

Community-Led Development Programme Impact Evaluation

Eastside Rotorua Community Case Study



Introduction

Hāpai Hapori, within the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) commissioned an impact evaluation of the Community-Led Development Programme (CLDP). Focused on the experiences of four partnering communities transitioning from the programme, a report presented summative findings examining the CLDP's outcomes and impact, including transformations in community, sustainability, wellbeing enhancement, realisation of aspirations, enablers of success and challenges, and recommendations for future activities.

This case study provides detailed reflections on the impact of CLDP partnership on one of the four communities - Tatau Pounamu Collective in Eastside Rotorua.

Data collection and analysis

The selected case study communities represent diverse characteristics, including partnership duration, community initiatives, and demographic factors.

This case study draws insights from data collected during a two-day site visit in April 2024, involving observations of activities and interviews with community members and partnering organisations. The Hāpai Hapori lead advisor was also interviewed. Data collection was supplemented by document analysis, including quarterly and results reports provided by Hāpai Hapori.

Community-led development programme overview

The overarching intended goal for the CLDP is “strong, resilient communities, hapū and iwi achieving locally owned visions and goals.” The two key aims of the CLDP, set out in its purpose, are:

- The CLDP supports communities of place, as well as hapū and iwi, to achieve their collective vision using a community-led approach.
- The CLDP is a partnering approach by the Department to invest in communities, hapū and iwi through intensive advisory services and, where appropriate, the provision of funding to help New Zealand build strong communities.

The DIA CLDP offers a flexible model of funding that supports community goals and needs as they change and develop. The programme emphasises community and partnerships drawing on the CLD principles. The programme shifts the focus away from small grants for individual projects and/or organisations, to an approach where communities have access to flexible funding that contributes to overall community wellbeing. DIA offers expertise as needed to communities, with a programme focus of supporting new and emerging community development. The CLDP began in 2011 with five pilot communities, with piloting and evaluation undertaken to 2015.

Te Aka Taiwhenua Strategic Framework outlines DIA's commitment towards Te Tiriti ō Waitangi. The framework is underpinned by the following mātāpono that guide DIA's work:

- **Whanaungatanga:** A relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging.
- **Manaakitanga:** Hospitality, kindness, generosity, support, the process of showing respect, and care for others.
- **Kotahitanga:** Unity, togetherness, solidarity, collective actions.
- **He Tangata:** It is the people, it is the people, it is the people.

Te Tiriti has become more central as the programmes have progressed and with the exploration of hapū-led development.



Tatau Pounamu

Background to Tatau Pounamu CLDP

Eastside Rotorua is situated in Rotorua and covers an area from the Waiohewa Stream to the Puarenga Stream, including Mokoia Island. Eastside is rich in cultural, spiritual, and historical traditions, with ngā hapū Ngāti Uenukukōpako, Ngāti Te-Roro-te Rangi, Ngāti Tuteniu, Ngāti Hurungaterangi and Ngāti Hinemihi residing within the area.

The whakapapa of Tatau Pounamu Collective extends back to 2012, when the Mokoia Community Association began supporting community-led initiatives. For example, one of the first initiatives was the development of the Aspen Place maara kai (community garden), inspired by a resident of Korotere (West Ōwhata), which TPC describes as “one of Eastside’s most vulnerable communities.”

In early 2017, Tatau Pounamu Collective and Hāpai Hapori began discussing a community led development project (CLDP); the invitation to talk was extended by the Collective and the CLDP Agreement was signed on 14 July 2017.

Initially known as the Eastside Community Collective, Tatau Pounamu Collective changed its name to reflect the Tatau Pounamu approach (see Figure 1 below), which the community collective developed. The Community vision is: Te Oranga Nui Rāwhiti Mai: to make Eastside Rotorua a safe place where every tamaiti (child) reaches their potential.

