



## **Working Paper No.16**

# **Achieving Better Social Outcomes in New Zealand Through Collaboration: Perspectives from the United States**

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the topic of improving social outcomes in New Zealand through collaboration between government and communities where children, young people and families are at risk. Public concern has mounted about the incidence of child abuse and neglect, youth suicide and pockets of poor educational performance among specific population groups in New Zealand. A review of relevant literature suggests that a systems approach is required, if public service and community leaders are to be successful in responding to these problems. Two frameworks are put forward for social systems change, one at a conceptual level and one at an operational level for practical application in New Zealand. These frameworks draw on the reinventing government work of David Osborne and Peter Plastrik and the systems thinking work of Peter Senge.

To learn how similar issues are being tackled in the United States, two case studies were selected. The first case study is about an innovative non-profit organization in Chelsea, Massachusetts, called Roca, Inc. and the impact it is having on social outcomes and on the way state agencies think about social problems. The second case study examines legislative measures in Oregon to improve social outcomes through collaboration.

The research demonstrates that in a systemic approach both bottom up and top down approaches to collaboration are important, as are outcomes planning, performance measurement and a mix of strategies to address underlying problems. There are deeper implications for change within our public management system, however, if collaboration is to be truly successful. These include moving to power sharing and joint accountability arrangements and extending the role of government to that of enabler. Methods of underpinning these new approaches include creating incentives for collaboration, longer term, relational contracting and distributed leadership.

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<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Why collaboration is important</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<i>Motivation and purpose</i> .....	6
<i>Setting the scene: Public management reform in New Zealand</i> .....	7
<i>The current challenge: Linking outputs to outcomes for better results</i> .....	8
<i>Social outcomes: At-risk communities</i> .....	10
<i>Social outcomes in New Zealand</i> .....	11
<i>Public management challenges</i> .....	13
<i>Structure and methodology of paper</i> .....	13
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Concepts, frameworks and practice</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<i>Introduction</i> .....	15
<i>Premise</i> .....	15
<i>Three important concepts</i> .....	15
<i>Community and community building</i> .....	16
<i>Collaboration</i> .....	17
<i>Innovation</i> .....	18
<i>Two frameworks to improve social outcomes</i> .....	19
<i>The Five C's for Reinventing Government</i> .....	20
<i>A conceptual framework for social systems change</i> .....	21
<i>Collaboration and learning strategy</i> .....	22
<i>Core strategy</i> .....	25
<i>Consequences strategy</i> .....	26
<i>Strategy for at-risk community members</i> .....	27
<i>An operational framework for social systems change</i> .....	28
<i>Practicing collaboration and generative learning</i> .....	29
<i>Identifying social outcome goals and performance budgets</i> .....	30
<i>Measuring performance</i> .....	31
<i>Designing holistic and supportive projects and programs</i> .....	32
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>Case Study: Roca, Inc</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<i>Introduction</i> .....	34
<i>Roca: the organization, its people and its communities</i> .....	36
<i>Origins of Roca</i> .....	39
<i>Vision, mission, values and core concepts</i> .....	39
<i>Transformational relationship</i> .....	40
<i>Peacemaking Circles and the Medicine Wheel</i> .....	41
<i>Echo Chart</i> .....	44
<i>Roca Projects and Programs</i> .....	45
<i>Project Victory</i> .....	45
<i>Learning, growth and evaluation</i> .....	48
<i>Collaboration and partnerships</i> .....	50

<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b> .....	<b>52</b>
<b>Case Study: Legislating for collaboration in Oregon</b> .....	<b>52</b>
<i>Introduction</i> .....	52
<i>Purpose of SB 555</i> .....	52
<i>Section 2 (1): Vision</i> .....	53
<i>Origins of the Oregon Commission on Children and Families</i> .....	54
<i>SB 555: Why legislate again?</i> .....	55
<i>Linkages to Oregon Benchmarks</i> .....	57
<i>Funding and Resources</i> .....	58
<i>Roles and tasks</i> .....	59
<i>Partnerships</i> .....	63
<i>Performance measurement</i> .....	64
<i>Other strengths and weaknesses of a legislative approach</i> .....	66
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b> .....	<b>68</b>
<b>Two contrasting examples of collaboration for social systems change</b> ...	<b>68</b>
<i>Introduction</i> .....	68
<i>Roca: A collaborative approach for radical social systems change</i> .....	70
<i>Collaboration and generative learning at Roca</i> .....	71
<i>Setting outcome goals in Massachusetts</i> .....	75
<i>Performance measurement at Roca</i> .....	75
<i>Holistic and supportive projects and programs at Roca</i> .....	75
<i>Senate Bill 555: a collaborative approach for incremental social systems change</i> .....	77
<i>Collaboration and generative learning in Oregon</i> .....	77
<i>Outcome goals, performance budgets and steering organizations in Oregon</i> .....	80
<i>Performance measurement in Oregon</i> .....	82
<i>Holistic and supportive projects and programs in Oregon</i> .....	83
<i>Summary of findings</i> .....	84
<b>CHAPTER SIX</b> .....	<b>87</b>
<b>Achieving social systems change in New Zealand</b> .....	<b>87</b>
<i>Introduction</i> .....	87
<i>Power sharing and joint accountability</i> .....	88
<i>Government as enabler</i> .....	89
<i>Creating incentives for collaboration</i> .....	91
<i>Moving to longer term, relational contracting</i> .....	91
<i>Distributed leadership</i> .....	92
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	94
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>95</b>

# CHAPTER ONE

## Why collaboration is important

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### *Motivation and purpose*

The purpose of this paper<sup>1</sup> is to explore how improved social outcomes for children, young people and their families can be achieved through collaboration and partnership between government agencies, non-profit organizations and communities. I have had a professional interest in this topic since I worked as a manager of child and adolescent health at the local level more than 10 years ago.<sup>2</sup> That experience changed my view of my role as a career public servant. It taught me the value of working with community groups and of learning to see the world through their eyes.

I began to think about how formal and informal collaboration and partnership between public organizations and communities could be used to achieve better social outcomes for New Zealanders. In the intervening years I have worked with this theme in a variety of professional roles. I have become increasingly convinced that the social problems that governments (not only in New Zealand) try to tackle through large amounts of spending on public programs and services cannot be effectively tackled alone. Public organizations need to draw on local knowledge and indeed, wisdom where it is to be found, to achieve the kinds of results they set out to achieve.

During the past year of study leave from the State Services Commission (SSC) in Wellington I have had the opportunity to explore relevant ideas, literature and practice on outcomes planning, collaboration and community empowerment and performance measurement. I have had the opportunity to study at first hand some of the concepts put forward by Peter Senge in *The Fifth Discipline*. These are systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision and team learning. I have researched in depth two cases of government and community collaboration in the United States.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was submitted as a Master's thesis to the Sloan School of Management, MIT, USA, for the academic year 2001/2002 by the author. She wishes to acknowledge the financial support offered by the State Services Commission, and the MDC Fellowship, New Zealand.

<sup>2</sup> I worked for the Taranaki Area Health Board, serving a population of about 100,000, much of it rural. The region of Taranaki is located on the west coast of the North Island, New Zealand. Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, comprised 14% of the total population at the last census in 2000 (Source: Statistics NZ). Tribal (iwi) groups play a major role in the life of the community. I learned a great deal from Maori colleagues and local Maori leaders about their beliefs and values during this time.

This research has convinced me that it is critical for public officials who want to make progress in improving social outcomes to understand at-risk individuals and groups in terms of systems, to learn about the values and mental models embedded in the communities they are serving and to work alongside members of these communities to create shared visions. It is fundamental that public officials learn to share the power that has been the reserve of public organizations for the last 100 years or more, with community groups and their representatives. Achieving better social outcomes, as a public service goal, means working to understand the complexity of communities, including their changing composition, and the diverse needs of the individuals who belong to them. Ultimately achieving better social outcomes is about systemic change and this can only be achieved through true collaborative effort between public organizations and communities. This paper attempts to take the reader on the journey of this discovery.

### ***Setting the scene: Public management reform in New Zealand***

New Zealand undertook major reform of its public management system in the late 1980s in response to a brewing fiscal crisis, when the country was on the brink of defaulting on international loans. The two principal instruments of reform were the State Sector Act, passed in 1988 and the Public Finance Act, passed in 1989.<sup>3</sup> Good public accounting practice and managerial accountability were the central tenets of these pieces of legislation and, based on these measures, New Zealand moved to accrual accounting and output budgeting in 1988. While the need to balance the country's budget was a strong driver, the introduction of innovative financial management practices and measures to encourage managerial discretion and accountability had been well planned and thought through by the New Zealand Treasury, which wanted to reduce public expenditure and achieve sustained efficiency and effectiveness in the public service. During this period it was not unusual for government departments to take across-the-board budget cuts of up to 10 percent to help achieve budget targets.

Structural reform involving a separation of the policy and operational arms of government agencies was carried out extensively. While this helped improve accountability by tightening the focus of departments and agencies, it also reduced the number of, and in some cases all but closed, the feedback loops between communities and policy advisors and between operational and policy staff. Over time, a problem of disconnect between government departments and communities developed. Allen Schick coined the term "Wellington talking to Wellington" to describe this problem.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For a good, readable overview of public management reform in New Zealand, see David Osborne's and Peter Plastrik's *Banishing Bureaucracy*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1997, pp. 75-91.

<sup>4</sup> Professor Schick is Professor of Public Policy in the School of Public Affairs at the University of Maryland and a Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington DC. He was commissioned to undertake a review of the NZ public management reforms in 1996. His comprehensive report *The Spirit of Reform: Managing the New Zealand State Sector in a Time of Change* is available on the SSC website [www.ssc.govt.nz](http://www.ssc.govt.nz)

An integral part of the new system was a clear distinction between accountability for outcomes and outputs. Outcomes are generally thought of as the results that a government wants to achieve and outputs are the activities, products and services that government departments are engaged in.<sup>5</sup> Outputs may or may not help achieve outcomes. Ministers, that is, elected members of Parliament, were deemed to be exclusively accountable for outcomes and public service managers were exclusively accountable for outputs. The principle behind this split was that managers should only be held accountable for things they could largely control. Outcomes, while important, were seen as much more difficult to control because they were affected by so many different factors and were thus seen to reside in the political domain.

Purchase agreements and contracts were introduced as principal mechanisms for achieving accountability, based on output specification. There have been many positive developments from 15 years of output contracting for services, including good accountability mechanisms, and development of service capacity in a range of diverse, non-profit organizations in the community. The downside of output specification and contracting, however, is that there are things that cannot be easily specified as outputs, such as the values and standards of services to citizens. Output contracting has also led to a short term planning focus, fragmentation of activities, and competition for scarce government funding in communities where cooperation may have been a better strategy. These were sweeping reforms that at the time went further than similar changes introduced in other OECD countries. Allen Schick wrote in 1996: "...the more closely one examines New Zealand's progress, the more it becomes evident that it has ventured far beyond what has been tried elsewhere."<sup>6</sup> But the reforms were focused primarily on fiscal reform and managerial accountability and the question of how well New Zealand was performing according to various social indicators was set to one side.

### ***The current challenge: Linking outputs to outcomes for better results***

Allen Schick in his 1996 review of the New Zealand reforms signaled the need to move beyond outputs:<sup>7</sup>

But as important as it is, efficiency in producing outputs is not the whole of public management. It also is essential that Government has the capacity to achieve its larger political and strategic objectives. More than twenty years ago, the Nobel Prize economist Kenneth Arrow wrote in *The Limits of Organization* (1974) "the prime need in organizational design is increasing capacity to handle a large agenda...Short run efficiency and even flexibility within a narrow framework of alternatives

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<sup>5</sup> The State Services Commissioner wrote in his Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 200: "Since the 1980s, the public management system explicitly has drawn a distinction between outcomes (the social, economic, environmental and other goals a government is trying to achieve) and outputs (the things done by State sector organisation), p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Schick, Allen, *The Spirit of Reform*, p.87.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



may be less important in the long run than a wide compass of potential activities.

The next steps in New Zealand State sector reform will have to address this larger agenda. They will have to move from management issues to policy objectives, to fostering outcomes, such as social cohesion, that have been enunciated by Government and are embraced by New Zealanders. They will have to do for outcomes what has been accomplished for outputs. The task ahead is much more difficult than what has been accomplished thus far, but the rewards of success will be even greater.

Currently there are initiatives under way in New Zealand to link outputs to outcome planning to achieve better results for government services. The Minister of State Services Hon Trevor Mallard and the State Services Commissioner Michael Wintringham (the head of the New Zealand Public Service) made a formal commitment to a longer-term outcomes approach in May 2001 in a joint statement:

The State Services Commission is adopting an outcomes approach to public management as its ambition and focus over the next three to five years...The outcomes respond to both the need for continued good government and the results that the Government wants to achieve.<sup>8</sup>

This statement signaled a commitment to a collaborative, whole-of-government approach, which encourages innovative thinking and seeks the knowledge and expertise of people working “at the coalface” to help formulate policy and deliver services able to meet the needs of citizens. Michael Wintringham reminds us in the same document that “in encouraging the processes of good government we should not forget the object of good government and the activities of the State, namely to make life better for all citizens.”<sup>9</sup>

In the State Services Commission Annual Report published a few months later, the Commissioner signaled a move to embrace outcome planning and contracting. He particularly focused on the relationship between Ministers and senior public servants:

I have come to the view that...the distinction between outcomes and outputs can be unhelpful to, or even destructive of, the creative and supportive relationship that should exist between Ministers and the organizations through which they work. Ministers legitimately can look for help in articulating and refining outcomes, for help in identifying the best possible ways of pursuing those outcomes, for help in delivering the programmes and outputs that give effect to the outcomes, and for

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<sup>8</sup> *Statement of Intent 2001 Incorporating the Departmental Forecast Report*, State Services Commission, May 2001, p.1.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

help in assessing what progress has been made in achieving those outcomes.<sup>10</sup>

In December 2001, Cabinet agreed to new planning and reporting arrangements for Public Service departments, requiring them to produce Statements of Intent. For the coming year 2002/2003, 16 out of a total of 36 government departments have produced Statements of Intent and the remainder will do so in the following year 2003/2004.<sup>11</sup> According to an internal paper, “The objective of the new planning system is to improve the performance of Public Service departments by encouraging Ministers and departments to give more emphasis and attention in both their planning processes and reports to outcomes, capability and risk.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Social outcomes: At-risk communities**

There is an argument to be made at the most general level, that in order to get the best results and to spend taxpayers’ money wisely in the social arena, governments must understand and work together within the complex web of organizations and systems, which make up society in order to achieve the best outcomes for citizens. While social spending (not including health, education and justice expenditure) as a percentage of GDP varies among OECD countries, 25 out of the 29 member countries spend 15% of their GDP or more on social issues: in 1998 the US spent 15%, Australia and Canada 17%, NZ 21%, UK, 23%. OECD countries that spend more than 25% of their GDP on social issues include Sweden (which is the highest at 31%), Denmark, France, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, Austria and Finland.<sup>13</sup>

Much of this spending goes into supporting at-risk individuals and communities, which are presenting a range of challenging demands on social, as well as health, justice and education spending. In 1992, the Oregon state government recognized that it had a problem of “escalating dollars for deteriorating outcomes” when it commissioned a Children’s Care Team to report on ways to improve services to children and families. The team found that, “In spite of increasing spending for social services, Oregon has experienced steady growth in rate of births to teens, percentage of low birth weight babies, and percentage of children dying from abuse or neglect.”<sup>14</sup>

Over the last 40 years, the combined effect of economic pressures, war, terrorism, migration, ‘globalization’ trends like the threat of a shrinking tax base in nation states and the widening gap between wealthy and poorer populations have contributed to the evolution of at-risk communities in developed countries. Lisbeth Schorr, an American

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<sup>10</sup> State Services Commissioner’s Annual Report on the State Services, in *Annual Report of the State Services Commission 2001*, October 2001, p. 10-11.

<sup>11</sup> The NZ government financial year spans from July 1 to June 30 each year.

<sup>12</sup> *Roll-Out of New Planning Expectations and Statements of Intent: Guidance for Departments*, December 17, 2001, Te Puni Kokiri (Ministry of Maori Development), the Treasury and State Services Commission, Wellington, NZ.

<sup>13</sup> OECD website: [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org) under Statistics Portal, Social and Welfare statistics

<sup>14</sup> *A Positive Future for Oregon’s Children and Families, A Report of the Children’s Care Team*, Oregon Legislative Assembly, January 1993, Executive Summary, p.1.

academic, has written extensively on this topic of at-risk communities in the United States.<sup>15</sup> In *Common Purpose* she focuses on systemic change. “What really matters,” she says, “is the system.” Her focus on systemic change is important. Increasingly research is showing that the most difficult social problems are inextricably linked: poor performance in school can be the result of a combination of poor health and housing, difficult family lives, where domestic violence and abuse occur, which is in part attributable to low income, unemployment and welfare dependency. Poor attendance and achievement at school is a significant factor in teenage pregnancy.<sup>16</sup> Multiple risk factors in juvenile crime include school failure, family problems, alcohol and drug use, negative peer association and anti-social behavior.<sup>17</sup>

A longitudinal study conducted in Christchurch, New Zealand by researchers at the School of Medicine concludes that: “Children exposed to high levels of interparental violence are an at risk population for psychosocial adjustment problems in young adulthood. Much of the elevated risk of these children arises from the social context within which interparental violence occurs. Nonetheless, exposure to interparental violence, and particularly father initiated violence, may be associated with later increased risks of anxiety, conduct disorder, problems with alcohol, and criminal offending.”<sup>18</sup>

These multiple and interwoven problems of at-risk communities do not belong to government alone; they belong to society. This means that society, as a whole, needs to find answers. But finding answers will require leadership both in the public service and in the community. The special task of leaders in public service is to recognize the systemic nature of these issues and find ways to ensure that expenditure on public programs and services is directed at improving outcomes. Public service leaders need to tap into the resources that our communities offer in terms of improving outcomes for at-risk members of society.

### ***Social outcomes in New Zealand***

There are at least two “big picture” reasons for New Zealand public officials to be concerned about poor social outcomes. These are: relatively poor economic performance and some disturbing social indicators for certain groups within the population. On economic performance, New Zealand’s relative standard of living has fallen compared to OECD countries like Australia and the UK. Low productivity and slow economic growth relative to OECD countries appear to be two of the main problems. A report to the NZ Government at the end of 2001 points out: “Labour productivity is a key driver of

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<sup>15</sup> Schorr, Lisbeth, *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, Doubleday, 1988 and *Common Purpose: Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America* Anchor Books, New York 1997.

<sup>16</sup> *Adolescent Births: A Statistical Profile*, Massachusetts, 2000, pp. 9 & 24, Massachusetts Department of Health, search under Publications and Statistics at [www.state.ma.us/dph](http://www.state.ma.us/dph)

<sup>17</sup> From an interview in February 2002 with Becky Eklund, Juvenile Crime Prevention Coordinator, Criminal Justice Commission, Salem Oregon.

