Working Group consisted of the following eight people, all involved in their personal/voluntary capacity:

Fran Wilde (Chairperson of Working Group), Chair, Greater Wellington Regional Council

A'asa Sanerivi, Director, Pacific Health and Wellbeing Collective

David Hanna, Director, Wesley Community Action; National Manager, Inspiring Communities

Deborah Morris-Travers, National Advocacy Manager, UNICEF New Zealand

Ian Fraser, Chairman, Goodman Fielder Cares Trust

Joan Buchanan, Executive Director, Spirit of Rangatahi Charitable Trust

Liz Gibbs, Chief Executive, Philanthropy New Zealand

Liz Mellish, Te Atiawa and Chair Palmerston North Maori Reserve Trust

Interviews and interviewees

- A total of fifty-five people were ‘interviewed’ for this report. Most interviews were one-on-one; some interviews were with two or three people from the same organisation/place; there was one focus group with five people. For the purpose of this report, all people met with, are referred to as ‘interviewees’.
- Interviews were conducted on an anonymous/confidential basis. Some interviewees were happy for their views and identity to be openly shared, while others preferred to be anonymous.
- The interview list was originally put together by the Working Group. Some additional people were added through the course of the interviews through recommendations from people interviewed.
- A summary of some of the interviewees’ background is provided below. Please note this is a generalised indication of the background of interviewees.

Background information		Number of interviewees
Sector	Private sector (background in business or currently working in business)	12
	Public sector (background in government or currently working in government or crown entity)	6
	Not-for-profit/non-profit sector	17
	Community members/individuals (locals, not associated with an organisation)	14
	Academia, Education, and “Fourth Estate” (media)	6
Total:		55