Figure 1: The Tatau Pounamu Approach



The Tatau Pounamu approach is community led and guided by mana whenua mātauranga (knowledge). The name gifted by a local kaumatua, ‘Tatau Pounamu’ is a metaphor for a safe place. Translated, it reflects a greenstone door, which historically was a place of security for those injured during battle or seeking protection.

Identifying aspirations

The project

The Tatau Pounamu Collective comprises hapū, local people and organisations who work together to achieve their shared vision of a child-friendly Eastside. Oranga or wellbeing is the starting point for the Tatau Pounamu approach, depicted in Figure 1 above. The dual hulls of the waka represent the wellbeing of te taiao, the environment, and hunga-ao, the people. The waka is also guided by ngā hau e whā, the four winds, reflecting the four pou or values of whakapapa, whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and wairuatanga. As TPC's website puts it, "The hera (sails) represent the many ways the Tatau Pounamu Strategy is put into action by individuals and groups supporting each other and working together to create change", and "when the Pou are reflected in actions, the waka sails fast".

A strategic approach developed to support community aspirations

Although there was activity in the community prior to CLDP, the partnership enabled a more strategic and proactive response to develop. Initially, the community's response to various challenges was somewhat fragmented, reacting spontaneously as issues arose without a long-term vision. The turning point came with the introduction of CLDP and the ability to engage in comprehensive collaborative processes, where community members, including local hapū, could align their efforts. This shift not only broadened the scope of participation but also began to steer the community towards more structured and collective planning.

Within the CLDP it was possible to "tease out" what was important, and evolve the aspirations to better reflect the community and the why. From the discussions grew the key vision to 'make Eastside Rotorua a safe place where every tamaiti (child) reaches their potential.' This is focused around two key areas:

- Hunga Ao (wellness) - recognising the community's strengths and assets and building on them to promote wellbeing and social sustainability for our whanau and community, thereby resulting in positive outcomes for our tamariki.

- Taiao (environment) - protecting and enhancing the local natural features with a coordinated, collaborative and sustainable approach as kaitiaki (guardians) of the environment.

The key thread in all of this was around a safe place, particularly for tamariki, [and] that's when that really strengthened, that key kind of vision. And then they really started teasing out how to make that happen, how do we approach this and that's when Tatau Pounamu took shape. (Collective leadership)

Involving mana whenua supported the partnership approach

Mana whenua have a significant, visible role throughout the Tatau Pounamu CLDP. Hapū involvement has been critical to the establishment and ongoing activity of the Collective. As rangatira, hapū members act as leaders in the space, while all the time maintaining their tino rangatiratanga. As mana whenua, they carry knowledge and experiences which they have generously shared to help create a vision for the Eastside community. Community members shared how hapū helped the Tatau Pounamu Collective to find a common ground and build on the natural strengths within the community. There is wide acknowledgement amongst Collective members and partnering organisations (e.g., council, schools) that with the support of mana whenua, there has been improved connection across networks and groups.

Mana whenua is across everything [TPC] does. And the relationship space that was huge, creating that platform for mana whenua and the wider community to work together on shared aspirations. (Community leadership)

Supporting transformational change

The CLD partnership has been critical in supporting the Tatau Pounamu Collective to activate transformative change through collective action and community collaboration. The Tatau Pounamu approach demonstrates that collective work can yield greater outcomes and it capitalises on every opportunity to strengthen community ties, ensuring that local voices are amplified. At a localised level, the Tatau Pounamu approach has enabled individuals to actively contribute to their community's wellbeing. For example, a resident's concern in Scott Ave was promptly addressed through the Collective network, leading to swift action from council representatives to enhance local facilities.



Through the partnership the Tatau Pounamu Collective have bolstered its online presence and community communication, creating robust digital engagement through social media and newsletters, and improving administrative competencies which support their operations and outreach. Through these efforts, the Collective not only showcases community achievements but also maintains a transparent and ongoing dialogue with its members and stakeholders.

The CLD partnership supported the Eastside community by providing access to consistent resource which supported opportunities for hapū, local Council, Schools, residents, and other organisations to continue building the Tatau Pounamu approach. Community members shared that these partnerships and relationships helped to engage a broad range of voices and “work truly as a community”.