<sup>18</sup> Fergusson DM, Horwood LJ, *The Christchurch Health and Development Study: review of findings on child and adolescent mental health*, Christchurch of Medicine, NZ, published in the Australia New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, June 2001; 35 (3), pp 287-96. Abstract available on <http://gateway.nlm.nih.gov>

economic growth, but we are failing to achieve the same levels of growth in productivity as other nations.”<sup>19</sup> This report, which principally addresses concerns about the “brain drain” – that New Zealand is losing people across all skill levels – highlights the fact that the relatively poor economic performance is putting the sustainability of New Zealand’s education, health care and income support systems under pressure.

Concerns about poor social indicators have been the subject of much public discussion in the last five years as information and data have become publicly available. As I see it, the main issues for attention are the underlying systemic causes of child abuse and neglect and a variety of flow on problems for young people. These include youth offending (juvenile crime), pockets of poor educational achievement and high youth suicide rates. New Zealand’s youth suicide rates are amongst the highest in the OECD countries. In 1998 there were 38.5 male and 13.3 female deaths from suicide between the ages of 15 and 24 years per 100,000 people. In 1998 Maori rates were even higher: 54.3 for males and 24.4 for females.<sup>20</sup>

Changing demographics in New Zealand mean that it is becoming an increasingly multicultural society. This factor presents particular challenges in terms of social outcomes. For example, Maori and Pacific Island males are currently disproportionately represented in youth offending (for Pacific Island males this is in violent offending only). These populations are growing: by 2016 the Maori youth population (under 17 years) is projected to grow to 27% (a 3% increase from 1996). Similarly, the Pacific peoples youth population (under 17 years) is expected to grow to 13% (also a 3% increase from 1996). A recent report on youth offending states: “The majority of young people in the youth justice system are male;” and “Maori youth are significantly over-represented in youth offending, comprising around half of youth in the youth justice system.”<sup>21</sup> The same report notes concern expressed, “...particularly by practitioners such as the Police, that offending by young females is becoming more serious and violent.”<sup>22</sup>

In a recent editorial article, a Wellington daily newspaper expressed its frustration with the high incidence of child abuse in New Zealand: “Child, Youth and Family figures just released show that 1600 children under the age of 10 were sexually abused during the past four years. Of them, 11 were less than a year old...Sex abuse of children is not specific to New Zealand, but in a nation of less than four million people surely there must be a way of better protecting children.”<sup>23</sup> Judge Mick Brown, (a former Chief Judge of the Youth Court) delivered a report on child abuse and neglect in December 2000 to the Minister of Social Services and Employment, commissioned because of public concern.

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<sup>19</sup> *Strategies for Building a Talented Nation*, November 2001, p.17, from the *Growing an Innovative New Zealand* series of reports, [www.beehive.govt.nz](http://www.beehive.govt.nz)

<sup>20</sup> *Children in New Zealand: Report on cross sectoral outcome measures and targets 2000*, published by the Ministry of Health, Wellington, New Zealand, May 2001, p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> *Youth Offending Strategy: Preventing and reducing offending and re-offending by children and young people*, published by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Development, Wellington, New Zealand, April 2002, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> The Evening Post, Wellington, New Zealand Opinion, January 29, 2002. The article, in fact, argues for tighter sentencing of perpetrators through the courts: “...there is one way of applying a remedy for children – convictions should render the guilty to permanent removal to prison.”

At that time he wrote to the Minister: “The area of child and adolescent mental health and present capacity as a nation to deal with these problems is, I think, a matter of grave concern.”<sup>24</sup> He, too, recognized that the problems are systemic ones: “I am of the view that if New Zealand is serious about the well being of its children it must identify those systemic or structural problems which are generating problems in the first instance.”<sup>25</sup> The Mick Brown report, as it is known, lays down a number of challenges for public management, not the least of which is understanding the real nature of the problem.

A recent Treasury paper focuses on the linkages between what it calls “social capability, economic performance and well-being.”<sup>26</sup> One recommendation of the paper is to remedy a “poor comparative record in education outcomes in the lower part of the distribution compared to its generally good performance in the upper half.”<sup>27</sup> The Treasury proposes a framework of “productive capability, social capability and well-being” as a way forward. It is hard to disagree with this. The challenge, however, is in knowing how to achieve social and productive capability – what I have called better social outcomes. While public officials, academics and community leaders are beginning to understand a great deal about what causes poor social indicators, knowing how to improve them requires deeper knowledge. This paper is intended to provide knowledge at this deeper level for application in New Zealand.

### ***Public management challenges***

Based on my research, I will address some of the future challenges for public service leaders and managers in New Zealand and what we can do to make a difference. In chapter six I discuss the main insights from my research and what they might mean in a New Zealand public management context. The themes covered include decision-making and accountability, government as enabler, creating incentives for collaboration, longer term, relational contracting and distributed leadership.

### ***Structure and methodology of paper***

In this chapter I have set the scene by briefly covering the public management reforms and the new outcomes, capability and risk focus for planning in New Zealand. I have given an overview of the challenges faced generally by western governments, including New Zealand, in the social policy arena. In chapter two I review relevant literature on community and community building, collaboration, innovation, planning for outcomes,

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<sup>24</sup> Brown, Michael J. A, *Care and Protection is About Adult Behaviour, Ministerial Review of the Department of Child, Youth and Family* (Mick Brown Report), Report to the Minister of Social Services and Employment, Hon Steve Maharey, December 2000, available on DCYF website: [www.cyf.govt.nz](http://www.cyf.govt.nz)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid p. 36.

<sup>26</sup> *Towards an Inclusive Economy*, May 2001, The Treasury, New Zealand, p.3. Social capability is defined “as high levels of participation, interconnection and cohesion (which result in) a high level of the ability of various interest in society to cooperate towards common goals.”

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

measuring results, community empowerment, learning and systems change. Based on David Osborne and Peter Plastrik's "reinventing government" work, and Peter Senge's systems thinking approaches, I have developed two frameworks, one conceptual and one operational, to achieve social systems change.

In chapters three and four I discuss the two case studies that I conducted and through them address the topic of the relationship between state agencies and communities, one from a grassroots (bottom up) perspective and one from a government policy (top down) perspective. The first case study is about an innovative, non-profit organization called Roca located in Chelsea, a low income city in the greater Boston area of Massachusetts, which works with at-risk young people and families. To conduct this study, I spent a total of four days at Roca interviewing 12 staff members, meeting many more and participating in a range of activities including peacemaking circles, a rally at the State House in Boston and a drop-in evening. I used a semi-structured interview process, which meant that I had a series of standard questions that I asked everyone but usually the discussion was not limited to the questions. I used a separate and longer set of questions to interview the Founder and Executive Director of Roca, Molly Baldwin. I also interviewed five of Roca's main partners in the community to learn about the influence of Roca in their work and their relationships with Roca. I drew on numerous publications by and about Roca to help acquire an in-depth understanding of the organization.

The second case study examines a legislative approach in Oregon, known as Senate Bill 555, and related legislation, which aims to improve outcomes for children and families through collaboration with communities. To conduct this study, I spent approximately one week interviewing state level public officials, legislators, a consultant and an academic and officials at the county level. I used a semi-structured interviewing protocol as in the Roca case. I observed two relevant meetings, one at the state level and one at the county level. I reviewed Senate Bill 555 in detail and many documents relating to SB 555, the Oregon Commission on Children and Families and the Oregon Progress Board. In chapter five I analyze the findings of this research, using my operational framework and drawing on a range of literature and Sloan School of Management course material. In chapter six I focus on public management challenges in New Zealand.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Concepts, frameworks and practice

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### ***Introduction***

In this chapter I begin with a premise about the way in which public organizations need to work if they want to improve outcomes for at-risk children young people and families. This is followed by working definitions of three important concepts that recur throughout the paper. These are community and community building, collaboration, and innovation. I then propose two frameworks, one at a conceptual level and one at a practical level, for approaching the difficult social issues in this domain.

### ***Premise***

My premise for working with at-risk children, young people and families is threefold:

- Public organizations need to see themselves as firmly anchored in and belonging to society, rather than somehow sitting above, or off to one side. As pressures in society bring dynamic and systemic change, public officials must reflect on and make sense of these pressures and build into their policy advice for setting outcomes, what this means for future public management.
- Community organizations, including non-profit organizations, are usually better at understanding community issues, relating to and supporting at-risk groups and delivering actual services and support, than public organizations.
- Public organizations dealing with complex social issues therefore need to be open to grassroots innovation, learning and collaborative opportunities within the community. Information, knowledge and experience from the community shared through formal and informal collaboration will enhance social outcomes.

### ***Three important concepts***

I have chosen to introduce three concepts because not only do they recur throughout this paper, but also because they are concepts that are frequently used in the context of social policy. They are: community and community building, collaboration and innovation.

## **Community and community building**

One of the best ways to think about community is what occurs and who is affected when it starts to disappear. Lisbeth Schorr calls this “loss of community” and quotes Robert F. Kennedy’s definition of this phenomenon, which he referred to as “the destruction of the thousand invisible strands of common experience and purpose, affection, and respect, which tie men to their fellow.” She goes on to say that Kennedy believed that the world beyond the neighborhood had become “impersonal and abstract...beyond the reach of individual control or even understanding.” Kennedy advocated for the “restoration of community as a place where people can see each other, where children can play and adults work together and join in the pleasures and responsibilities of the place where they live.”<sup>28</sup>

Schorr believes that the loss of community is hardest for the poorest people. She writes: “The decline of manufacturing, the disappearance of well-paid jobs for the unskilled, racial discrimination, in both hiring and housing, the decreasing value of income supports, inferior and overwhelmed schools and services, the flight of the middle class to the suburbs, crack, the crack trade, and guns all have combined to form the inner-city deserts, inhospitable to healthy human development.”<sup>29</sup> Drawing on poverty-related research, Schorr highlights the linkages between “community conditions and high rates of youth violence, school failure and childbearing by unmarried teenagers. These studies profoundly challenged the conventional wisdom –and the conclusions of earlier research– that life outcomes were determined just by what went on within the confines of the family.”<sup>30</sup>

In 1997, under the auspices of the Federal Department of Health and Human Services, the Committee on Community Engagement (comprising public health experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and members of the Academy for Educational Development, non-profit organization) defined the concept of community:

A community can be viewed as a living organism or well-oiled machine. For the community to be successful, each sector has its role and failure to perform that role in relationship to the whole organism or machine will diminish success. In a systems view, healthy communities are those that have well-integrated, interdependent sectors that share responsibility to resolve problems and enhance the well-being of the community. It is increasingly recognized that to successfully address a community’s complex problems and quality of life issues, it is necessary to promote better integration, collaboration, and

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<sup>28</sup> Schorr, Lisbeth, op.cit. p. 305.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.306. Schorr is referring to poverty related research undertaken by the Social Science Research Council and by William Julius Wilson’s book *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, The Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987, p. 7.



coordination of resources from these multiple community sectors.<sup>31</sup>

The Committee suggested that community could be defined either from a systems or a sociological perspective. To understand a community from a systems perspective, the following factors could be explored:

- People (socioeconomics and demographics, health status and risk profiles, cultural and ethnic characteristics).
- Location (geographic boundaries).
- Connectors (shared values, interests, motivating forces).
- Power relationships (communication patterns, formal and informal lines of authority and influence, stake holder relationships, resource flows).<sup>32</sup>

Sociological factors would include social and political networks that link individuals, community organizations and leaders.

For the purposes of this paper, I have adopted a broad, systems-based definition of community. This definition can be summarized as an interdependent group of people, living in the same neighborhood, sharing responsibility for at-risk groups within the neighborhood, developing facilities and resources to overcome problems and working towards the well-being of all. Community building can be defined as seeing the community as an interconnected system and finding ways to ensure that groups of at-risk people are integrated into the fabric of the neighborhood, to give them a sense of shared belonging and purpose and ultimately improve their well-being.

## **Collaboration**

For the last 10 years public organizations around the world have been seeking ways of serving citizens and families better through coordination, cooperation, collaboration and integration. To some extent these terms are used interchangeably but many people interpret collaboration to have a broader meaning than coordination, cooperation and integration because it signals a systems approach to change. Madeleine Kimmich, a US human services consultant working in the field for many years, asserts: “Indeed, the interest in collaboration as a vehicle for systems change is exploding, as evidenced by the range of national organizations with a major interest in this area and the number of state and local entities that are tackling reforms through collaborative decision-making.”<sup>33</sup> She goes on to give a helpful definition as follows: “A collaborative strategy is used when the “need and intent is to change fundamentally the way services are designed and

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<sup>31</sup> *Principles of Community Engagement*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Public Health Program Office, Atlanta, Georgia, 1997.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Kimmich, Madeleine, *Collaboration in Action* in Bradley, Valene J., et al, *Creating Individual Supports for People With Developmental Disabilities*, Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing, 1994, p 403.

delivered throughout the system” (Melaville and Blank, 1991, p. 14), that is, “when the goal is systems change.”<sup>34</sup>

According to Kimmich, the “guiding principles and functions” for this movement, are a broad population focus, top down and bottom up efforts, the use of information technology to enhance technical aspects of integration, fiscal constraints and “a clear focus on the importance of the family as both targets and partners in the intervention.”<sup>35</sup> Collaboration for achieving better social outcomes can be summarized as the practice of combining and leveraging public and community-based organizational resources and power to address difficult social problems in the community.

### ***Innovation***

There is a large body of literature on innovation in public management that discusses what it is, why it is important and why it so difficult to achieve (John Bryson and Barbara Crosby, 1992, Paul Light, 1998, Mark Moore, 1995). The broader literature is also interesting, where it goes beyond the profit motive, to link vision, knowledge sharing and creativity to innovation (Rosabeth Moss Kanter, 1983, Ikujiro Nonaka, 1991, and Peter Senge et al, 1994).

Paul Light defines innovation in the public sector as “about doing something worthwhile. If it does not challenge the prevailing wisdom, if it does not advance the public good, why bother?” he asks. He quotes Lawrence Lynn who defined public innovation as “an original disruptive act.” “The ultimate purpose of innovation,” Light writes, “is...to create public value.”<sup>36</sup> Writing about creating public value, Mark Moore argues that innovation is often inimical to public sector managers because they have an administrative or bureaucratic mindset which leads them to perfect traditional, operational rules rather than change or innovate in response to external challenges.<sup>37</sup> Moore maintains that the main purpose of managers in the public sector is to be innovative and experimental in order to create public value.<sup>38</sup>

Paul Light also suggests on the basis of researching 26 non-profit and government organizations over a period of seven years, that values play an important part in innovation. The four values that he identified as being consistently present in innovating organizations are trust, honesty, rigor and faith, regardless of whether they belong to the non-profit sector or government.<sup>39</sup> There is general agreement that the following

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p 406.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 404-405.

<sup>36</sup> Light, Paul, *Sustaining Innovation: Creating Nonprofit and Government Organizations that Innovate Naturally*, Jossey-Bass, 1998, Preface, pp. xv-xvi.

<sup>37</sup> Moore, Mark H, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*, Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 17.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 55.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, pp. 249-257.

principles guide innovation in the public sector: understanding the challenges in the external environment; openness to new ideas and experimentation; recognizing and giving credit for what actually works; and tolerance of and the ability to learn from failure.

Nonaka depicts knowledge creating and sharing as an entrepreneurial or innovative activity. Knowledge creating, he says, “is as much about ideals as it is about ideas. And that fact fuels innovation. The essence of innovation is to re-create the world according to a particular vision or ideal.”<sup>40</sup> Senge et al link collective dialogue with innovative thought,<sup>41</sup> and Kanter associates receptivity of innovation with successful organizational change.<sup>42</sup>

### ***Two frameworks to improve social outcomes***

A good starting point for constructing a framework to improve social outcomes from a public management systems perspective is David Osborne and Ted Gaebler’s landmark book, *Reinventing Government*, and Osborne’s subsequent work in conjunction with Peter Plastrik, *Banishing Bureaucracy*. Osborne and Plastrik define reinvention as follows:

*By “reinvention”, we mean the fundamental transformation of public systems and organizations to create dramatic increases in their effectiveness, efficiency, adaptability, and capacity to innovate. This transformation is accomplished by changing their purpose, incentives, accountability, power structure and culture.*

Reinvention is about replacing bureaucratic systems with entrepreneurial systems. It is about creating public organizations and systems that habitually innovate, that continually improve their quality, without having to be pushed from outside. It is about creating a public sector that has a built-in drive to improve – what some call a “self-renewing system.”<sup>43</sup>

In the case of social services, what may be more important than internal self-renewal is the ability to learn and adapt within the community setting. The “habitual innovation” Osborne and Plastrik refer to, could equally be inspired by community groups and organizations. Writing on learning organizations, Fred Kofman and Peter Senge shed a different light on self-renewal: “We have grown accustomed to changing only in reaction to outside forces, yet the wellspring of real learning is aspiration, imagination, and

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<sup>40</sup> Nonaka, Ikujiro, *The Knowledge-Creating Company*, Harvard Business Review, November-December, 1991, p. 97.

<sup>41</sup> Senge, Peter M, Kleiner, Art, Roberts, Charlotte, Ross, Richard B. and Smith, Bryan J, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization*, Doubleday, 1994, p. 357-359.

<sup>42</sup> Kanter, Rosabeth Moss, *The Change Masters*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1983.

<sup>43</sup> Osborne, D and Plastrik, P, *Banishing Bureaucracy: The Five Strategies for Reinventing Government*, Addison-Wesley, 1997, pp 13-14.

experimentation.”<sup>44</sup> I believe that the wellspring for improving social outcomes is largely, but not only, based in the community.

### ***The Five C’s for Reinventing Government***

In *Banishing Bureaucracy*,<sup>45</sup> Osborne and Plastrik offer a useful and comprehensive framework for understanding the important features of reinvention or systemic change. It consists of five strategies, which they call the Five C’s. These are: the core strategy which clarifies purpose; the consequences strategy which creates consequences for performance; the customer strategy which puts the customer in the driver’s seat; the control strategy which shifts control away from the top and the center; and the culture strategy which creates an entrepreneurial culture. In their subsequent *Reinventor’s Fieldbook* they offer many useful tools to transform government.<sup>46</sup> I have replicated the Five C’s and the associated approaches, tools and competencies in Table 1 to give a brief overview of the framework.

**Table 1: Osborne and Plastrik’s Five Strategies**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Approaches, tools and competencies</b>
<b><i>1 Core strategy: creating clarity of purpose</i></b>	<b><i>Using strategic management (outcome planning) to improve your aim</i></b> Eliminating functions that are no longer useful Creating clarity of role
<b>2 Consequences strategy: introducing consequences for performance</b>	Using markets to create competition Using competitive contracts and benchmarks to create consequences Performance Management – using rewards to create consequences Performance Measurement
<b>3 Customer strategy: putting the customer in the driver’s seat</b>	Competitive Customer Choice Customer Quality Assurance

<sup>44</sup> Kofman, F, and Senge, Peter M, *Communities of Commitment: The Heart of Learning Organizations*, American Management Association, 1993, p. 9.

<sup>45</sup> Osborne and Plastrik, op. cit pp 36-48 for overview.

<sup>46</sup> Osborne and Plastrik have refined their recommendations on approaches, tools, and competencies in a comprehensive and practical guide to transformation of public organizations in their most recent publication *The Reinventor’s Fieldbook: Tools for Transforming Your Government*, Jossey-Bass, 2000.

