



# Sustainably Yours

## Community Development & a Sustainable Just Future

15-17 February, 2017 • Auckland

By *Beate Matthies*, ADCOSS

The Aotearoa Community Development Association (ACDA) and the International Association for Community Development (IACD) organised a joint Community Development Conference in Auckland 15-17 February 2017. The conference theme was Sustainable Communities, with sub themes on community-led enterprise and disaster preparedness and response. The conference included peer reviewed papers and workshops as well as poster sessions, practice exchanges, and pre-conference tours.

The conference was well attended with several international speakers and attendees. Many speakers had arrived from USA and presented to an audience of participants from all over New Zealand, Australia, and USA.

It was sometimes hard to choose which session to attend. This article reviews three of these sessions.



One of the first sessions was a workshop with an Auckland Council team on **ECA – the Empowered Community Approach**. *Kim Conway*, *Matt Appleyard*, and *Erin Wilson* introduced this approach, and were open for feedback and ideas how to involve the communities in decisions that have a direct impact on them.



Aotearoa Community  
Development Association



Key words such as ‘co-design and delivery’ or ‘localism and subsidiarity’ led to ways of including people who are working for grass-root causes. Even though the principles of the empowered community approach would have had the same meaning for all participants, it might have been challenging for some people from overseas to hear about the “international application of the Treaty of Waitangi”. Hopefully, they had some knowledge of New Zealand history before they arrived for the conference.

It was good to see how the attendees shared their experiences and knowledge, and everyone agreed with the Auckland Council staff that wherever you have the people involved in decisions, you are building up happier and safer communities!



One of the most fascinating speakers at the conference was certainly *Dr James Prescott*, who spoke on **Measuring Outcomes Using the Balanced Scorecard**. A Tongan specialist accountant, *Dr Prescott* is member of the advisory panel of MSD and the Ministry for Vulnerable Children. He challenged the concept of measuring outcomes on counselling – are we counting the right things? The ‘balanced scorecard’ is a strategy performance tool that became very popular among managers in the 1980s. However, about a decade later,

*Kaplan and Norton* expressed their concerns of measuring solely on financial returns and defined a strategic management system which included also non-financial data.

*Dr Prescott* takes this initiative one step further and suggests a modified balanced scorecard for NGOs which takes into



*ADCOSS Board Members (front row, left to right) Beate Matthies, Joan Lardner-Rivlin, and Rika Werner, together with one of the conference speakers, Charlie McConnell*

consideration that some decisions are politically based rather than evidence based. In this context he challenges MSD. The Ministry of Social Development is asking for outcomes, but the contract presented are only considering outputs. This difference is necessary as NGOs are driven by a mission. Their ultimate return is not to financial stakeholders.

Whereas the balanced scorecard for businesses is based on cardinal measuring, the NGOs should be able to follow ordinal measuring, and ask questions like: "How much is the target population engaged?" and "How effective and relevant is a certain programme really?"

The dimensions of the traditional balanced scorecard include finances, innovation and growth, internal process, and the customers. The scorecard for NGOs should include a social/political/environmental dimension!



A review of current models or concepts was also a topic for a workshop facilitated by specialists from different countries. *Charlie McConnell* (UK), *Greg Wise* (USA), *Paul Lachapelle* (USA), and *Gavin Rennie* (NZ), invited the participants to think about definitions of Community Development. What is Community Development and is it possible to set up a code of standards for those involved?

There are *National Occupational Standards* on which a Code of Ethics for Community Development workers could be built upon, but there are also cultural circumstances to be considered.

In his hand-out, *Charlie McConnell*, the immediate Past-President of IACD, describes the use of Codes of Ethics for professional practice:

- ▶ Express the distinctiveness or identity of CD
- ▶ Articulate the shared value base that we have
- ▶ Challenge, examine and reflect on our practice
- ▶ Promote professional dialogue and understanding
- ▶ Provide accountability

At the IACD's last international conference in the USA in 2016, the Board adopted its Global Definition of Community Development.

“Community development is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes participative democracy, sustainable development, rights, economic opportunity, equality, and social justice, through the organisation, education, and empowerment of people within their communities, whether these be of locality, identity or interest, in urban and rural settings.

From conference hand-outs by *Charlie McConnell*

The workshop certainly created very good and passionate discussions – maybe some of the results of these discussions will be considered at the next IACD's conference?

All in all, a conference worth while attending!