The Tatau Pounamu Collective were able to invest in multiple paid contract positions, including the current Piripiri role. This role has been a significant resource and asset. Having a Piripiri role has helped to embed the Tatau Pounamu approach. The strong relationships that the Piripiri has made with different community representatives and residents have been key to facilitating efforts within the Eastside community.

One of the many ways that the partnership with DIA was really helpful is the consistent resourcing over multiple years [that] gave us capacity to be able to develop really good systems like induction material, [that explains] this is what a Tatau Pounamu way of working looks like. (Community leadership)

The CLD partnership provided opportunities for the Collective to improve trust and connection among individuals and organisations in the community. It has also helped to reinvigorate areas of interest like maara kai and supported the development of whānau within the community to lead and participate in locally designed initiatives. With the advice and support of the Tatau Pounamu Collective, Eastside locals have been able to talk to matters that concern them, such as the removal of local parks, footpath and pedestrian placement.

I think because of this [partnership] voices that wouldn't normally be at the table are at the table and are contributed and heard. They may not be physically there but you can see it coming through and that's a large part because of the people resource. They have been out listening and those voices [are] brought forward. (Community member)

With the ongoing support from CLD advisors and funding, the partnership has led to many community activities and events that have promoted wellbeing and social sustainability for community and taiao, including:

Table 1: Examples of Tatau Pounamu Collaborative Projects and Outcomes

Project area	Activities	Outcomes	
Taiao kaitiakitanga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hannah's Bay, Waikawau Restoration Project Eastside kura connecting students to taiao 	Beautiful space created for local Eastside and wider community to visit including rongoā maara kai Returned native life (e.g., native fish, birdlife)	Building a resilient ecosystem Increased awareness of taiao and roles as kaitiaki Reconnecting tamariki, rangatahi to te taiao Creation of outside learning spaces
Restoration of Community Maara Kai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood-led maara kai 	Whakapapa of area and traditional practices Feeding whānau	Common space for whānau to come together Facebook pages set up for Scott Ave and Aspen Place
Park activations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rangatahi and community kaitiakitanga 	Community feeling safer Examples of rangatahi taking ownership and caring for these spaces e.g., no tagging	Pride developing Eastside events e.g., Xmas in the park
Eastside spring cleans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community clean up days 	Community are getting involved and feel positive about their contribution Neighbourhood relationships are developing and there is more cohesion	Whānau are learning about waste minimisation and have been able to decluttered homes
Taiao Rēhia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Afterschool activities in neighbourhood parks 	Fun activities for rangatahi Chance for whānau to gather, enjoy a kai and company of their neighbours	Rangatahi and whānau feel valued
Te Manawa ō Owhatiura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building child friendly streets 	Lower driver speeds Streets feel safer	People walking and biking more
Power Pole Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tamariki designed artwork on power poles 	Pride and sense of belonging enhanced	Unique identity of Eastside being developed
#LOVEEASTSIDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media campaign 	Community engagement enhanced	Community shared what they love about Eastside



Sustained impact and benefits

The Tatau Pounamu approach supports collaborative sustainable development

The Tatau Pounamu approach developed through the CLD partnership serves as a fundamental framework for achieving sustainability. Central to the approach is growing community champions, collaborative decision-making and building relationships and partnerships based on the Tatau Pounamu Collective's vision and pou.

As shared by the community, one of the most significant ongoing impacts of the partnership is relational. While specific initiatives may start and end, the relationships forged through this partnership continue to yield benefits. The platform established through the Tatau Pounamu Collective for collaboration between mana whenua and the wider community offers a robust structure for future engagement. The groundwork laid for these relationships ensure that there is a lasting framework to convene, pursue shared goals and also pave the way for future collaborative effort.