4 Control strategy: shifting control away from the top and center	Organizational Empowerment Employee Empowerment Community Empowerment
5 Culture strategy: developing an entrepreneurial culture	Changing Habits Touching Hearts Winning Minds

### ***A conceptual framework for social systems change***

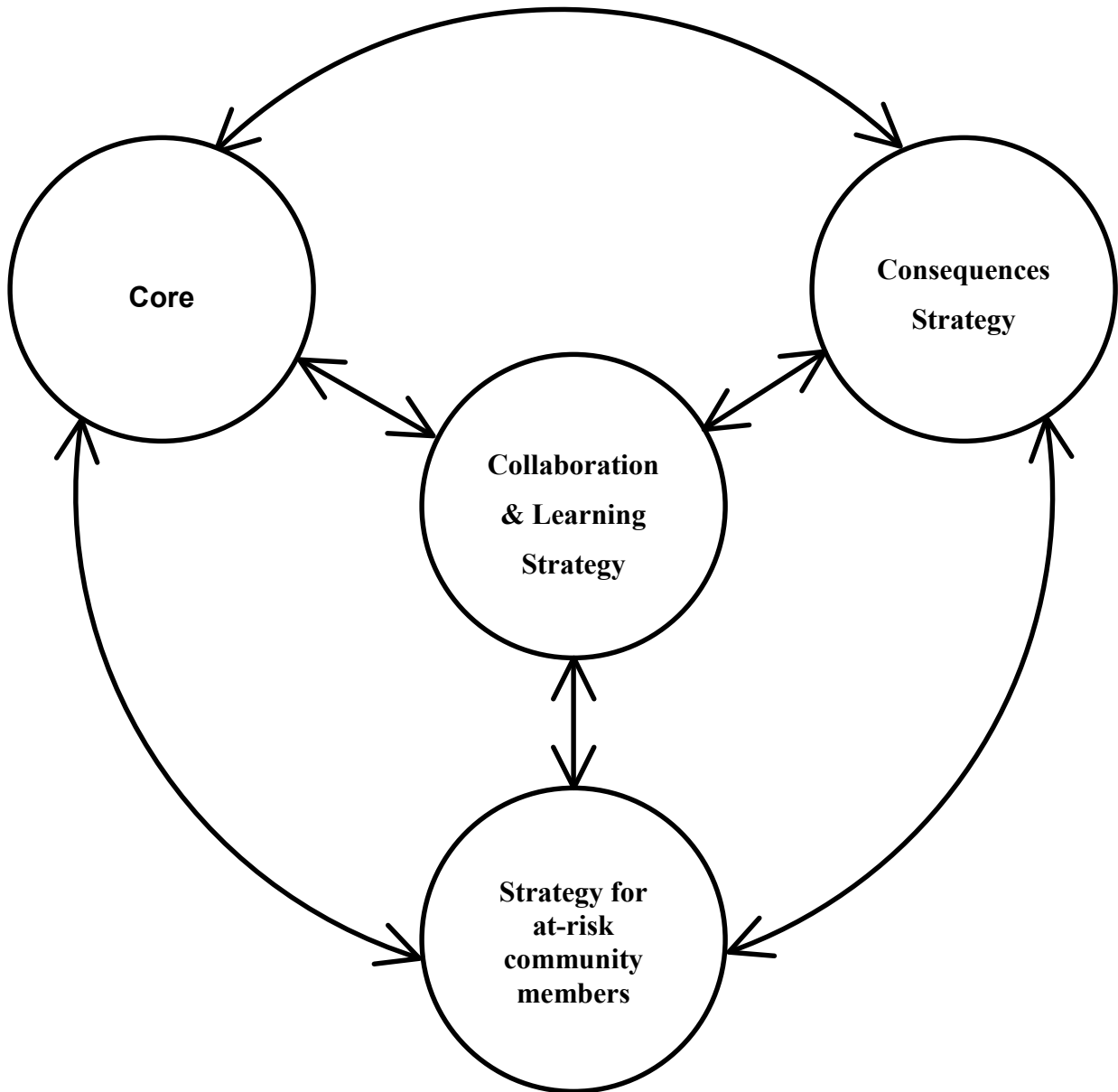
I have adapted these five strategies to provide a new framework or model for my focus on improving social outcomes through collaboration. I have used the same or similar strategies where they fitted my framework and invented new ones where the Osborne and Plastrik model is not specific enough for my purpose. In the new framework I reshape control strategy and culture strategy into collaboration and learning strategy to form the heart or epicenter of attention. The emphasis is on shifting control away from the top and the center of government towards the community, supported by learning techniques to help achieve this. I placed collaboration and learning strategy at heart of the system because I believe that in addressing social outcomes it is important to start with a focus on the community – what Osborne and Plastrik come closest to describing in their idea of community empowerment. Core strategy and consequences strategy remain the same as in Osborne and Plastrik’s Five C’s. Customer strategy becomes a strategy for at-risk community members.

I have constructed the framework as an interconnected, or enacted system, with arrows going in both directions between each strategy to indicate two-way flows of information and knowledge.<sup>47</sup> In this case the enacted system is one that depicts the interrelatedness of public organizations, community and at-risk members of the community in improving social outcomes. The framework is shown in Figure 1 on the next page.

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<sup>47</sup> An Enacted System is a concept that was central to an MIT Sloan School of Management course that Wanda Orlikowski and Peter Senge taught in the Fall of 2001, entitled “Organizations as Enacted Systems: Learning, Knowing and Change.” The concept describes how we view organizations, “wherein humans are continually shaping the structures which in turn influence their action. In other words we create the systems that then create us.” I have taken the concept and applied it more widely than the organization to social systems in society.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for social systems change



**Collaboration and learning strategy**

In the area of social outcomes, how to preserve and build community are two important questions for public servants to think about if they want improve social outcomes. The challenge is to identify which groups and organizations in the community are best placed to help identify problems and issues and work out what needs to be done to help build community. I suggest that building relationships of mutual trust, handing over sufficient power to those groups and organizations to enable them to achieve results, and working alongside them are the most important actions that public servants can take. This is what

I mean by collaboration. Osborne and Plastrik had a similar view, which they referred to as community empowerment.

Osborne and Gaebler wrote in 1992 the importance of community empowerment was clear and urgent if government was to be transformed.<sup>48</sup> In chapter two, entitled “Community-owned Government: Empowering Rather Than Serving,” they quoted a former mayor of St Paul, George Latimer who said: “The older I get, the more convinced I am that to really work programs have to be owned by the people they’re servicing. That isn’t just rhetoric, it’s real. There’s got to be ownership.”<sup>49</sup> Osborne and Gaebler expanded on this notion:

We let bureaucrats control our public services, not those they intend to help. We rely on professionals to solve problems, not families and communities. We let the police, the doctors, the teachers, and the social workers have all the control, while the people they are serving have none. “Too often” says George Latimer, “we create programs designed to collect clients rather than to empower communities of citizens”. When we do this, we undermine the confidence and competence of our citizens and communities. We create dependency.<sup>50</sup>

In the Osborne and Plastrik Five C’s framework (see Table 1), the three important elements of control strategy are empowerment of the organization, employees and the community. To empower organizations they advocate de-centralizing control functions. This requires giving the center a steering role where it sets outcome goals and guidelines, holds line organizations accountable for their performance, provides them with support and stimulates innovation in the system. To empower employees they argue it is necessary to give employees a stake in management and achieving results, break up functional silos, build teams and establish labor-management partnerships.<sup>51</sup>

Empowering the community is not such a radical notion as we might think. Osborne and Plastrik remind us that 19<sup>th</sup> century communities had a much stronger role in their governance. They cite John Clayton Thomas’ history of public administration (Public Participation in Public Decisions) as describing how turn-of-the-century “civic reformers tried to minimize political interference in the management of government. They limited public participation to voting in elections or lobbying elected officials. The people’s elected representatives were to enact laws that assigned tasks to professional administrators, who would report back to them. Reformers thought administration should be insulated from political involvement. They were right about this, but many of them also pushed community members out of government as well – by building public bureaucracies and monopolies that took control of decision making and service delivery.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> David Osborne confirmed this view on community empowerment during a discussion I had with him about this topic in April 2002.

<sup>49</sup> Osborne, David and Gaebler, Ted, *Reinventing Government: How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector*, Addison-Wesley, 1992, p.49.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 51.

<sup>51</sup> Osborne and Plastrik, *Reinventor’s Fieldbook*, The Employee Empowerment Toolkit, pp. 461-488.

<sup>52</sup> Osborne and Plastrik, *Reinventor’s Fieldbook*, p. 498.

Other factors suggested by Osborne and Plastrik that have caused the separation of government and communities are the growth of the urban society, the development of a professional ethos and technological development. The professional ethos holds that professionals like social workers, teachers and police officers have become the technical experts and that the concerns and interests of parents and community groups are subordinate to this expertise. Osborne and Plastrik suggest that the tide started to turn in the 1960s when public administrators realized that they would achieve better results if they handed control for some issues over to the community.

Osborne and Plastrik identify culture strategy as one of their five strategies for transforming government. For them this means changing habits through creating a new culture by introducing new experiences; touching hearts by developing a new covenant within the organization; and winning minds by changing the mental models of employees. While the importance of organizational learning is part of these approaches I believe it needs to be made far more explicit for the purposes of achieving better social outcomes.

Peter Senge wrote in an article on building learning organizations that, “Over the long run, superior performance depends on superior learning.”<sup>53</sup> Like Osborne and Plastrik, Senge maintains that the challenge for contemporary organizations is to move power and control away from the top: “In an increasingly dynamic, interdependent, and unpredictable world, it is simply no longer possible for anyone to “figure it all out at the top.” The old model, “the top thinks and the local acts,” must now give way to integrated thinking and acting at all levels.”<sup>54</sup> But this movement away from the top must go hand in hand with a new kind of learning which he calls generative learning: “The impulse to learn, at its heart, is an impulse to be generative, to expand our capability. This is why leading corporations are focusing on *generative* learning, which is about creating, as well as *adaptive* learning, which is about coping.

Generative learning, unlike adaptive learning, requires new ways of looking at the world, whether in understanding customers or in understanding how to better manage a business.”<sup>55</sup> In Senge’s view generative learning is more responsive to systemic problems than adaptive learning: “Generative learning,” he continues, “requires seeing the systems that control events. When we fail to grasp the systemic source of problems, we are left to “push on” symptoms rather than eliminate underlying causes. The best we can ever do is adaptive learning.”<sup>56</sup> It is this concept of generative learning, not only within the organization and within the community, but also between the two that is integral to good collaboration.

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<sup>53</sup> Senge, Peter M, *The Leader’s New Work: Building Learning Organizations*, Sloan Management Review, Fall 1990, p. 7.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.



## **Core strategy**

Of the three approaches listed in Osborne and Plastrik's Core Strategy – strategic management, eliminating functions that are no longer useful, and creating clarity of role – I believe strategic management is the most important in improving social outcomes (see Table 1). Osborne and Plastrik suggest that strategic management means: undertaking long term visioning; setting outcome goals to achieve the vision; writing a mission statement; developing strategies to achieve outcome goals; aligning performance budgets to outcomes and outputs; and strategic evaluation (examining the policy outcome desired). Because of the complexity inherent in improving social outcomes, as discussed in chapter one, it makes sense to ensure that a well-honed strategic management system which delivers high quality direction setting is in place. In New Zealand's case it particularly means moving from an output focus to an outcome focus.

To help create clarity of role, Osborne and Plastrik recommend distinguishing between steering and rowing roles and argue for uncoupling them.<sup>57</sup> Steering organizations are those that set directions (policy advice) and rowing organizations are those that carry out actual services or interventions (service delivery). In New Zealand this is known as the “purchaser and provider split” or separating policy advice from service delivery. As the State Services Commissioner pointed out in his Annual Report last year, the rationale for this separation was “to enhance the focus of State sector organisations, and to eliminate the risk of the policy advice function being captured by those with an interest in particular sorts of delivery.”<sup>58</sup> He went on to say that separation can only be successful, however, “...if the operational information needed for effective policy formation and evaluation is available to, and readily interpretable by, policy advisors. If this is not the case, any separation will over time seriously weaken the policy advice function.”<sup>59</sup> The Commissioner noted several flaws in the purchaser and provider split that have resulted in poor flows of information and knowledge between the policy and service delivery arms of government in New Zealand, including where they are in the cycle of separation: “Even if the policy advisors initially know enough about operational matters for the separation to improve the quality of advice (less risk of capture with no offset from lack of understanding of operations), over time their knowledge and understanding will decay, as will the quality of their advice.”<sup>60</sup>

As discussed in chapter one, knowledge and information about, and indeed information direct from, the community are essential to achieving effective outcomes for at-risk individuals and groups. The major reason for placing collaboration and learning strategy at the heart of the conceptual framework is to ensure that there is effective connection for public organizations with communities. I suggest, therefore, that the most important principle in determining structural and functional arrangements in government is to maximize flows of knowledge and information. A number of ways to achieve this will be shown in the two case studies.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 105.

<sup>58</sup> Annual Report of the State Services Commission, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 15.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

In the Oregon case study there are two important steering organizations. Both organizations have direction setting functions in the Oregon state government system and both work in a “cross-cutting” way, that is, they work across the traditional silos of health, education, justice and human or social services (and in one case, more widely). Both are effective. There may be situations where separation works well, therefore, and other situations where it does not. Variables include: overall structural arrangements of any given government system; leadership and location of organizations; use of relationship management and technology to enhance knowledge and information flows. Osborne and Plastrik’s blanket prescription, always to separate steering and rowing, is a useful place to start but not the final word on this matter.

Osborne and Plastrik’s third point under core strategy, that is eliminating functions that are no longer useful is a useful reminder that demands on government change but we are not always good at letting go of doing things that are no longer useful or relevant. Focusing on outcomes for the community and clear purpose of the organization in relation to these outcomes should aid decisions about what functions need to be dropped. The combination of these three factors can enhance high quality direction setting, but are not sufficient on their own to improve social outcomes, hence the “enacted system.”

### ***Consequences strategy***

Hand in hand with direction setting is measuring performance which is central to Osborne and Plastrik’s consequences strategy: “If you do not measure performance, you cannot manage it, reward it, contract for it, or even identify the bottom lines for which public organizations will be held accountable. To do that you need information.”<sup>61</sup> Starting from first principles in *Reinventing Government*, Osborne and Gaebler devote a whole chapter to results-oriented government: funding outcomes, not inputs. They argue that not everything government does generates results that can be easily measured but the reasons to measure results are compelling: “If you don’t measure results, you can’t tell success from failure. The majority of legislators and public executives have no idea which programs they fund are successful and which are failing. When they cut budgets they have no idea whether they are cutting muscle or fat. Lacking objective information on outcomes, they make their decisions largely on political considerations. Large, powerful organizations – whether public agencies or private contractors – make the most noise and have the best connections, so they escape relatively unscathed. Smaller, more entrepreneurial organizations take the hits.”<sup>62</sup>

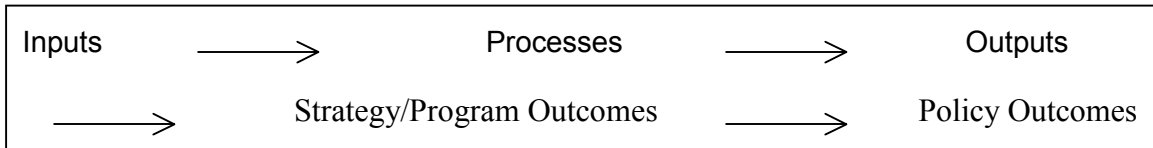
To help organize what it is that needs measuring and how to measure it, Osborne and Plastrik create “a conceptual architecture.”<sup>63</sup> This is a kind of hierarchy of measurement:

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 247.

<sup>62</sup> Osborne and Gaebler, op cit, p. 147.

<sup>63</sup> Osborne and Plastrik, *Reinventor’s Fieldbook*, op. cit, p. 251.



Beginning with policy outcomes (these are also referred to as high level outcomes or outcome goals), it is possible to link each level of measurement to the next one. An outcome goal might be reducing the number of juvenile arrests; a strategy or program outcome might be a program which successfully engages young people in productive learning activities within the community, whether education, community service or developing life skills; outputs might be numbers of computer classes or classes on how ecosystems work for an environmental project; processes and inputs are the activities and resources required to run the classes or community service programs, including instructors, planning and running the program.

### ***Strategy for at-risk community members***

Osborne and Plastrik's idea of customer strategy, which focuses on competitive public choice systems and quality assurance, is problematic in respect of social outcomes. It is unrealistic to regard at-risk children, young people and families as customers or clients. A customer orientation is a market concept based on varying elements of competition, control and choice. Although this term is appropriate in many cases of public service delivery (especially where citizens pay for services like acquiring a passport), I find it unhelpful in this context because it does not capture the complexity of the relationship between public organizations and the at-risk person. The language of customer service has been part of public management reform in New Zealand and has, in my view, got in the way of achieving better social outcomes, simply because it does not help us understand the reality of working with at-risk members of the community.

The most useful approach I have discovered in thinking about the interrelated and complex public management issues associated with at-risk individuals and groups is systems thinking, one of the five disciplines from Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline*. In *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, Senge defines systems thinking as "a way of thinking about, and a language for describing and understanding, the forces and interrelationships that shape the behavior of systems. This discipline helps us to see how to change systems more effectively, and to act more in tune with the larger processes of the natural and economic world."<sup>64</sup>

The challenge in public management is to understand problems relating to at-risk children, young people and families as part of a larger sociological, economic, and political system and to think beyond the traditional silos and top-down ways of service delivery. Shifting paradigms about the way we treat people in society is part of this

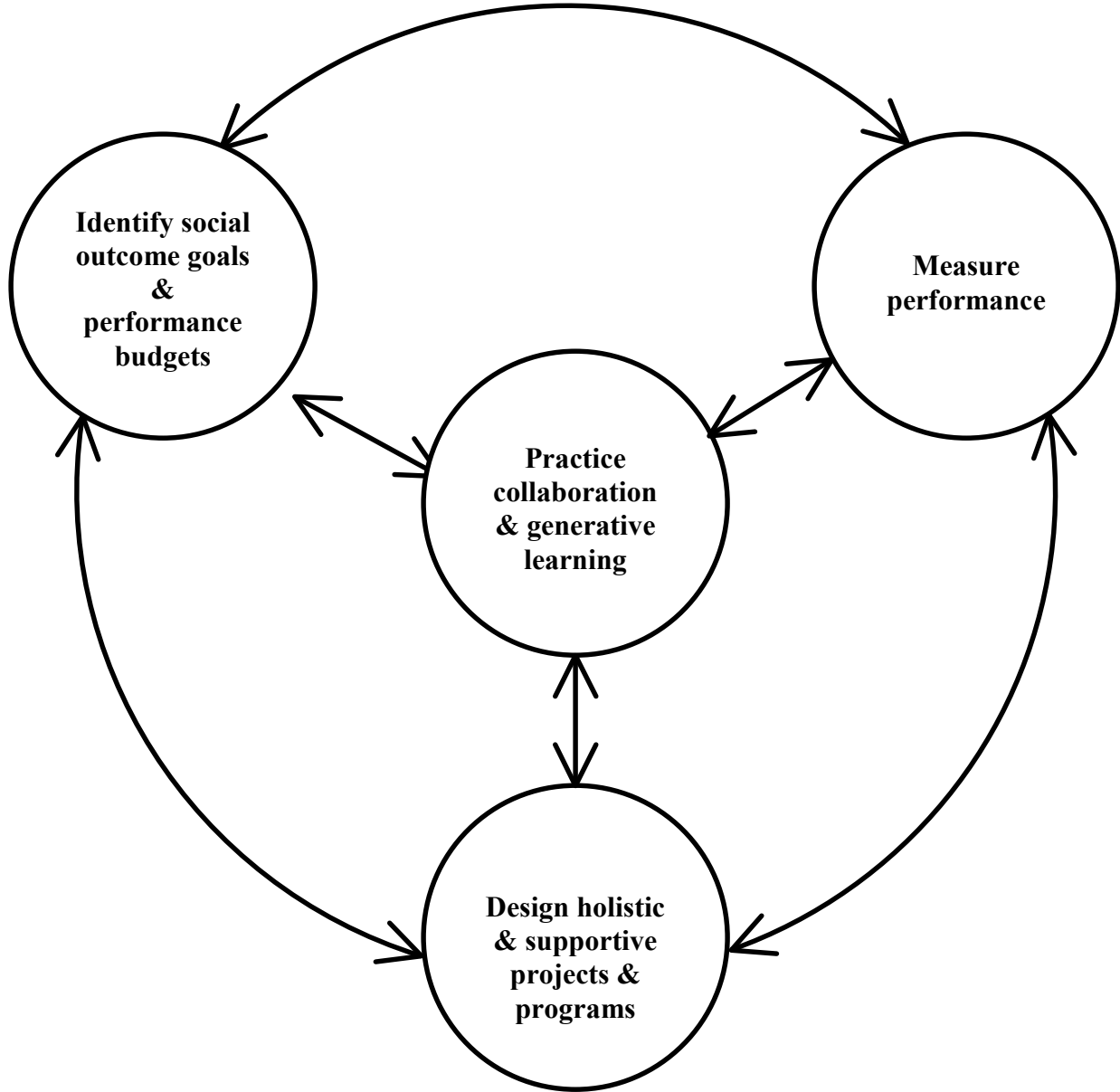
<sup>64</sup> Senge, Peter M., et al., op.cit., pp 6-7.

challenge and involves incrementally shifting societal values, norms and practices. Moving from punitive justice to restorative justice is one example. Creating opportunity and empowering young people to make decisions about their own health, education and employment is another.

### ***An operational framework for social systems change***

Having established a conceptual framework, the next task is to think about how these concepts can be applied in a public management context. Taking the same diagrammatic frame, I have identified several main tasks which are derived from the conceptual base, to develop an operational framework; practicing collaboration and learning; identifying social outcome goals; ensuring budgets are aligned with these goals; designing and implementing holistic and supportive project and programs to achieve the outcome goals, and measuring performance to help gauge whether the outcomes are being achieved. This operational framework is depicted in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Operational framework for social systems change**



***Practicing collaboration and generative learning***

In developing practical tools for collaboration it is important for public organizations to recognize that there are some areas where they have expertise (paying welfare grants and assisting with job placement), some areas where they do not (working with gang members), and those areas where their expertise is no longer working well (assisting young people who have dropped out of high school, have drug and alcohol problems or who are prone to violent and disruptive behavior for a variety of reasons). Osborne and Plastrik give several examples where public organizations recognize that they need to change to be more responsive to needs in the community and where they are influenced

in this change by community organizations and groups. Roca is a non-profit organization that is challenging traditional ways of working and supporting at-risk young people. Public officials in Massachusetts recognize its expertise and success, as I will show in chapter three.

As part of community empowerment, Osborne and Plastrik advocate a variety of practical measures which include: building trust with communities; getting access to good information about what is happening in the community; finding ways to work with community groups; and building accountability into relationships with community organizations. They also issue a warning: “Beware of creating a bureaucratic wolf in community clothing... Public officials must consciously resist the tempting sense of control and order that bureaucracy offers. They must recognize that variation is an advantage of community control, because one size does not fit all. The point of empowerment is to create entrepreneurial, community-based entities that will produce better results than government bureaucracies do.”<sup>65</sup>

In terms of generative learning, understanding and changing people’s mental models is a good tool to use. Senge et al, describe mental models as “the images, assumptions and stories which we carry in our minds of ourselves, other people, institutions, and every aspect of the world.”<sup>66</sup> Practicing “surfacing, testing and improving” our mental models is fundamental to individual learning and to the learning organization. Ways of practicing and changing our mental models include slowing down our thinking and using skills of inquiry and reflection. These ideas are discussed in detail in the Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, a section that Osborne and Plastrik also recommend.<sup>67</sup> In particular tools like Chris Argyris’ ladder of inference – “a common mental pathway of increasing abstraction, often leading to misguided beliefs”<sup>68</sup> and the left-hand column – a method of exploring what we are really thinking and feeling but not saying, especially in a difficult discussion or conversation – are invaluable tools for insight and reflection to help change our mental models.<sup>69</sup>

### ***Identifying social outcome goals and performance budgets***

A number of practitioners agree that being clear about purpose and direction are essential for good public management practice (Osborne and Plastrik, 2000, Schick, 1996, Jonathan Walters, 1995). Osborne and Plastrik cite Oregon Benchmarks as an exemplary public management case of clarity of purpose and innovation.<sup>70</sup> Oregon Benchmarks are high-level outcome goals adopted by the Oregon state legislature in 1989, as part of a citizen-based strategic vision for the state. The goals were articulated in a report,

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 513.

<sup>66</sup> Senge, Peter M, et al, op.cit., p. 235.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp. 237-293. The chapter entitled *Strategies for Working with Mental Models* is worth studying in detail to understand these concepts in more depth.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 243.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p.246-252.

<sup>70</sup> Osborne and Plastrik, *Reinventor’s Fieldbook*, pp. 13-18.

entitled Oregon Shines, which was the result of a working group of business, union, government and education leaders put together by the then Governor, Neil Goldschmidt to develop a vision for Oregon. Their vision was, “to build an advanced economy that provides well paying jobs to the maximum number of our citizens.” The working group proposed three strategies that Oregon needed to embrace: a superior work force; an attractive quality of life; and a global frame of mind.<sup>71</sup>

One outcome of the first Oregon Shines report was the establishment of the Oregon Progress Board (OPB), effectively a “steering organization” to be the caretaker of Benchmarks, to help identify what needs to be done to meet the goals and to measure and monitor progress against the Benchmarks over the long term. The OPB is a small, public agency headed by an executive director, an assistant and one or two policy staff which has made a remarkable contribution to understanding how well Oregon is doing against the Benchmarks through its regular monitoring reporting. Osborne and Plastrik’s assessment is: “By creating a steering organization and setting outcomes goals, Oregon’s leaders have changed the way a good deal of the public’s business is done in their state. Throughout Oregon, the Benchmarks have acted as “magnets for collaboration” to use an oft-repeated phrase.”<sup>72</sup> Senate Bill 555, my focus for chapter four, is a piece of legislation with explicit links to Oregon Benchmarks and the Oregon Progress Board. I will discuss the Oregon experience with outcome planning further in chapter four.

### ***Measuring performance***

There are a number of good texts on how to put in place good performance measurement systems (e.g., Harry P. Hatry, 1992, Osborne and Plastrik, 2000, and Jonathan Walters, 1995). All agree it takes time and it is important to work out ways to measure or assess progress towards outcomes and not just measure activity or outputs. Writing on this difference Walters says, “What government has been really lousy at is measuring what was accomplished through spending and action. For example, social services agencies have long been able to report in great detail what their annual budgets are and for what programs the money was parceled out. Quite a few of them now can also report in decent detail such things as how many hours case managers spent helping move clients from welfare to work (and how many clients were thus served). What they haven’t been able to tell anybody in any meaningful detail is whether those clients were better off as a result of all that spending and serving.”<sup>73</sup>

Osborne and Plastrik distinguish between quantity, efficiency, effectiveness, quality and cost-effectiveness in performance measurement and provide useful working definitions of each of these terms.<sup>74</sup> Their advice is that it takes about three years to develop an adequate set of performance measures and that outputs and outcomes are the most

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<sup>71</sup> *Oregon Shines: How do we get there? A strategy for achieving our vision*, 1989.

<sup>72</sup> Osborne and Plastrik, *Reinventor’s Fieldbook*, p. 17.

<sup>73</sup> Walters, Jonathan, *Measuring Up: Governing’s Guide to Performance Measurement for Geniuses (and Other Public Managers)*, Governing Management Series, Governing Books, Washington DC, 1998, p. 49.

<sup>74</sup> Osborne and Plastrik, *Reinventor’s Fieldbook*, pp. 252-256.

difficult to measure. In summary, they offer 24 comprehensive lessons on performance measurement, which provide a kind of checklist for implementation.<sup>75</sup> Measuring social outcomes can be difficult because of the complexity inherent in them. I have chosen eight lessons from Osborne and Plastrik's list to highlight here, as first order lessons for dealing with this inherent complexity. These lessons are:

- Measure qualitatively, not just quantitatively.
- Watch out for perverse incentives (if you measure the wrong thing you'll end up doing the wrong thing).
- Don't just measure efficiency.
- Watch out for overkill: don't try and measure everything.
- Continuously improve your system.
- Standardize but don't centralize.
- Use experts in the design stage and train employees.
- Make sure you know what you are going to use performance data for, otherwise don't bother collecting it.

### ***Designing holistic and supportive projects and programs***

This involves a way of thinking about social issues and problems that differs fundamentally from the service and treatment approaches that have been traditionally used in social services. Traditional approaches, divided into manageable public management portfolios like education, health and social services, have led to fragmentation. Many OECD governments are grappling with how to deliver more seamless, less broken up services. In Britain the term "joined-up government" describes this development. In the US "reinventing government," although a much broader term, has come to symbolize the same phenomenon. In Canada, collaborative or cross-cutting government means the same thing. Kofman and Senge describe this change in systems thinking terms: "In the new systems worldview, we move from the primacy of the pieces to the primacy of the whole, from absolute truths to coherent interpretations, from self to community, from problem solving to creating."<sup>76</sup>

It is possible to approach this systemic change from a values and human rights perspective or from an economic perspective but in practical terms they are closely related. From a human rights perspective it requires valuing human life, dignity and potential. It requires thinking about a person as part of their family and community and to believe that they have the right to healthy, safe lives with good education and employment opportunities. From an economic perspective, productivity, capital supply and the changing conditions in the international marketplace are important. The numbers of people available to work (workforce) and their levels of education and their flexibility and adaptability determine productivity. Capital flows are also determined by the endeavors of the workforce.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp 256-271.

<sup>76</sup> Kofman and Senge, op.cit. p. 6.



David Osborne, in an article that predated *Reinventing Government*, drew a linkage between poverty and the changing economy environment. He argues that the impact of global changes in business and the advent of the knowledge-based economy mean that, “the poor need increasing skill and literacy levels.”<sup>77</sup> Whereas poverty, which he defines as “surplus workers without jobs, or unstable, low-wage jobs,” used to be an economic asset it no longer is. “In an industrial economy in which most labor was manual and required fairly simple skills, immigrants and poor workers from rural and inner city areas...maintained downward pressure on wages and keeping costs for US producers low.”<sup>78</sup>

This development requires a very different approach from government in dealing with poverty, Osborne argues. In the industrial era, “The primary mechanism used was social service delivery, in which individuals were treated as dependent clients, rather than development, in which individuals are empowered to seize control of their own lives.” This argument leads him to the conclusion that, “in short we must replace our social welfare strategy with an economic opportunity strategy...(where) individuals are the primary target.”<sup>79</sup> He goes on to say that strengthening individuals means strengthening their families, their neighborhoods and their communities, for which a fundamentally different approach is required. He proposes ten underlying principles to an economic opportunity strategy, which were the forerunners of the principles introduced in *Reinventing Government* and *Banish Bureaucracy*. He concludes that, “Studies demonstrate that successful revitalization strategies in poor communities are usually those with a broad focus. They attack social problems such as crime and illiteracy at the same time that they provide economic opportunity through training and business development...they use a mix of strategies: employment, education, remediation, investment, support and prevention.”<sup>80</sup>

Using a mix of strategies is a good way to think about designing holistic and supportive project and programs. In the next chapter on Roca, Inc. we shall see how they have taken exactly this approach. Roca, however, treats its projects and programs as more than an economic opportunity strategy. For Roca it is about creating an opportunity for everyone to belong to a community.

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<sup>77</sup> Osborne, David, *From the Safety Net to the Ladder of Opportunity*, published in *Why. Challenging hunger and poverty*, Fall 1990/Winter 1991, pp. 16 & 17. This article is excerpted from a longer unpublished article entitled *Strategies and Tools To Expand Opportunities for Employment and Self-Sufficiency*, for the Council of State Community Affairs Agencies project on States and Economic Development: Expanding Opportunities for Employment and Self-Sufficiency, March 1990.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Case Study: Roca, Inc.

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#### **Introduction**

*The people who are the most violent come from the most broken place.*<sup>81</sup>

Understanding the systemic causes of street violence and healing the “brokenness” of young people is what Roca, Inc. has become very good at and is recognized for in the community. Roca is a non-profit organization that helps at-risk young people and families find ways to live safe, healthy and fulfilled lives in their community. Roca describes itself as “a grassroots human development and community building organization.” It takes its name from the Spanish word for rock, reflecting the fact that Spanish is the first language of many people in the community: “Roca creates a place that is like a rock, a solid foundation. It is a place of power and it is about the strength of youth, families, and our communities.”<sup>82</sup> It has a philosophy that balances a strong practical, activity-based approach with a spiritual dimension symbolized by Peacemaking Circles, and that is deeply rooted in the idea of community (as defined in chapter two).

In the course of its 14 years, Roca has come to understand that its vision and dreams cannot be realized without strong, collaborative partnerships with key players in the community, regardless of whether their beliefs and practices about dealing with young people are closely aligned with those of Roca. By and large they are not. From this embracing of community comes true collaborative effort to improve outcomes for at-risk young people and families. In recognition of its unique approach, Roca has achieved a considerable amount of support from national foundations in recent years, including the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

This case study provides a snapshot in time, reflecting the interviews I conducted with a range of people including Roca staff, community leaders and partners from state agencies, as well as interactions with a number of young people between January and April 2002. I want to highlight the power of this grassroots organization and the systemic way in which it works to achieve change, including through relationships with a wide

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<sup>81</sup> Quote from Saroem Phoung, leader of the Street Team and Peacemaking Circles, and former gang member who arrived in Revere, as a war refugee, aged six, with his family from Cambodia.

<sup>82</sup> Roca, Inc., Five-year Strategic Business Plan, March 2001, p. 3.

variety of state agencies. To do this, it is necessary to understand in some depth the nature of Roca the organization and the people who make up that organization.

### ***Roca: the organization, its people and its communities***

Now a \$3.6 million enterprise, Roca works intensively with 1,300 people and another 15,000 each year through outreach activities. Roca is growing rapidly and has nearly doubled in size over the last two years, with further plans to increase its range and scope of activities. Currently it has 42 fulltime adult and 65 part-time youth staff members. A special characteristic of Roca is to encourage and support its young people to “give back” to the community. Adult staff therefore put a great deal of effort into young staff members, mentoring and supporting them into leadership roles. Its overall quality of staffing was helped by a development grant in 2000, through which it was able to raise low salaries to more comparable market rates, invest in technology and undertake better staff training. In 2001 funding was split 57% public, 39% private, and 4% other. Decreasing dependence on government funding (which is under severe budgetary pressure in the state of Massachusetts, forcing Roca to take budget cuts, for example, in its 2002 teen pregnancy prevention activities of about 40% or between \$200,000 and \$250,000) and increasing support from private foundations and corporations from 25% to 46%, is an important part of its growth strategy.

Roca has its heart in the city of Chelsea (population approximately 40,000), which is situated across the river from Boston, Massachusetts and is amongst the poorest communities in the state. A profile of Chelsea is shown in Table 2. Until recently Roca has had a “shop front operation” in Revere, a neighboring city. According to Roca’s Five Year Strategic Business Plan, the profile of both communities is similar: per capita income is low, poverty rates are higher than state and national averages, teen birth and HIV/AIDS infection rates are high, as are rates of violent crime. Chelsea in particular is highly ethnically diverse - about 48% of its population comes from all over Latin American.

Roca also does outreach in the neighboring communities of Revere, East Boston, Lynn, Charlestown, Winthrop, Lowell where it is currently developing a stronger role to assist newcomer families and young people. Multi-ethnic, immigrant populations, some of them refugees from war-torn countries like Cambodia and now Afghanistan, live in these neighborhoods, often struggling to make a new life in an environment where understanding language, cultural and work norms and accessing education and healthcare are all major challenges. In fact the migrant families that Roca supports come from nearly every corner of the world: South East Asia (Cambodia, Vietnam) Central Asia (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan), Eastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia), Africa (Morocco, Somalia, Sudan), as well as many parts of Latin America. Roca sees a strong need for community institutions and values communities to change in order to be responsive to these migrant peoples to help them make new lives for themselves.

**Table 2: Profile of the city of Chelsea, Massachusetts**

Education

- 37% of Chelsea High School students are in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and only 18% are in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, showing high numbers of students repeating grades and/or dropping out before graduating.
- 83% of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch (24% statewide).
- 19.5% have limited English proficiency (4.6% statewide).
- 12.2% dropout rate in school district (3.6% statewide).
- MCAS Scores in 2001:
  - 42% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders received a “warning/failing” grade in mathematics and 38% received “warning/failing” in English Language Arts.
  - 81% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders received a “needs improvement” or “warning/failing” grade in English Language Arts.
  - 78% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders received a “needs improvement” or “warning/failing” grade in mathematics.

*Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, 2000.*

Teen births

- Teen birth rate is 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in Massachusetts.
- Birth rate of 80.8 per females aged 15-19 (state average is 25.8 per 1,000 females aged 15-19).
- Chelsea’s teen birth rate has decreased 30% between 1990-2000.

*Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Health Statistics, Research and Evaluation, 2000.*

High risk behaviors

- 11% of Chelsea High School students reported being involved in a gang.
- Chelsea students are less likely to have received AIDS/HIV prevention education at home or at school than students statewide.

*Source: 2000 Chelsea Public Health Profile, a report from the Institute for Health Policy, Massachusetts General Hospital/Partners HealthCare System and MGH Community Benefit Programs.*

- 19.7% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders self reported they have attempted suicide in the past 12 months.
- 16% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders reported they didn't go to school at least one day in the past 30 days because they felt unsafe.
- 62.5% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders reported they have used alcohol at least once.

*Source: Chelsea Public Schools Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2000*

### **Unemployment**

- 3.9% unemployment in 2000 (2.6% is state average).

*Source: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Division of Employment and Training, 2000.*

A major, new initiative supported by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation will underpin this strategy: the Kellogg Foundation approved a grant of nearly \$2 million in late March 2002 to fund an exciting project, known as the VIA (Vision, Intent, Action) project, to establish a new kind of learning environment, especially for those young people who have dropped out of the public school system but also for others who need it. The purpose will be to give people life, education and employment skills and opportunities. This heralds a major growth and development initiative for the organization, which will bring a good deal of internal change to Roca and help it to achieve its vision.