The Eastside Wellness Plan exemplifies a collaborative effort, involving local hapū, Rotorua Lakes Council, and various local and national agencies such as Waka Kotahi and Te Papa Atawhai (Department of Conservation). This initiative began in 2019 and underwent public consultation in 2020. It was officially adopted by the Council in July 2021. It serves as both a pathway and a framework aimed at guiding the aspirations and enhancing the wellness of the community. It addresses various aspects of community life including land use, housing, health, education, environmental sustainability, and recreational opportunities.

The Piripoho Service, is also a wellbeing initiative that took shape through the collaborative efforts of the Tatau Pounamu Collective, Mokoia Community Association and Ōwhata Medical Centre, with support of Lakes District Health Board. Leadership and ownership of the Piripoho Service have recently transitioned to Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Pikiao, which now owns the Ōwhata Medical Centre, ensuring the continuation and localisation of care. The Piripoho model was developed to provide community nursing service that incorporated navigator and whānau support to empower whānau. It is aimed at building trusting relationships and facilitating access to broader services

that can be challenging for the Eastside to reach. The model of care addresses immediate health needs and helps families to navigate and connect with necessary services.

Ongoing collaboration with local government

By securing an agreement through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Tatau Pounamu Collective, mana whenua and Council, there is now a foundation for working in partnership. This plan is seen as an important mechanism to ensure that Eastside locals have a say in shaping what happens in their community and ensuring that growth aligns with the community's values and needs.

The Tatau Pounamu Collective has played a critical role in enabling the Council to effectively leverage its relationships with the community, enhancing community cohesion across the city. The approach has supported council engagement with Eastside community, during their long-term planning workshops. Council members share how they aim to replicate the successful community engagement model of Tatau Pounamu across different city sectors to better understand and advocate for community needs.

Coordination is essential to engaging and responding to community

Despite the exiting of CLDP funding, the Collective have continued to employ the Piripiri role through alternative funding. This has enabled ongoing coordination and responses to emerging needs and challenges of community. This has supported a better understanding of CLD and the Tatau Pounamu approach, and it has also raised the profile of the Eastside community. This shift towards community-driven planning and feedback has underscored one of Tatau Pounamu's greatest achievements: fostering a sense of collaboration within communities.

If I compare my work across the city, where we've got collaborations happening in terms of having quite a breadth of people involved and especially with hapū, Tatau Pounamu's enabled that to be as strong as what it is. If it wasn't there, a lot of this wouldn't happen. Things have really ramped up because of Tatau Pounamu's and hapū involvement. (Community Advisor)



Enhancing wellbeing of the community and hapū

From the perspective of the community the CLD partnership has contributed to the wellbeing of members. It has enhanced the sense of connection and belonging amongst Eastside locals.

There is an heightened awareness of communal activities, which has helped to foster positive engagement. The newly established Taihokohoko (community market) day is an example of this, with a great turnout of residents supporting each other and local businesses.

The true value of Tatau Pounamu can be difficult to explain, especially to those unfamiliar with the approach. While Tatau Pounamu operates on a macro scale, the collective's magic is deeply personal and human.

Whether we are meeting each other in our homes, streets or around a table, the non-hierarchical structure provides a level playing field so people who have never worked within the Tatau pounamu way can know their voice and perspective is valued. That is the first and most vital step towards empowering people to take the lead, the very core of community lead development. (Community member)

The Tatau Pounamu approach is localised and strength based. Starting from a place of orange it has championed local leadership and recognised the existing strengths and assets of the community. Initiatives like park activations, neighbourhood clean-up days, and providing safe spaces for tamariki and rangatahi to have fun, have fostered a sense of pride and inclusion. Social interactions through these events have resulted in new friendships and led to discussions on how to create a more cohesive community environment.

It's community orientated and about strong connection. My kids never used to play with these other kids, never. but after those programmes, they've kind of gelled and it's really good and they've got a really good friendship from that. (Community member)

Realising aspirations

Tatau Pounamu is a responsive approach that supports positive change

With the support of mana whenua, the TPC approach has been grounded in tikanga Māori principles through the four pou:

- Whakapapa – building a strong Eastside Rotorua committed to wellbeing
- Whanaungatanga – strong trusting relationships
- Wairuatanga – recognising all people's uniqueness, their identity, intelligence and spirituality
- Manaakitanga – encourage and enhance people's mana.