Roca has had a presence in Revere with a “shop front” in Shirley Street, the heart of the Cambodian community of Revere, for the last 10 years. The city leaders who were shocked and stymied by the street and gang related violence, involving drive-by shootings and other criminal behaviors, invited Roca into Revere in the early 1990s. The Chief of Police in Revere, Terry Reardon, reports that the Part 1 crime rate has fallen by 40% since 1996, following Roca's arrival.<sup>83</sup> The two – Roca and the Police - started “working the same problem from different angles.” But as successful as Roca's presence has been in reducing crime, it was clear from one street team leader who operated from Revere, that the operation was becoming increasingly untenable. To continue to operate in the same way, more funding and a bigger space were critical to coping with the demand Roca was facing. In March 2002 Roca decided to close its shop front in Revere and to concentrate its physical presence in Chelsea, building on its current projects and programs. Before discussing these, I want to go to the origins of Roca and describe how they organization has evolved.

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<sup>83</sup> Most serious crime identified by the Federal Department of Justice.

## ***Origins of Roca***

The origins of Roca lie in an initiative by former Governor Dukakis in the mid-1980s to break down the barriers of poverty. The state government led a teen pregnancy prevention plan, known as the Teen Challenge Fund, in four high-incidence communities. Molly Baldwin, Founder and Executive Director of Roca, was employed to run the early Teen Challenge Fund in Chelsea. Baldwin wanted “to look at things from the perspective of teenagers,” reflecting her deep-seated belief that young people need to be involved in their own decisions and health. She describes it as working with young people on belonging to a community. Her work began with a fundamental question: “what is the purpose of life?” Her answer: “generosity and putting back into the community.”

Inspired by these beliefs and the African proverb, “it takes a village to raise a child”, she says “Roca became village builders, but with a difference - we flipped the paradigm so that all the ideas around village building come from the street. That is how Roca was born.” Thus, Roca began in 1988 as a grass roots organization that would give “voice and place” to young people on the streets. Recent statistics show that teen pregnancy rates in Chelsea and Revere remain high although they are improving.<sup>84</sup> Research reveals that teen pregnancy is closely correlated with poor educational achievement, which in turn is associated with ethnicity and poverty.<sup>85</sup> According to the Massachusetts Department of Education report on 10<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS scores (state testing standards in literacy and mathematics), 39% failed the literacy test and 43% failed the mathematics test in 2001.<sup>86</sup>

## ***Vision, mission, values and core concepts***

Roca developed its first five-year strategic business plan in March 2001. The motivation for this was a grant of \$1.75 million over five years for organizational development by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.<sup>87</sup> A 40-page document expressing its core philosophy, as well as program details, growth goals, outcome goals and a financial overview, the plan shows a strongly vision-based and values-led organization. At one level, the process of developing the plan and clearly communicating its purpose represents a coming of age for the organization. Not only does Roca have a clear vision for itself and its broad community, but also it has been able to articulate that vision clearly and with confidence. Roca’s vision is of young people and families thriving and leading change. Its mission is to promote justice by creating opportunities with young

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<sup>84</sup> Chelsea is amongst the cities reporting high teen pregnancy rates in the state of Massachusetts (third highest) although the rate has dropped over the last 10 years from 114.8 to 80.8 per 1000 women aged between 15 and 19. The rate in Revere has also dropped from 42.3 to 28.8 per 1000 women aged between 15 and 19. Source: Massachusetts Department of Health, Adolescent Births: A Statistical Profile, 2000.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System 10<sup>th</sup> grade report for 2000 and 2001, Massachusetts Department of Education, [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)

<sup>87</sup> The Clark Foundation chose Roca as one of five pilot sights in non-profit organizations nation-wide to help them address internal capability.

people and families to lead happy and healthy lives. Its values are belonging, generosity, competence and independence. Roca defines these as follows:

- Through a sense of positive belonging, young people can see the world as a place where they and all others fit, and where they can chart a positive and personally fulfilling course for themselves.
- Young people can find a sense of purpose and an understanding of their own worth by building and acting on a sense of generosity. Darren Way, Churchill Fellow, captured a phrase that is often heard around Roca: “Generosity is about the development of a sense of purpose and value through giving. Doing something for someone else is a way to help you feel better about yourself. Or A helps B and A gets better.”<sup>88</sup>
- By developing skills of the mind and body, young people gain the competence to take on life challenges.
- With a sense of independence, young people create positive visions for themselves, and can identify and take appropriate actions to reach their goals.<sup>89</sup>

The process of developing this plan, as with any strategic planning process, was important. Molly Baldwin explained: “We needed to get lost before we could find our way back to our vision, mission and values.” Part of “getting lost” was examining at a deep level what mattered most within Roca and, instead of reacting to problems they saw in the community, identifying how to work from a vision, mission and values base. Out of that process came several key concepts that lie at the heart of what Roca stands for and does. These concepts, which are closely interrelated, are transformational relationship, peacemaking circles, the medicine wheel, and the echo chart.

### ***Transformational relationship***

Through its work with young people, Roca aims to help them transform their lives. It undertakes to “walk with them on their personal journeys wherever they are in their lives, whatever their personal circumstances.”<sup>90</sup> At its deepest level, this involves a relationship of trust developing between a young person and an adult, and that adult being available at any time of the day or night to offer the young person different ways of being, thinking, and interacting. Learning to trust is especially important for young people on the street and gang members who are exiting gangs. Saroeum Phoung, former gang member and leader of the Street Team and Peacemaking Planning Committee, says: “This relationship thing is very important...we have no money and only limited resources to offer. It’s about trust and believing in themselves.” He explains that if a young person whom he or his team members are working with calls at 2 or 3 am and says “I’m thinking about killing myself,” Saroeum and his team respond to that call for help. Not to do so

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<sup>88</sup> Way, Darren, *Working From An Empty Stomach*, Report to the Sir Winston Churchill Fellowship Fund, 2001, p. 95. This report was made available courtesy of Roca, Inc.

<sup>89</sup> Roca, Inc., Five-year Strategic Business Plan, p. 3

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.



would be to undermine the trust relationship they are intent on building. “They push you to the limits. It is a not a 9-5 relationship – it’s like a marriage.”

His own transition from the street where he was a leader of a Cambodian gang took four and a half years. “It was hell. I was willing to do anything for the gang.” Changing that mind set is about transformational relationship. It is a process where Roca staff ask hard questions and challenge young people to shift and where young people adopt new mental models for themselves. They no longer sit on the edge of society but are gradually drawn in and start to belong.

### ***Peacemaking Circles and the Medicine Wheel***

These two concepts, both deeply spiritual, are closely interrelated and are derived from “aboriginal and native” traditions. Roca first learned about peacemaking circles in November 1999 at a conference organized by Suffolk University’s Center for Restorative Justice. Circles offer an egalitarian way of communication and community building, using ritual and symbols to achieve good listening and purposeful sharing of ideas, thought and feelings. This differs from our traditional western mode of meeting and exchanging views, which is often marked by an authority figure taking the lead such as judge, teacher, manager or chair of a meeting. Instead, facilitated by a “keeper,” everyone has an equal opportunity to speak, making it hard for those who have most authority or are most articulate to dominate.

To begin participants form a circle by joining hands around one or more lit candles symbolizing the gathering around the sacred fire. Often there is an opening prayer or reading and a cleansing ritual using burning sage to purify and signify the “entry into a different kind of space.”<sup>91</sup> One of the most powerful symbols of the circle is the talking piece (this was traditionally an eagle feather), an object chosen by the group that has some significance, which gets passed around the circle clockwise to symbolize the earth moving around the sun. Only the holder of the talking piece may talk; everyone else listens.

Circles are an important way for Roca to do the work of transformational relationships with more than two participants. They use them in many ways: to work with young people on the street for healing and support, or to solve specific problems, to develop new programs and to deepen relationships with community partners. A current initiative, in partnership with the Chelsea District Court, is to establish sentencing circles for the purpose of ensuring restorative justice rather than the traditional approach of retributive justice. The condition is that offenders must admit their guilt. The sentencing circle, intended to begin a healing process for both offender and victim, would include their

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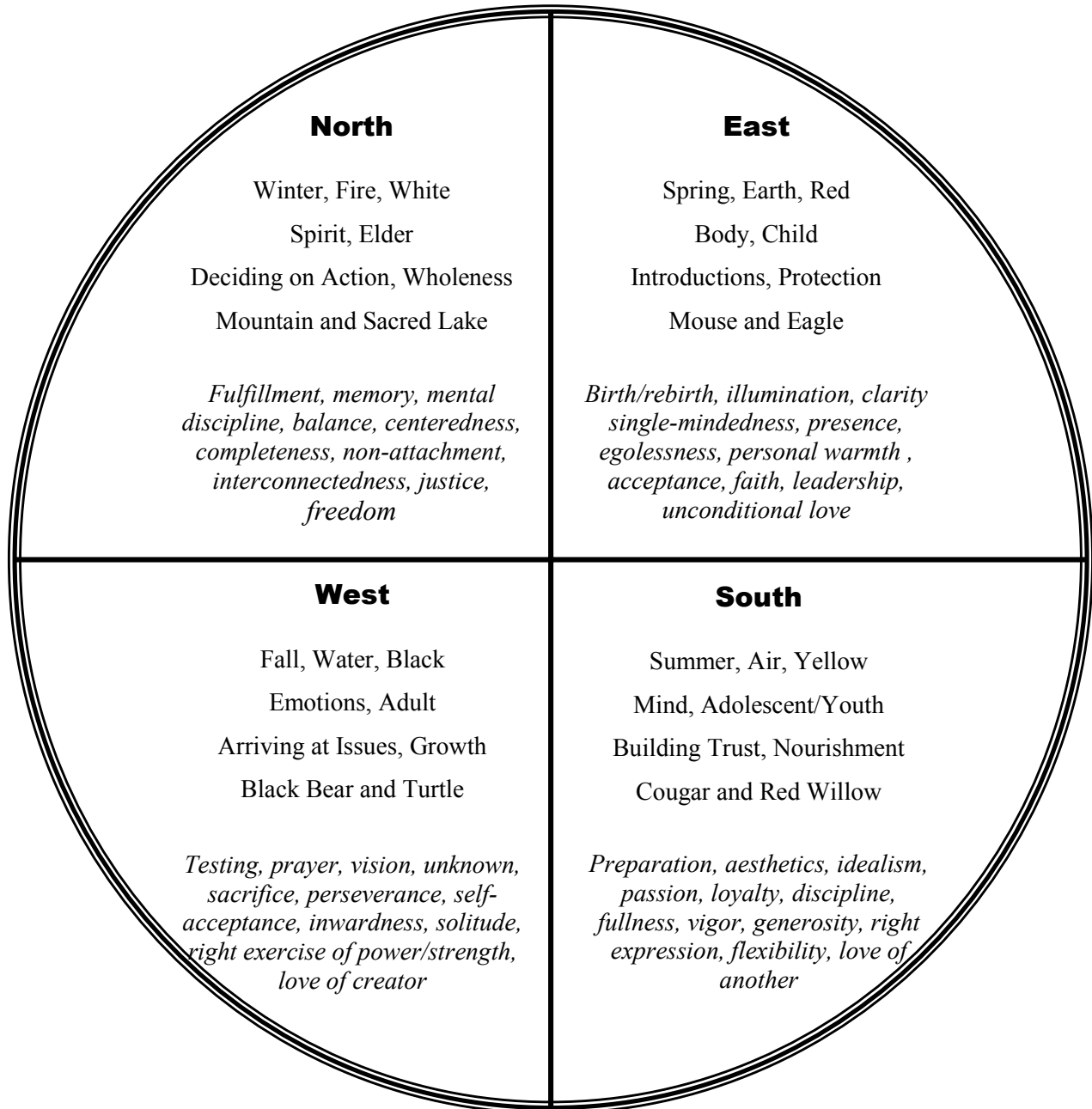
<sup>91</sup> Boyes-Watson, Carolyn, *Healing the Wounds of Street Violence*, CYD Journal, Volume 2, No.4, Fall 2001, pp 16-21. I owe my understanding of circles to this article by Dr Boyes-Watson, participation in one Circle at Roca, and another fuller report on Circles entitled Coming Full-Circle: Peacemaking Circles at Roca, Inc. Report on the period November 1999-June 2001, prepared by the Centre for Restorative Justice, Suffolk University.

supporters, the victim and his/her family and supporters, staff from Roca as well as the court system.

The Medicine Wheel symbolizes a holistic view of human life where body, mind, emotion and spirit are the four quadrants of the wheel or circle. The interconnectedness of these four aspects of life is overlaid on a holistic view of the four seasons, the four cycles of life (infancy, adolescence, adulthood and old age), the four essential elements of the earth (wind, fire, rain and earth), the four directions (north, south, east, west) and the four races of our planet. The Medicine Wheel is reproduced in Figure 3.

### Figure 3: The Teachings of the Medicine Wheel

Compiled from *The Sacred Tree*, by the Four Worlds Development Project, with input from Mark Wedge and Molly Baldwin

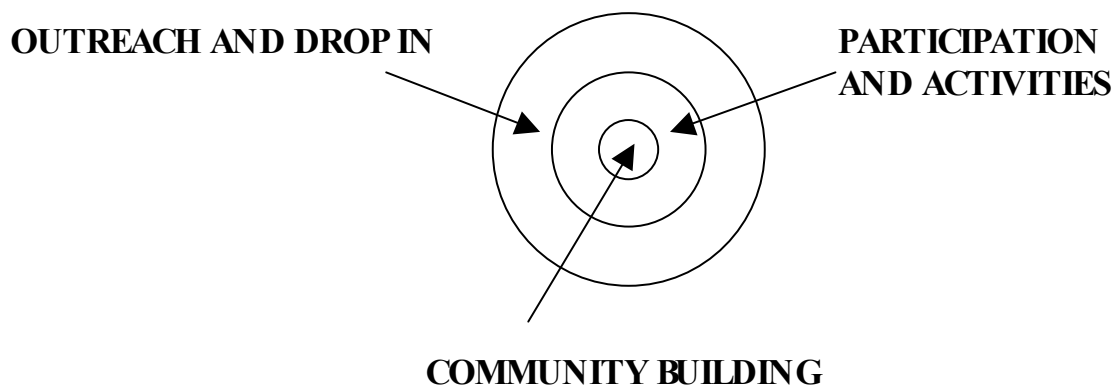


“The teachings hold that each of these elements is a part of a whole, an essential part of our natural existence, and each is held in balance with each other around a sacred fire. In many Native American cultures, a person who is acting out or harming others is “out of balance”; if one person is out of balance, so too is the community. Similarly, the understanding in a circle is that a problem for one is a problem for all. We are all connected and the wisdom of the circle teaches us that we all must move to restore balance. No one person – no problem – is ever put in the middle of the circle for all to blame, judge, to correct, or even to help.”<sup>92</sup>

### ***Echo Chart***

The Echo Chart describes three progressive operational stages, describing the way in which Roca works. Each stage is aligned with one or more of Roca’s values. It is presented graphically in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Roca’s Echo Chart**



- **Outreach and Drop In:** this stage involves reaching into the community, targeting street or gang leaders. Each member of the Roca street teams identifies one or two young people who demonstrate leadership skills on the street and works with them intensively for four to five years with the aim of getting them to finish school, move into a job and keep it. Drop-in includes events like community activities and multicultural celebrations, designed to attract young people and families to Roca, and health clinics. Roca models its values of belonging and generosity through these activities where people in the community, no matter who they are, are welcomed into the Roca family.
- **Participation and activities:** this stage involves after-school activities, workshops, dance, art, music and sports groups, home visits, community service, and the family

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 19

leadership project. It is designed for young people to develop new skills and become aware of the values and principles of the Roca community.

- **Community Building:** this stage encourages young people to devote voluntary time to developing leadership skills by becoming more involved in community organizing, coalition building and partnerships. Activities include peacemaking circles. This stage is absolutely central to Roca's philosophy, targeting young people who are potential leaders and teaching them to be the next generation of youth leaders. It is intended to teach generosity and independence.

### ***Roca Projects and Programs***

With the addition of the VIA project, Roca is planning a total of seven projects for the coming year. The other six comprise existing projects and programs, some of which are expanding. This is part of Roca's evolutionary approach to change: to build on its strengths, scale up and extend its capacities as opportunities arise. The seven projects are Project Victory, the VIA Project, the Street Outreach Project and Peacemaking Planning Committee, Healthy Families Outreach Project, Youth STAR Project, Community Building Team, and the Cambodian Project in Lynn.

### ***Project Victory***

This work focuses on 12 to 15 years old young people in Chelsea who are struggling with school and life. The aim is that it will be expanded to serve 150 young people as an intensive youth development and intervention program in Chelsea. It will include outreach, follow-up, educational enrichment, leadership development and community service.

- **VIA Project (VIA stands for Vision, Intent, Action)**

The underlying concept is to create a "community learning center which is a basic education and employment readiness school for our community's highest risk, most vulnerable youth. Baldwin says the goal is to teach up to 100 "street involved youth and young people from war ages 16-26 with minimal to no/life/education/employment skills" enough basic skills through education and vocational training methods to be able to get jobs. The focus will be on teaching English as a second language and pre-GED skills. At the same time these young people will be learning about keeping themselves healthy and about developing and maintaining constructive personal and community relationships.

- **Street Outreach Project and Peacemaking Planning Committee**

The Street Outreach team, combined with peacemaking work, has become a real strength of Roca in that no one else is prepared to deal with these alienated young

people, who are frequently involved with gangs – “tough kids” as one interviewee described them. The work in street outreach, gang intervention, community organizing, circles with young people and young adults will continue, with intensive work for 150 and outreach to an additional 300 young people. Work with the District Court on sentencing circles and with the criminal justice system and community on re-entry is proceeding. The Peacemaking Planning Committee will continue to work with the community and a range of organizations and institutions on systemic change.

- **Healthy Families Outreach Project**

This is a multi-cultural support program for young at-risk pregnant women and first time mothers under the age of 20, their babies, partners and families. It provides home visits for 170 young parents, training in parenting skills, support groups, access to higher education, and access to training and employment opportunities.

- **Youth STAR**

This is a multicultural community service group of between 24 and 30 young people between the ages of 16 and 24 years, who are divided into three teams: health and education including HIV/AIDS prevention, environmental education, and operation of a food pantry. They each work 40 hours a week, are paid a small wage, and receive a lump sum grant of \$4,700, which they can put towards vocational or college training. The purpose is to prepare these young people for college or vocational education and train them in community organizing and leadership skills.

- **Community Building Team**

This team focuses on the Latin American community and is described as “an overarching coalition that unites organizations, individuals and community leaders to develop strategies to address teen pregnancy, community organizing and service projects in Chelsea and surrounding areas.” It aims to reach 300 people through intensive programs and a minimum of an additional 5,000 people through outreach. The intensive programs include adult education classes in GED preparation in Spanish and English, ESL, computer skills and citizenship.<sup>93</sup> Free childcare is available while parents attend class. This program coordinates and organizes multicultural community events. Outreach activities focus on establishing links and community building in the Latin American communities, focusing on education, criminal justice and democratic participation.

- **Cambodian Project in Lynn**

This work concentrates on the Cambodian community situated in Lynn and involves street outreach, gang intervention with intensive support for 60 youth and outreach to an additional 150 youth. New work will focus on a restorative justice project and outreach and community building with adults and elders in the Cambodia community.

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<sup>93</sup> GED is the General Education Development test, which has high school diploma equivalency.



## ***Learning, growth and evaluation***

Change and growth at Roca have been constant and incremental. A critical motivating question for Molly Baldwin at the beginning was “can you set in motion a (value-led) way to be that can be reproduced and reproduced.” Getting clarity for the vision and then understanding how to share it were important drivers of growth. Early on, Roca grappled with how to grow and share its vision collectively. There were many incremental shifts and changes of habits along the way. Baldwin describes Roca as having learned to be “brilliantly ordinary.” Several partners describe Roca as a good learning organization that is constantly seeking to learn from its mistakes. Carolyn Boyes-Watson, Director of the Center for Restorative Justice at Suffolk University in Boston, describes Roca as always “searching for different and better ways to do things.” Sophie Godley from the Department of Public Health says: “Roca people are very critical and self-examining. That distinguishes them.” “We made all the mistakes in the book,” says Baldwin but it is plain that she and others at Roca have learned from their mistakes.

One really important lesson was the need to assert their role: “We are not a social service delivery agency; we are really about something else which is much more to do with community building.” Baldwin is quick to add that service delivery agencies have their place and Roca is happy to work alongside them. Roca, however, wanted to do things differently for and with young people and to lead systemic change to create “a different way to be in the world.” Baldwin describes Roca’s growing awareness of the need for systemic change: “We realized at a certain point that Roca was always waiting for and expecting others to change the system, so that young people would no longer be at risk.” There came a time when she and her colleagues understood that they were the ones who needed to tackle and advocate for systemic change.

A part of their success as a learning organization is being open to mentors who have always “shown up when we needed them.”<sup>94</sup> Receptivity to new ideas and change within the organization are a way of life at Roca. Two developments in particular signal watershed changes for Roca. One was the acquisition of a dedicated building in Chelsea in 1993, which was donated by Hyman and Mary Pallin, a local businessman and his wife. An old automobile showroom, this building provided a large enough space that could be designed for Roca’s multi-purpose needs of sport and activity spaces, rooms for classes and meetings and administration. The building has a gym, dance studio, art studio, rooms for meeting in circle and computer rooms. The second development was the adoption of peacemaking circles as a way of systemic operating.

Incremental changes have included governance arrangements. There are 14 members of the Board - nine men and five women, including two African-Americans, two Asians,

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<sup>94</sup> Important mentors in recent years have been leaders at El Puente in New York, Bob Harrison, and especially the ‘Circles’ leaders. They include Mark Wedge and Harold Gatensby, First Nations leaders from the Yukon, Barry Stuart, Chief Justice of the Yukon Territorial Court, Don Johnson assistant district attorney from Minnesota, Kay Pranis, restorative justice planner from the Minnesota Department of Correction; and Gwen Chandler-Rhivers, community leader in circles from Minnesota.



five Latin Americans. The President of the Board is Alejandro Urrutia who works with the Red Cross. Responsibilities include: fiduciary, human resource policy setting, hiring and evaluating the executive director and fundraising. The Board and management have worked hard on better accountability arrangements including assigned authority. Baldwin is particularly pleased that there are now three youth members of the Board and two former youth members, but she says “the Board needs to become more active, especially in fundraising.”

A tangible indication of the determination to learn and grow is Roca’s identification of four growth goals in its strategic business plan:

- Deepen the quality of programming to maximize impact.
- Grow through expansion of current programming and new initiatives.
- Restructure and develop the organization to strengthen management, leadership, technology and infrastructure.
- Develop, implement, track and refine process and outcome evaluation and capture knowledge about lessons learned.

Pivotal to these goals are the peacemaking circles. The Peacemaking Planning Committee, made up of young people, parents, criminal justice professional, youth workers, religious leaders, educators, human service professionals and interested community members, comes together to “learn and implement Peacemaking Circles and other restorative justice practices in the cities of Chelsea and Revere...We strongly believe that Roca’s model can contribute to the development of appropriate violence prevention methods in rapidly changing communities that have seen dramatic increases in gang violence, prostitution, drug use, child labor, domestic violence and abuse, rape, the dispersion of traditional and extended family networks, hunger, unemployment and crime.”<sup>95</sup>

Another important development is Roca’s work on outcome evaluation, which has been sponsored by the Surdna Foundation. Roca has partnered with two universities (Brandeis University and Suffolk University) to develop a completely different way of approaching outcome evaluation. Cindy Davenport, who is responsible for implementation, explained, “We want to capture the “stories” of growth from the individuals and communities we are working with.” Baldwin adds, “It is about getting away from all the negative data that is collected and moving to stories of transformation and relationship. We want to be able to show how the lives of young people are improving.”

Two tools have been designed to measure progress towards achieving Roca’s values, specifically belonging and generosity. These are the structured interview, which staff will conduct with young people once every six months and a quarterly questionnaire to be completed by young people, called street logs. From this data Roca expects to be able to extract information on sexual practice, use of alcohol and drugs, engagement with schoolwork and so. Both tools are “highly relational (and intended to) measure positive things...(like) young people experiencing capacity building in their own right to become

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<sup>95</sup> Roca, Inc., Five Year Strategic Business Plan, pp. 18-20.

more self-determining.”<sup>96</sup> Initially these tools will be targeted to specific projects, namely street work and Youth STAR.

### ***Collaboration and partnerships***

Community partners are an integral part of Roca’s work. One of the lessons Roca has learned is that it cannot achieve its vision without the assistance and support of the community, including those organizations with which it has been at odds over the years. Molly Baldwin told me: “We can’t do it, we can’t be street workers by ourselves. We try to stay open and gracious.” Roca has consciously worked to build constructive relationships. Principal relationships are with young people and their parents, state agencies, the police, city officials, public schools and churches, especially two Dominican nuns. The principal drivers in building relationships are collaboration and partnerships. Baldwin describes this as a shift away from competition, networks and referrals. “The purpose is to create something new, something you cannot do individually. But you need to understand what you are giving up. You are giving over a part of yourself to something greater. It is sacrifice as making holy.” Where it used practices of referrals, networks and competition in the past, Roca now sees collaboration and partnership as the way forward. The successful grant application to the Kellogg Foundation is testimony to this approach.

Roca has more than 80 different funding streams, for which it has traditionally made many more grant applications, and manages multiple accounts and reporting requirements. But community partnership is a broad concept and broader than the relationship with funders. This makes for many and complex relationships to manage. Roca goes about this in its own unique way. While there is an efficient system in place to manage the multiple funding streams, there is no formal system in place to manage the multiple relationships. Baldwin says, “It is more related to common sense”. In terms of the most effective way of building relationships with communities, other NGOs and government agencies, Baldwin summarizes the approach: “I like this idea about invitation to do better through relationship. It is about clarity of vision and the daily effort to live the values of Roca. It is a combination of the invitation to relationship and persistence. We are infamously persistent – we never take no for an answer.” Partners agree and talk about the hard road some of them have experienced in building trust with Roca because they are operating from such different mental models. Not all community partners are comfortable with Roca’s operating style. One of the education people I spoke with grumbled about Roca “not turning up” when he needed them, but agreed that they were superb in a crisis.

Community partners were arguably essential to Roca’s success in receiving Kellogg Foundation funding for the VIA project. They are an impressive line-up: Employment Resources Inc., the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, the Metro North Workforce Investment Board Youth Board, the Centre for Restorative Justice of Suffolk

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<sup>96</sup>Quote by Cindy Davenport, Director of Operations at Roca.

University and the Center for Youth and Communities at Brandies University. These and other community partners were present during the recent Kellogg Foundation site visit for the VIA project grant application, to argue in favor of it. They freely admitted to the representatives from the Foundation, “We have failed these young people,” where Roca is succeeding.

Working with government agencies has changed and improved over time. Baldwin admits, “there’s been a lot of name calling in the past but now there is an understanding that “something greater is calling us out.” She adds that relationships with government agencies and “working with government systems does better the more we have invited government people in.” Circles have enabled much more effective dialogue between Roca and its partners than in the past. I will cover this topic in more depth in the next chapter. In summary, collaboration and partnership at Roca has become a central feature of the way this non-profit organization carries out its work.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Case Study: Legislating for collaboration in Oregon

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#### ***Introduction***

Oregon State legislators enacted a bill in June 1999, known as Senate Bill 555, with the purpose of achieving better outcomes for children, young people and families.<sup>97</sup> This case study describes the intent of Senate Bill 555 and provides comment on how it is operating, based on a series of interviews conducted in February and March 2002 at both the state and county levels. Documents researched included the Bill itself, a variety of state government publications and working papers. I also attended two meetings, one in Salem, the seat of State government and one in Albany, Linn County.

While it is too early to tell with any measurable precision whether this legislation is achieving better outcomes for children and families, (there are specific audit requirements in the bill which will help determine this), the Bill has enabled agencies and communities to undertake high quality collaborative planning work and start to put in place a performance measurement system. The case study covers motivation and purpose for the Bill; its relationship to Oregon Benchmarks; funding and resources; the roles and tasks of related agencies; new partnerships; and performance measurement. I conclude with an overview of general strengths and weaknesses.

#### ***Purpose of SB 555***

The Bill is wide-ranging in its scope and, in part, highly prescriptive. It is a mix of vision, policy goals, role assignment and detailed prescription in specific areas, like early childhood intervention and preventive measures for high-risk behaviors in young people. The vision expressed in the second paragraph of the Bill is shown in Table 3.

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<sup>97</sup> SB 555 consists of 26 pages of closely typed sections and subsections, amending 24 existing acts and repealing four acts. It is available at <http://www.leg.state.or.us/99reg/measure>

**Table 3: SB 555: Vision and goals for children, young people and families<sup>98</sup>**

**Section 2 (1): Vision**

The Legislative Assembly finds and declares that:

- (a) Children are our future;
- (b) Healthy children and families are of fundamental importance to the vitality of Oregon;
- (c) Children are entitled to safety and health;
- (d) All children deserve love, respect and guidelines for responsible behavior;
- (e) Families should be supported and strengthened; and
- (f) Communities provide the context for healthy children and families, and strong families and healthy communities are interdependent.

**Section 2 (2): Goals**

The Legislative Assembly recognizes that demands on families, created in part by changes in family structures and relationships, intensify the need for Oregon to support children and families toward the goals of family stability and broader access for children, youth and families to:

- (a) The best possible physical and mental health;
- (b) Adequate food and safe physical shelter;
- (c) A safe and healthy environment;
- (d) The highest quality of educational opportunity;
- (e) Quality education;
- (f) Effective training, apprenticeship and productive employment;
- (g) A range of civic, cultural, educational, family support and positive youth development programs and activities that promote self-esteem, involvement and a sense of community;
- (h) Community services that are efficient, coordinated and readily available, and:
- (i) Genuine participation in decisions concerning the planning and managing of their lives in respect of such decisions.

The addition to the vision was clause (f), which introduces emphasis on the interdependency of healthy families and healthy communities. The intention of legislators was to draw together under one comprehensive plan the diverse programs and funding streams that are designed to support at-risk individuals and groups. The Bill required this to happen in two ways: through early childhood intervention and through specific programs for high-risk people. For both purposes, legislators wanted to see better collaboration at two levels: horizontally among certain state agencies and

<sup>98</sup> Senate Bill 555, Section 2. Amendment to ORS 417.305, 70<sup>th</sup> Oregon State Legislative Assembly, Regular Session, June 4, 1999.

vertically between these state agencies and local counties. To achieve this, Senate Bill 555 established a policy requiring state agencies to work in partnership with local communities to plan, coordinate and provide services for Oregon's children and families.<sup>99</sup>

The Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) was the principal agency given the task of coordinating the requirements in the Bill, which directed public officials to build on work already being done by communities in the prevention area, as well as addressing at-risk issues for young people. It also formalized in legislation the role of an existing committee on juvenile crime prevention within the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission, gave a new audit role to the Oregon Progress Board (OPB) and bolstered the roles of the local commissioners for children and families in the counties. Before I discuss motivation for the Bill, I will provide some background on the history of the OCCF.

### ***Origins of the Oregon Commission on Children and Families***

The Oregon Commission on Children and Families was set up in 1993 under House Bill 2004 as a cross-cutting or collaborative agency with a strong preventive mandate. Jeff Tryens, executive director of the Oregon Progress Board, described this legislation as “strong on vision and values.” This move had been prompted by concern of the Legislative Assembly about outcomes for children, young people and families. The Legislature commissioned a Children's Care Team to look into the situation. The team reported: “Of particular concern, in 1992, is the escalating rate of fatalities of young children from abuse or neglect.”<sup>100</sup>

OCCF was allocated a small budget of around \$34 million per biennium. It had a difficult task to make an impact on outcomes for children and families because it had no control over the existing programs and funding streams controlled by much larger departments. Donna Middleton, current executive director of OCCF, reflected: “Agencies did not want to be told what to do.” OCCF established local commissions for children and families in each of the 36 counties with a director and an assistant each and given a small budget for “seeding” innovative projects. Many dedicated themselves to marshalling resources in their communities for better coordination and to promote prevention policies. Currently OCCF has a budget of \$83.3 million for the biennium. Four percent of this is spent at the state level and the rest goes to the Local Commissions.

One significant move was to commission research from Dr Clara Pratt and her team at Oregon State University to understand better the links between interventions and

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<sup>99</sup> Note that although SB 555 links children and families in the same phrasing throughout, it also frequently refers to children, youth and families. The first time youth are included is in Section 2.

<sup>100</sup> *A Positive Future for Oregon's Children and Families, A Report of the Children's Care Team*, Oregon Legislative Assembly, January 1993, Executive Summary, p.1.

outcomes.<sup>101</sup> Through these initiatives OCCF began to build understanding within the bureaucracy and in communities about the systemic nature of at-risk problems in children, young people and families. This was effectively a role of consciousness raising about the value of prevention, developing tools for collaboration and focusing on results. What SB 555 appears to have done is strengthen OCCF's role. As one official said: "555 has given OCCF more authority and helped define better what the expectations are for its performance."

### **SB 555: Why legislate again?**

What legislators seemed most concerned about was a gap between state government and local communities in planning and service provision, as apparent in the opening statement of the Bill, which reads:

*The purpose of ORS 417.305 is to establish a state policy for serving Oregon's children and families, in recognition that addressing the needs, strengths and assets of children necessarily requires addressing the needs, strengths and assets of families and communities, and to direct state agencies to work in partnership with local communities to plan, coordinate and provide programs accordingly.*

Interviews revealed that, while this was to a large extent justified, the picture was in reality more complex. There were three main target groups: all children, aged 0-8; potential young offenders; and high-risk children and families. Putting more money and collaborative effort into juvenile crime prevention and early childhood intervention measures were the two main strategies. Neil Bryant, former Republican senator and chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee at the time, who has been dubbed "father of the Bill,"<sup>102</sup> explained in an interview: "There had been the shooting in Springfield so the Governor wanted to address violence in schools. The Senate was more interested in tackling this issue, and problems like it, through early intervention (across a range of issues like) health, good parenting etc. A work group closely negotiated the wording over about 45 days. It was a marriage between a Republican Senate and a Democratic Governor."<sup>103</sup>

According to Bryant the Governor had attempted to introduce a similar bill in 1997 but the Legislature had failed to pass it. Pam Curtis, from the Governor's office elaborated: "The Governor spent two years between 1997 and 1999 working with legislators (and others) to convince them of the importance of (what became) SB 555." She attributes the

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<sup>101</sup> *Building Results* by Clara Pratt et al, at Oregon State University is "a series of three publications designed to support local commissions and partners in producing outcomes, by making strategic investments based upon effective practices" (from the OCCF Orientation Handbook, October 2001). When I visited her in February 2002, Pratt was working on a fourth volume (*Building Results 4*), which is a guide on community mobilization.

<sup>102</sup> By Jeff Tryens, Executive Director of the Oregon Progress Board. Note that Neil Bryant is a current Board member of the Oregon Progress Board (OPB) and a supporter of both the Benchmarks and the work of the OPB.

<sup>103</sup> The shooting took place at Thurston High School, Springfield, Oregon on May 21, 1998.

eventual success of SB 555 to the Governor's determination and leadership on these issues. "The Governor has been a catalytic leader in getting people to the table. He uses the bully pulpit to highlight problems and asks agencies to respond."

It is significant that how young people were faring in schools was at the heart of legislators' concerns. Almost every person I interviewed, who wanted systemic change, pointed out that public education in Oregon sits outside the regular accountability arrangements for the civil service. Normally the Governor appoints the chief executives of state agencies. The head of the public school system, however, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, is an elected official in Oregon (this is also the case in the two other west coast states, California and Washington), meaning the Governor cannot provide formal direction or guidance on public education. This structural separation leads to major governance and accountability barriers in achieving the outcomes and goals articulated in Oregon Benchmarks and in SB 555. An earlier attempt in the Legislature to pull the public education system under the Governor's jurisdiction for appointment and accountability failed. Apparently, the Legislature believed that Oregonians would be unwilling to give away one of their direct democratic rights to vote for the head of the school system.

It is not surprising then, as several officials pointed out: "There was concern in the Legislature about silos and silo mentality." The Bill represented a significant effort by Legislators to link criminal justice, human services (social services, mental health and public health), and the school system – the latter through moral suasion and common sense. Becky Eklund, juvenile crime prevention coordinator, explained: "All the research on juvenile crime is linked to whether or not the kids are in school. But the whole structure is not set up for many of these kids. It is designed for the middle of the road student and managing large numbers."

Other officials interpreted SB 555 as the first real systems approach to improving outcomes for children and families. For Middleton the main purpose of the Bill was introducing a systems approach: "This amounts to transformation of a whole service system in the state – it won't happen overnight. We want to change people's mindsets," and she added, "it's also about relationships." Middleton says that SB 555 has sharpened OCCF's mandate for supporting prevention programs for children and families. Its previous mandate was "too vague." Barbara Cimaglio, who is responsible for child and adolescent health coordination at the Department of Human Services, agrees: "Changing the system is where you have to start. The burden of government is that no one person has the authority to change the system, so it takes collaboration. A lot of folks aren't prepared for this approach. But there is much more a sense in the last five to ten years that people want to do collaborative work. The challenge is to feel like this is so important that you want to do it. But there are lots of barriers." Pam Curtis, policy advisor to the Governor on health, human services and labor, said SB 555 was about "shifting from a mindset of running programs to problem solving and getting each agency to think about how does my program impact the problem and how does it impact other agencies."



Two out of three directors of local commissions on children and families reported good existing processes for coordination and collaboration including established partnerships with non-profit organizations. The motivation for SB 555 clearly did not come from communities, according to a number of people I interviewed both at the state and county level. Judi James and Paul Siebert of the Legislative Fiscal office suggested: “There was a lot going on at the local level that was worth sharing more widely. This was an opportunity to use best practice as a guiding principle.” James and Siebert added that SB 555 was about trying to “get the best value for the dollar.”