A constant theme of feedback from interviewees is that the Tatau Pounamu approach isn't that of a formal organisation, it is a way to bring all parts of a community together. There is no formal governance structure, instead members of the Eastside community can participate in the Collective, cohering towards the overarching vision of a safe community and nurturing the potential of tamariki.

It's an approach rather than delivery of activity and services. While activity and services drop out of that, the key binding connectedness is around those pou and that aspiration of a safe place. And it comes and goes, like the koru, it comes in and out but overarching, that's kind of in terms of that aspiration vision what holds it together is that. (Tatau Pounamu Collective member)

Although the trajectory of progress and change has fluctuated throughout the partnership, the pou ensure that all Tatau Pounamu Collective activities and responses maintain a connection to the original intent of the kaupapa. As shared by the Collective it is a way of working that enables them to respond to need, shift priorities and act quickly when needed.

The Tatau Pounamu Collective is a completely open bounded group of people who come together to think about and support what can happen and how it can happen. Whoever's [there] becomes that group and I think there's many strengths to the way we've gone, which is to say we are just who we are right now and the principles and the aspirations that underpin it. So it's responsive and adaptable according to what happens and it's not about who holds money or what we deliver in that kind of resourced based way, it's about that shared thinking and aspiration. (Tatau Pounamu Collective member)

The ability to experiment

Through the resource and support made available through the CLD partnership, the Tatau Pounamu Collective have been able to test and learn. This iterative approach has allowed experimentation, assessing what works and what doesn't. By embracing a culture of learning, the Collective have supported the engagement of local people, businesses, schools and other organisations to find unique responses, tailoring interventions to meet their specific needs and circumstances. It has encouraged active participation from community members, who are more likely to engage when they see that their input can lead to real adaptations and improvement.

I think [the difference] was the ability to experiment. That whole approach of just allowing [and] giving community space to manage it, to conceive it and realise it in a way that seems worthwhile [to them]. (Community member)

Challenges post funding

Community members acknowledged that there is still considerable work needed to fully embed and strengthen the Tatau Pounamu approach and ensure the long-term viability of the projects. Even though their operational capacity has been reduced through other funding sources they have been able to continue the Piripiri and Pou Awhi roles. This is critical to realising the overall vision to make Eastside Rotorua a safe place where every tamaiti (child) reaches their potential.

The challenges of sustaining the Tatau Pounamu Collective have become more prominent in the current environment where local philanthropic organisations are experiencing reduced income and an increased number of grant applications. This creates significant uncertainty around continued access to resources and continuation of their work. However, the Collective will continue

to work strategically to secure the necessary support to sustain community initiatives.

I think there's more to imbed, to support and strengthen this way of working. I always think do no harm and to me stepping back too quickly and letting it drop is harm and so that's why [we're] still here. (Tatau Pounamu Collective member)

Conclusion

The efforts to develop the Tatau Pounamu approach through the CLD partnership have profoundly influenced how the community thinks about the concept of community, at the neighbourhood level, and across the Eastside area. By creating spaces where neighbours, mana whenua, schools, local and central government, and businesses can collaborate, Tatau Pounamu is showing momentum. This collaborative environment has fostered a deeper understanding among community members and an enhanced willingness to cooperate and support one another. While the impact of these efforts may not always be immediately apparent, it becomes unmistakable when opportunities arise, revealing the strong undercurrents of community cohesion and resilience.

Tatau Pounamu has a unique way of meeting you as you are and extending a hand to you. It is a gate way for many to find a path, a support crew. This helps people realise that they can and do deeply shape their neighbourhoods, and this I believe is the fundamental core of Tatau Pounamu's successes and will be their generational legacy. Tatau Pounamu plants trees in whose shade the current members shall never sit. (Community member)