One fundamental question is how successful has OCCF been at achieving its original purpose? Pratt explained that: “As one of the smallest state agencies trying to coordinate the biggest, the Commission on Children and Families spent a lot of time cajoling, facilitating and “using talk into behavior” with other agencies to try and achieve its mission.” Another commentator pointed out: “In fact, OCCF has had continual change in its mandate and leadership since it was established in 1993 (with at least four executive directors), leaving it always a bit in flux.” Osborne and Plastrik also expressed a view on this: “The Oregon Legislature created the Oregon Commission on Children and Families to reshape the human services system, but gave it less than 1 percent of the resources in the system...(this steering organization)...tried to push the operational agencies to change their priorities and fund new initiatives; soon they were as welcome in those departments as lepers. Since they controlled far fewer resources – and hence had far weaker constituencies – than those agencies, they inevitably lost the power struggles that ensued.”<sup>104</sup>

In January 2001, the Legislative Assembly enacted a second piece of legislation, House Bill 3659, which was intended as a companion piece to SB 555 and known as the Oregon Children’s Plan. Targeting 0-8 year olds, the Plan came with a \$66 million budget for a combination of voluntary home visits for at-risk pregnant and new mothers, building on the Healthy Start model, alcohol and drug treatment for parents, mental health treatment for children and early learning opportunities. One of the champions of this Bill, Representative Jackie Winters, explained that the purpose was to get education and human services to work together to help prevent abuse and neglect. It was also to give “more teeth” to the Benchmarks. Governor Kitzhaber wrote in an open introductory letter, “The Oregon Children’s Plan will help them get a healthy start in life, help them to be ready to learn when they get to school and help them avoid the increasing problem of school failure, school dropout, and later mental health problems.”<sup>105</sup>

### ***Linkages to Oregon Benchmarks***

Neil Bryant explained that SB 555 was intended to give weight to Oregon Benchmarks, which were high-level outcome goals approved by the Legislature originally in 1989 and

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<sup>104</sup> Osborne and Plastrik, *Reinventor’s Fieldbook*, op.cit. p. 37.

<sup>105</sup> *The Oregon Children’s Plan*, letter by John A. Kitzhaber, M.D. to “Friends of Oregon’s Children,” January 30, 2001.

revised in 1996. Oregon Benchmarks are a part of a citizen-based strategic vision for the state of Oregon documented in a report entitled Oregon Shines. Initially in 1989, 198 benchmarks were identified and this number grew to an unmanageable 259 over the next six years. A Children’s Agenda was part of Oregon Shines, which focused on “the well being and development of children in their very early years, especially those raised in single-parent, low-income families.”<sup>106</sup>

Following a review in 1996 led by the Governor, which produced Oregon Shines II, the total number of benchmarks was reduced to 92. The Oregon Progress Board identified 25 of these as key benchmarks to make the whole system more manageable. These were sorted under three overarching goals: quality jobs for all Oregonians; safe, caring and engaged communities; and healthy, sustainable surroundings. The 1996 review highlighted social problems:

More attention should be focused on the well-being of families and communities and the condition of our surroundings. The shift is driven by what the Oregon Benchmarks have told us about how well we have achieved our goals. The Benchmarks, created in 1991, are a method of focusing Oregonians on common, long-term goals and a way of measuring their achievement. The three new goals of Oregon Shines II address our concerns that the improved economy has not reduced some of Oregon's social problems as much as had been expected and that our economic expansion may be threatening the very quality of life that makes Oregon such a special place to live.<sup>107</sup>

One criterion for the review was “strong community-based partnerships based on achieving outcomes.”<sup>108</sup> Bryant had been involved with this review in 1996 and was determined to give Benchmarks more emphasis through SB 555. “We wanted to convey a message that state agencies needed to get serious about these issues.” The Bill requires that state agencies work together in “cooperative partnerships” to employ “methods of accountability to measure effectiveness of state-funded programs; and use of public resources for programs and services that move the state toward meeting the goals described in section 2 (these goals are shown in figure 6) and the Benchmarks adopted by the Oregon Progress Board.”<sup>109</sup> Specific initiatives under SB 555 connect to specific Benchmarks. For example, the juvenile crime prevention work led by Becky Eklund connects to the high level benchmark on reducing the juvenile arrest rate.<sup>110</sup>

## **Funding and Resources**

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<sup>106</sup> *Oregon Shines*, op.cit. Both documents, *Oregon Shines* and *Oregon Shines II* can be found on the Oregon Progress Board website: [www.econ.state.or.us/opb/](http://www.econ.state.or.us/opb/)

<sup>107</sup> *Oregon Shines II*.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Senate Bill 555, Section 2 (4) (b) and (c).

<sup>110</sup> For the key Benchmarks and Benchmark performance reports see [www.econ.state.or.us/opb/](http://www.econ.state.or.us/opb/)

There was a small budget attached to the Bill, appropriated for the biennium, which was split equally between the justice and early intervention goals, with \$27 million for each.<sup>111</sup> The main purpose of the Bill, however, was not to create new funding streams but “to rearrange existing resources to achieve better outcomes,” as Tryens explained. James and Siebert agreed: “The Legislative Assembly did not try to change actual funding streams; it wanted better coordination of existing streams. The focus was on achieving efficiencies and effectiveness. That means letting go of things that don’t work.” The Bill is explicit on how the goals it sets out are to be funded: “...through a combination of local, state and federal funding, including the leveraging of public and private funds available...” (Section 4, (4)).

The idea of leveraging multiple funding streams at the local level was also not entirely new. Marlene Putnam, local commission director in Tillamook, explained her role in leveraging these three funding streams, “We became the fiscal agent for federal grants; we help local organizations apply for private foundation money; and help them work out how to put those two funding streams together with state funding to get the best results. We knew what we needed because we have done our planning.” Carol Wire, local commission director in Washington County, explained where the SB 555 budget fitted in: “SB 555 money is systems change money - seed money for prevention work.”

Prevention and collaboration may be easier when the economy is growing and Oregon State finances are relatively healthy. Currently, in the middle of an economic recession, there are budgetary pressures. One senior official told me that the deficit was \$900 million, which seems high for a population of 3.2 million. The state budget for the next biennium, under consideration in February 2002, was deadlocked. Another negative effect of the recession is the climbing unemployment rate, now the highest in the country at 8.5 percent, which will put pressure on state services. There were mixed views about whether good outcome planning and collaboration can mitigate poor economic performance. One person commented, “A tight economy is bad for collaboration because it will lead to a fight for resources.” Another official was similarly pessimistic, “Budget cuts are a disaster for preventive work.” But an opposing view was: “Thanks to SB 555 efforts, most folks working in this arena would agree that a poor economy in fact may be good for collaboration as it makes the need for working together more obvious and compelling. As people in small communities in Oregon are fond of saying, money makes you compete but the lack of it makes you coordinate.”

### ***Roles and tasks***

Multiple roles and tasks are identified in the Bill, including setting planning guidelines, coordination of planning and services, performance audit, review of plans, and review of results achieved, both in terms of targets local plans and in light of Oregon Benchmarks (these two are desirably aligned). Principal roles and tasks are set out in Table 4. Several people commented, “it is an ambitious piece of legislation.” OCCF, in its

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<sup>111</sup> Oregon sets and appropriates its state budget once every two years.

coordination role, has identified three phases of development: Phase I was concentrated on county inventories, or mapping of strengths, gaps, barriers, and overlaps in local services; Phase II on developing complete comprehensive plans at the local level that included a broad vision and identifying priorities and strategies to reach that vision. Identifying a system for counties to use in measuring their progress in achieving outcomes and targets was begun in Phase II and will be further implemented in Phase III. The first two phases have been completed. State agencies will begin in Phase III to allocate funds to counties based on their comprehensive plans. Each of the 36 counties in Oregon has developed a single, coordinated plan for services and supports for children from pre-natal care to age 18, and their families, known as a comprehensive plan.

**Table 4: Principal roles and tasks relating to Senate Bill 555**

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Tasks</b>
Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set statewide guidelines for planning, coordination and delivery of services for children and families in partnership with state agencies and other planning bodies; coordinate review of these plans.</li> <li>• Identify outcomes and interim indicators consistent with the Oregon Benchmarks and monitor the progress of plans in meeting these outcomes jointly with OPB.</li> <li>• Work with multiple agencies to collect local level data.</li> <li>• Develop a plan, with DHS, to re-engineer and integrate relevant data-processing systems to make information more accessible.</li> </ul>
Oregon Progress Board (OPB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify outcomes and outputs consistent with Oregon Benchmarks jointly with OCCF.</li> <li>• Conduct a review of the outcomes achieved by local plans against targets and Benchmarks.</li> </ul>
Local Commissioners on Children and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the development of local coordinated comprehensive plans for services.</li> <li>• Facilitate, help acquire and allocate state, federal &amp; private funds to purchase services (direct service delivery is specifically excluded by statute).</li> </ul>
Boards of County Commissioners (Representative group of citizens at local level – need to be 51% citizenry-based.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the local, coordinated, comprehensive plans.</li> <li>• Designate a lead agency to serve as lead planning organization to facilitate the creation of a partnership among state and local public and private entities in each county.</li> </ul>
Juvenile Crime Prevention Advisory Committee (JCPAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure preventive measures for juvenile crime are included in local planning. (Note: there is a long list of other specific functions).</li> </ul>
Joint Legislative Audit Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report the findings and any recommendations of the performance audit to the Legislative Assembly no later than August 1, 2002.</li> </ul>

OCCF chairs the SB 555 Steering Committee, which has responsibility for progress of the three phases. At a meeting I attended in February 2002, the committee was focused on a range of collaborative activities including a “Healthy kids learn better” project, improving cultural competence (a training program on inclusivity is to be offered throughout the state, focusing on gender issues and working with minorities); integrated data collection, teen pregnancy prevention; and alcohol and drug abuse programs. The committee was also starting work on how the local comprehensive plans would be implemented (Phase III of SB 555). This would include “building partnerships, creating detailed work plans and reporting mechanisms to achieve better outcomes for our kids.”<sup>112</sup>

To help support all of the work of local commissions, OCCF has two local planning and systems development coordinators. The two incumbents, Gretchen Bennett and Pat Pitman, describe their positions as “translator” roles. They see their jobs as “putting together technical and citizens’ perspectives.” They want to keep “grass roots perspectives visible and encourage community based organizations to participate in planning.” Carol Wire of Washington County describes her role in a similar vein: “My job is to translate between the local and state levels.”

The Department of Human Services deserves a special mention, as the largest state agency in the broad social arena, with 9,500 employees and a biennial budget of \$8.5 billion. Policies and programs it is responsible for include health services (Medicaid), mental health and public health, alcohol and drug prevention and treatment, disability services, child welfare and foster care and adoption. The new director, Bobby Mink, who is currently restructuring his department, was enthusiastic about the concept of SB 555, which he says was prompted by concerns about silos in departments and fragmentation of services. He explained: “We are re-organizing around the collaborative ideas in SB 555 to de-fragment services. The burden of fragmentation has been resting on the shoulders of clients for too long – it should be with the organizations. I have 16 executives throughout the state who are re-organizing services to create one field system instead of five.” He adds this was beginning to occur anyway but SB 555 provided “an additional impetus.”

The DHS portfolio is a lot broader than SB 555, explains Mink, “but the Bill provides a core that we can embrace. We need to build new relationships and partnerships. I want to configure the whole department around better outcomes for communities and their citizens.” To demonstrate that he is really serious about managing towards outcomes, Mink requires his management team to assure him that every employee understands how their job connects with the mission and values of DHS. “I am looking for the logic link,” says Mink who wants his staff to be thinking actively about how what they do everyday will help the department and the state achieve its goals.

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<sup>112</sup> Minutes of the Coordinated Planning (SB 555) Steering Committee, February 20, 2002.

## **Partnerships**

The Bill sets clear expectations about partnership: “Service delivery systems...shall include cooperative partnerships among state agencies that serve children, youth and families (Section 2 (4) (a)). It also sets expectations about community mobilization, which “means government and private efforts to increase community awareness and facilitate the active participation of citizens and organizations in projects and issues that will have positive impact on the well-being of children, families and communities,” (Section 3, (1)).

Developing partnerships at the county level has been a priority from the beginning of implementation. Middleton maintains: “Partners would not have come along without the legislation. People began to see that working together was a better way of doing business.” Some of the advantages are that collaboration has the potential to increase the flow of federal funding and the likelihood of federal waivers, although OCCF reports that a recent federal collaborative grant application from more than three departments in Oregon “was not funded because the feds wanted to fund states that weren’t as far along as Oregon.” But OCCF is seeing evidence of “volunteer organizations and community groups like the faith based groups coming to work together with government agencies.”

The Legislative Fiscal Office, which was part way through its audit in February 2002, reported a similar pattern of new partnerships forming at the county level, particularly between mental health, public health and social services groups as one cluster and juvenile criminal justice services and education as another cluster. Above all they saw evidence that collaboration was removing the need to be competitive about funding. Several officials highlighted that one success of SB 555 is “getting many people in education to the table.” But this was not universally the case. One senior official added: “The way teachers are educated is to keep education separate. It is a mind shift for these folk to talk about education as a partner.” She went on to say: “We need a change of model for education. It needs to be more natural, where kids can be engaged in public service and action in the community.” One local commission director reported that they had come a long way with the comprehensive plan but they still had further to go: “We need to bring the faith based groups along, especially in the Latin American community.”

In Oregon, prior to SB 555, there was evidence of good collaboration developing in a number of counties between local government services and community partners. The rural county of Tillamook provides a good example. The local commission director there has been in the position for eight years and explained that by February 1999 (the Bill was passed in June 1999), the community had already formed a work group to identify issues and resource gaps and were working on a database for information sharing and measuring results.<sup>113</sup> “While SB 555 was really redundant for us, it give state level authority to what

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<sup>113</sup> The background to early community planning in Tillamook is the following: in 1998 the State received a technical assistance grant from the US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs for six counties to prepare coordinated plans for juvenile crime prevention. Tillamook was one of these counties. OCCF explained, “these OJJDP plans were more narrow in scope, but served as a model for SB 555 planning guidelines.”

we were doing and it ensured state-wide progress in this area”. Her main concern was that she would be required to start all over again. This did not happen and Tillamook was able to share its experience with OCCF when it was preparing planning guidelines in Phase I of SB 555 implementation.

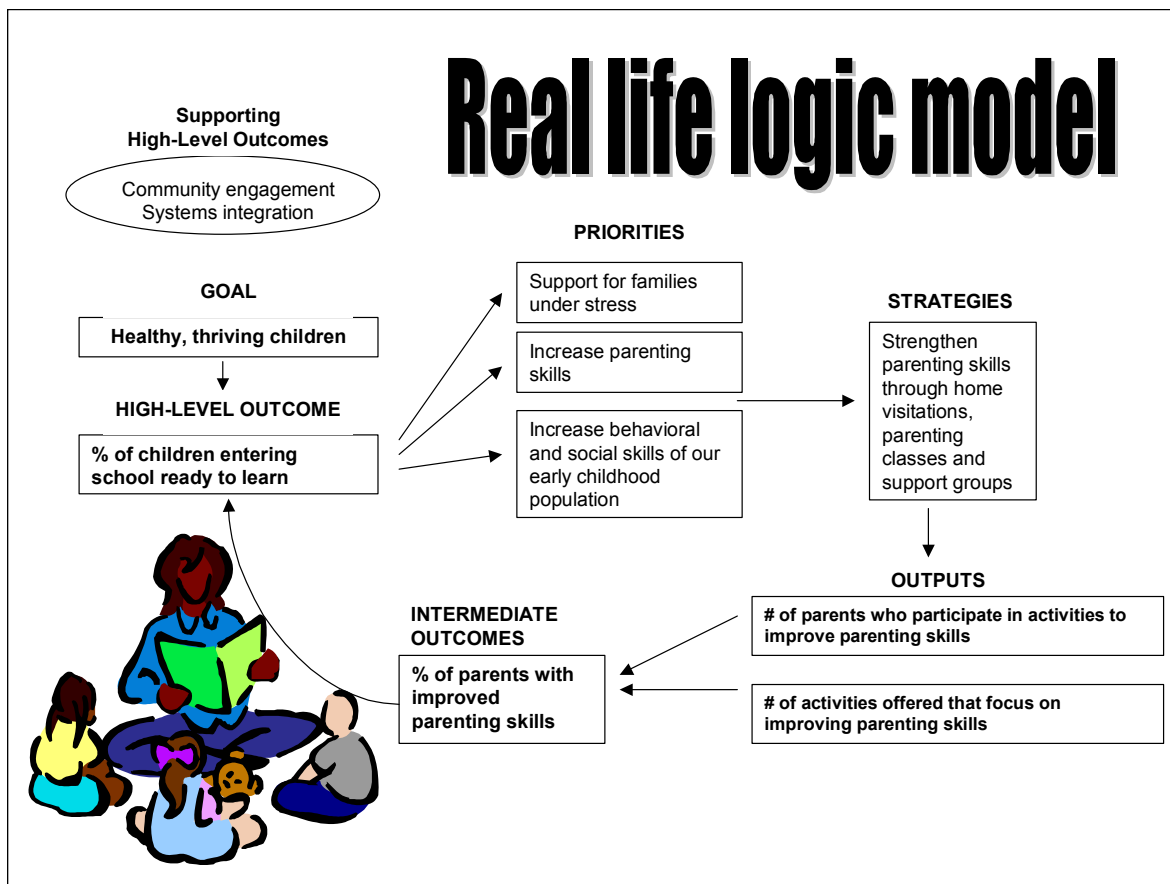
### ***Performance measurement***

This is one of the most interesting aspects of the Bill and potentially one of the most beneficial. Section 19.3 of the Bill requires the OPB to: “Conduct a review of the outcomes achieved by local coordinated comprehensive plans...for the purpose of identifying success in achieving targets specified in local plans.” Tryens explained: “The interagency work group that developed the planning guidelines for Phase II, also incorporated, as part of the guidelines, a performance measurement framework that will help local agencies to meet minimum performance criteria.” At this early stage in the process, when it comes to review (OPB is required to report to the Legislature in 2003), OPB will focus on the quality of the performance measurement framework that agencies have put in place. Assessment of actual results will follow in subsequent years.

For the purpose of developing a performance measurement framework, the interagency group developed a “logic model,” drawing on outside expertise from consultant Madeleine Kimmich (who has written on collaboration and partnership, as discussed in chapter two) and Clara Pratt of Oregon State University. The logic model is a method by which counties can identify performance measures related to their agency goals, connect their goals to high level outcomes (benchmarks), then work out their priorities and strategies, identify outputs and intermediate outcomes, which then loop back to high level outcomes. This is shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5: SB 555 Logic Model



Source: Oregon Progress Board: presentation prepared for SB 555 training, developed with input from OCCF and Human Services Research Institute (HRSI).

Tryens described the challenge for this process: “We need to come up with ambitious but realistic targets.” But it is proving time consuming to train people in the techniques of performance measurement. They have to be sure that understanding of concepts and language is good enough before they can ask counties to work through the logic model.

Darwin Merrill, coordinator for the local commission in Linn County agrees: “It is a challenge to explain this process to partners.” An integral part of putting in place the logic model is best practice, which is required in the legislation and is well documented in the Building Results series of publications. All this will take time and expertise to work out, consistent with Osborne and Plastrik’s advice that it takes at least three years to build a performance measurement system.

Siebert and James explained the Legislature's emphasis on performance measurement: "This focus on results is important for legislators – they want to be able to invest money, track results and assess what works and what doesn't work." Performance measurement moves Oregon beyond the "old style of service delivery which was very much along the lines of trust us we know what we are doing" to much more precise and transparent accountability.

### ***Other strengths and weaknesses of a legislative approach***

There are obvious strengths and some weaknesses in attempting to get better vertical and horizontal collaboration through a top down, legislative approach. A key strength of SB 555 has been the ability to target juvenile crime prevention in the traditional justice area and combine and work with human services and schools at the local level. The Criminal Justice Commission (OJC) established Becky Eklund's position as High Risk Juvenile Crime Prevention Coordinator in response to SB 555. Eklund has been proactive in developing a greater level of understanding about the underlying causes of juvenile offending and ways to prevent it. OJC are adopting a prevention program called multi-systemic therapy and are partnering with the University of Colorado to undertake training at the local level in a range of areas like "mental health treatment, sex abuse treatment and tracking for school kids who are not in school and methods to get them back." The Criminal Justice Commission and Oregon Youth Authority have built into their joint contracts with county level entities like correctional facilities the requirement for collaboration and linkage to the benchmark "Preventing and Reducing Juvenile Crime," to bring a preventive focus into their service provision.

Another positive effect of SB 555 is better planning at the community level where it was weak or non-existent. Bringing community groups, which are typically focused on single issues, to the planning table and getting them to pay attention to the big picture is hard work (not only in Oregon). Gretchen Bennett and Pat Pitman noted that: "Many non-profit organizations are entitlement focused rather than community focused." SB 555 is also motivating capacity building at the local level not just in planning, but also in performance measurement and data collection. Several officials pointed out the planning load for state and county agencies has increased, however, because SB 555 has come on top of existing requirements. A review of multiple planning requirements and a rationalization of overall planning at the community level would make sense. I understand the Legislative Fiscal Office will look into this as part of their audit in 2002.

One person I interviewed thought that SB 555 was "a step back from engaging communities. Neighborhood groups don't want to deal with paper and few staff are able to write a plan at the local level." Putnam put it another way, "You cannot sell planning at the local level. You have to repackage it into activities and specific priorities that make sense to the community."

A potential weakness of the dispersed approach to roles and tasks is the lack of a clear leadership role. While SB 555 affirms and strengthens the role of OCCF, it does not give

it an explicit leadership role. For some this is frustrating. As one official, outside OCCF said, "No one is really in charge of SB 555. There is no hammer to bring it all together." For others, it "epitomizes a collaborative effort that is based on shared goals and a problem-solving approach, rather than an authoritarian or prescriptive approach. Collaboration usually is messy and inconsistent, but offers long-term benefits in changing the 'me' (silo approach) to 'us' as just the way business is done." One point of concern lingering in the background is that fact that the current Governor, John Kitzhaber, leaves office in January 2003, and there is a question mark about whether his successor will provide the same sense of purpose and leadership on these issues.

In summary, SB 555 is ambitious and experimental. If SB 2004 was the prevention Bill, then, building on that approach, SB 555 is the partnership and collaboration Bill.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Two contrasting examples of collaboration for social systems change

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#### ***Introduction***

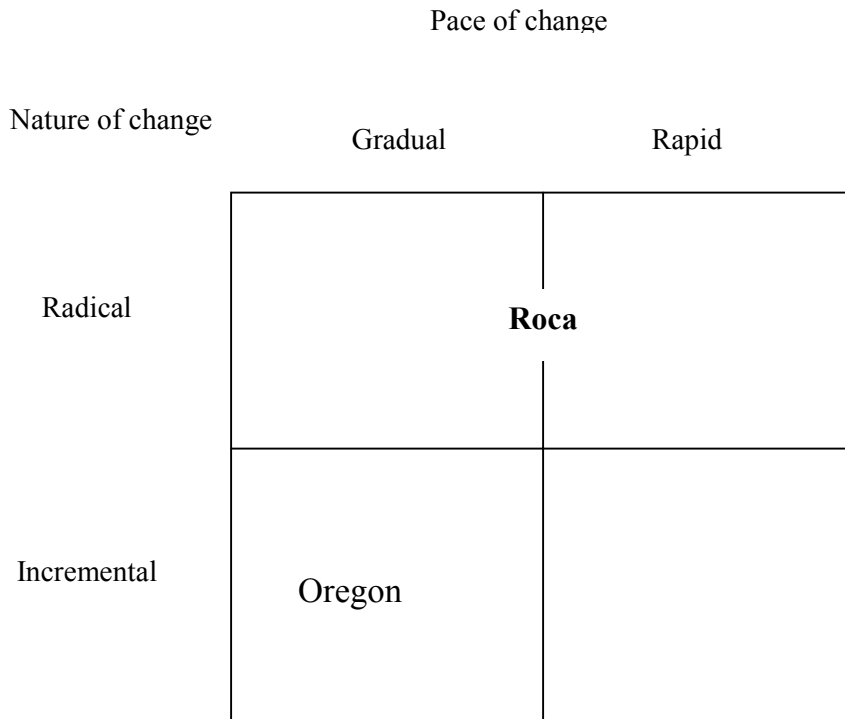
The two cases of Roca and Oregon SB 555 are quite different and in many respects difficult to compare, since the first focuses on a single organization and the second on a state government initiative. Yet both are positively influencing on social outcomes through collaboration. It is interesting, therefore, to consider the two cases as contrasting examples of collaboration, where Roca is a bottom up example and SB 555 a top down example. As Kimmich (1994) indicated in her “guiding principles and functions” for collaboration (chapter two), both types of collaboration are important in effecting systems change. Neither one on its own will be entirely successful. Roca, without the support of its partners, could not achieve its vision. Similarly, in Oregon, the state agencies rely on bottom up efforts for the initiatives to flourish.

Another way to think about the two different approaches to social systems change is in terms of the relationship between the speed or pace of change and the degree or nature of change that is sought. Gallivan, Hofman and Orlikowski (1994) in the context of organizational change, distinguished between incremental change and radical change: “In contrast to incremental change, where established structures, processes and knowledge are extended and augmented, radical change replaces the status quo with a new order of things...”<sup>114</sup> The following matrix in Figure 6 depicts these two dimensions of change and positions each of the cases appropriately.

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<sup>114</sup> Gallivan, M.J. , Orlikowski, W.J. and Hofman, J.D. "Implementing Radical Change: Gradual versus Rapid Pace," *Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Conference on Information Systems*, Vancouver, Canada, December 1994: 325-339.

**Figure 6: Two dimensions of change for social systems**



In terms of degree or nature of change, Roca is challenging the conventions or status quo of the education and criminal justice systems because it believes that these traditional systems are often not helping, and sometimes further harming, at-risk young people. It wants to see radical change in these systems and through peacemaking circles is beginning to achieve this. In terms of pace of change, Roca as a grassroots organization is flexible and able to respond rapidly not only to challenges and crises but to opportunity. I have not placed it fully in the top right hand quadrant, however, in recognition of the fact that it is one organization within a system and the pace at which it can bring about change will inevitably be hampered by that inability of the system to change rapidly.

Given the complexity and range of organizations involved, a government system is much more likely to experience gradual, incremental change by comparison. Although it is tackling some difficult issues systemically, like juvenile crime prevention, Oregon is unlikely to achieve radical, rapid change across the board, not least because it is difficult to get education “to the table.” It could realistically aim for radical and gradual change however, where it is able to challenge existing ways of delivering education, health and social services. To do that it would have to implement its local comprehensive plans in 36 counties successfully. That would require devolving a high degree of responsibility

for implementation to local communities and I detect reluctance in Salem (Oregon state capital) to do that.

At present, I gauge it to be in the lower left hand box of the matrix as indicated. Through SB 555, however, Oregon has set in motion some important and worthwhile initiatives, including giving greater currency to collaboration as a way of doing government business, giving emphasis to the preventive focus of the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, reinforcing the roles of local commission and putting in place comprehensive strategic planning and performance management systems for at-risk, children, young people and families.

In asserting that government systems move slowly and seek a different degree of change, it is important to acknowledge that there are many individuals within publicly funded systems who are dedicated professionals, often working beyond the call of duty to improve outcomes for at-risk young people. Ed Dolan, Deputy Commissioner at the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS), told the story of a Department of Youth Services caseworker, who in the absence of family or friends to take on the task, organized the funeral of a young person who tragically died while under the department's care. That was not in her job description but the department gave her the flexibility to do it. To a large extent, public officials are locked into inflexible and outmoded systems, which are slow to change. The public organizations that I see being responsive and open to Roca are those with leaders who share a vision for better outcomes for young people, and who realize that systems have to change in order for their vision to be achieved.

However, neither the bottom up, top down descriptors, nor the pace and nature of change matrix fully capture all the influences at work in either case, however. To get a richer, more systemic picture of these two cases, I propose to discuss them using the operational framework for systemic social change presented in chapter two.

### ***Roca: A collaborative approach for radical social systems change***

Roca is an organization that is deeply committed to systemic social change. In its work with at-risk young people, it is having success where public organizations are not. It is receiving local and national attention for its achievements, as evidenced by the grants it has been awarded from major foundations to fund new initiatives. In April 2002, at the request of the Kellogg Foundation, Roca ran a national network meeting for the Kellogg Youth Engagement Strategy (YES initiative) in Minnesota on its transformative work with at-risk young people. Roca staff conducted peacemaking circles for 94 people from around the country over four days. The recent Kellogg grant to establish a community learning center is an achievement of which Roca can be justly proud and one that will challenge the organization and the community to greater change. Roca's strong roots in the community, its commitment to community building, its innovative ability in working with young people whom no one else can reach and, more recently, its collaborative capacity, go a long way to explain why it is successful. But there are other factors too: it

has developed a capacity for generative learning, it has come to understand and utilize the power of transformation, and it promotes “distributed leadership.”

In the following, I examine Roca from my perspective as a public servant and what I personally have learnt from studying Roca. In particular, I highlight the impact Roca is having on the policies and programs of those state agencies that are working to improve outcomes for young people in Massachusetts.

### ***Collaboration and generative learning at Roca***

Roca is an outstanding example of the kind of grassroots organization that public organizations can and should collaborate with. Roca, for its part, has invited state agencies to be partners in a range of projects and activities. As each partner has got to know the other, relationships based on trust and information sharing about what is happening in the community have been formed. Partners recognize that Roca is achieving results that no other agency is achieving. Chief of Police in Revere, Terry Reardon, says, “There is nothing else out there like [Roca] – they are willing to deal with the hard core cases. They work on the basis that kids will start setting limits for themselves.” In January 2002, during the visit for the Kellogg Foundation assessment of the VIA project (new community learning center), the support from community partners was remarkable and spontaneous. More than twenty-four partners heard about the visit and literally “showed up” to speak in support of Roca and the VIA project, much to Baldwin’s amazement and delight. “We have challenged, argued and clashed with many of these people over the years and while we have much better relationships now, it was still an amazing sight to see the city manager of Chelsea get on his knees and literally beg the foundation for money. It was a humbling experience,” says Baldwin.

Terry Reardon told Kellogg: “This program is exactly what is needed. I am very well exposed to the issues and the biggest problems are the kids who do not go to school...If we do not address this, the young people will continue to have no leadership, no values system and no one to help them. I am 1000 percent behind this...The whole village thing is our mantra.”<sup>115</sup> Other local officials and organizations lined up behind Roca for this project including the young people themselves, the local high schools and community colleges, North Suffolk Mental Health, the mayor of Revere, the Department of Youth Services, the Department of Social Services and Department of Public Health

This degree of collaboration has not always been a feature of Roca, as shown in chapter three. Two changes - one external to Roca and one internal - have occurred in recent years to help make this shift. The external factor is the way in which social agencies of government are now expected to work. The federal government ties state and local grants to collaboration and partnering with the community. This top down requirement has helped departments rethink their way of operating. Ed Dolan, from DYS, which runs correctional facilities and day reporting centers, realized it needed to “stop being all things to all people” and concentrate on working with families and communities in those

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<sup>115</sup> Kellogg Foundation site visit notes, January 2002, made available by Roca.

parts of the state “that give us 70 percent of our kids.”<sup>116</sup> Part of that change was to connect with the networks in these neighborhoods to work out who was offering what programs and facilities. Dolan says, “we have a very different view of the world than Roca,” but he adds, “we have significant numbers of kids with mental health problems who come to us having experienced trauma, neglect and abuse. More often than not punishment is not the primary issue for these youth.” Dolan and his colleagues recognize that “we share kids in common” with Roca. Through peacemaking circles and ongoing dialogue they have come to share a common vision of helping these kids through education, health education and employment opportunities.

The internal factor that shifted Roca toward collaboration was the discovery of peacemaking circles, which Molly Baldwin describes as a “real watershed” because they could “hold the values of the organization and find a way to be that was consistent with those values.” Said another way, circles, through generative learning (that is, new ways of looking at the world and understanding the systems that control events), have enabled Roca to share with the state agencies working in the same field its knowledge about how to work with and heal at-risk young people and families, without compromising its vision and values. Shifting from its former adversarial stance, Roca has been able to develop constructive relationships with other organizations, with whom it may not necessarily share values and beliefs, and change its mental models by listening to others.

Carolyn Boyes-Watson (director of the Restorative Justice Center, Suffolk University) who has been closely involved with the changes at Roca introduced by circles, explains this change: “The perspective of aboriginal leaders helped to teach Roca that there was no one “right way” to do something; that believing in one’s own self-righteousness was a kind of blindness.” “It was,” she adds, “a hard lesson for Roca, namely, to admit their own mistake in believing they were “right.” Instead, what they did was to focus on intentions...to learn to approach partners with a fundamental core of respect and to listen and find underlying values that were common even when they may chose different ways to achieve the same goals.” Baldwin recognizes this change. She says Roca used to blame others for the problems they saw everyday and believed that “we were the people to make the world better.” Over time, however, they learned that the real question is “how, as a community, do we want to raise our children.”

Peter Senge, quoting the total quality management innovator, Dr W. Edwards Deming, reminds us that, “nothing happens without personal transformation. And the only safe space to allow for this transformation is a learning community.”<sup>117</sup> Peacemaking circles allowed Roca to create a strong learning community that led to transformation at personal

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<sup>116</sup> The Department of Youth Services (DYS) moves 5,600 youths through 250 detention beds each year. The average stay is 17 days but some stay as long as a year. On any given day DYS has 3,400 youth in custody, half being supervised in the community and half in a residential setting. Offenses range from “shoplifting to murder.” Ages range from 7-17, with the average age 15 years and 3 months. 86% are from broken homes; 80% report drug and alcohol use; and 40% are from families receiving state aid. Many have a prior history of mental health treatment.

<sup>117</sup> Kofman, Fred and Senge, Peter M., *Communities of Commitment: The Heart of Learning Organizations*, American Management Association, 1993, p. 5.



and collective levels within the organization. This enabled transformation from a “them and us” blame mentality to a collaborative or partnership model.

Roca has invited all its important partners to circle training. Many were skeptical in the beginning, but they too, have changed their mental models. Sophie Godley, new to her job in the Department of Public Health (DPH), was one such skeptic. She admits, “Circles work – they are very empowering and very equalizing. The first circle I participated in allowed a conversation to take place that would not have otherwise been possible. We were able to talk about past grievances (between Roca and DPH) and agree to work together. The process went up in my estimation.” As a result of this experience Godley asked Roca to run a peacemaking circle for her team of 17 teen pregnancy prevention coalition leaders throughout Massachusetts. “I am very proud we did this circle. It has started the process of transforming the power dynamic between the department and the community.”

In the last year, approximately 80 state officials and other partners have participated in circle training. Ed Dolan decided to put his entire executive team of 24 through circle training to explore the concept of restorative justice. He initially had the same inhibitions as Godley, but needed a different approach to “create an engine of change in the department to get better results.” A seasoned public sector manager, he thought it was important to recognize how to best use circles. “You wouldn’t use them for decisions on the payroll or for medical decisions, but you would use them when you are looking for new ways to solve old problems, create ownership for young people of the decisions in their lives and give them a sense of success. It’s a way to release creativity and energy.” DYS is using circles with staff and young people in two locations, in Chelsea and its Pelletier residential facility. Dolan acknowledged that there is a “culture clash” between Roca and DYS. “We are a correctional institution. It’s taken an openness and a willingness on Roca’s part to hear our concerns.” Jessica Turner, former youth team worker and currently assistant to Baldwin sums it up: “The benefit of circles is that you are building shared relationships to reach out to young people whom no others in the community are reaching. Circles make you more open to change.”

The stress of working with intractable difficult and tense situations takes its toll on staff. Circles have provided a way of containing that stress and of understanding that sometimes it is best to operate from a “do no more harm” perspective. If they are overwhelmed, too tired or not clear about their purpose in any given situation, the “do no more harm” maxim is a good guiding principle. The example Baldwin gave me when I probed this a bit further was of an encounter she had with the local police, after the suicide of a young person who was involved with Roca. Three other young people were being blamed for the death and targeted by kids on the street. Baldwin wanted police surveillance and protection for these young people and was meeting with some resistance. She described how she “lost it” at that point and yelled at the police officer concerned. In hindsight, she said, this approach was not helpful for protecting the three young people concerned. She later came to understand that the “do no more harm” maxim was a more positive way to approach the problem. Circles have helped promote and facilitate this change in behavior.

Not all of Roca's collaborative success should be attributed to circles. Vin Cowhig, current Board member and long-time a friend of Roca, who is Director of Special Education in Revere, says, "Roca has become much more professional and much more structured as an organization. It needed to do that to be listened to and understood." Another factor for closer collaboration is co-location. Ed Dolan reported that DYS had developed a much closer relationship in the last three years since locating in Chelsea. Revere Police Chief Terry Reardon agreed that co-location was important. "I wish that Roca was centered in Revere and not Chelsea. I could do so much more with them." He is very disappointed Roca is pulling out of Revere, although understands the reasons. "I hate to see them go," he said.

It is interesting to consider the degree to which leadership and commitment contributes to the generative learning practiced at Roca. For Molly Baldwin, as Founder and Executive Director, the job is a "calling, the work of a lifetime." For Saroeum Phoung and his street team, it is like a marriage. For others it is a compelling and fulfilling commitment. It is certainly not just another job. At least one public official commented that they "would find it difficult to work at Roca because of the demands of the job." This is another way that Roca distinguishes itself in the community. If there is a crisis, Baldwin knows her staff will respond, "regardless of the time of day or night, weekend or week day." To cope with these demands Roca practices "distributed leadership." That is, it actively promotes leadership at all levels, including developing leadership skills among the young people it is working with.

Distributed leadership is a concept developed by a group of faculty from the Sloan School of Management, at MIT.<sup>118</sup> Essentially it embraces three generic types of leaders, suggested by Senge as essential in learning organizations. These are: designer, teacher and steward.<sup>119</sup> Senge further suggests that these different types of leaders need to operate at least three different levels in the organization. In the middle are local line leaders, at the top executive leaders, and throughout are internal networkers or community builders.<sup>120</sup> At Roca the different levels of leadership are actively promoted. "We now have three generations of leaders at Roca," says Baldwin. The dynamic leadership style of Molly Baldwin is, however, a driving force that is acknowledged by all, staff and community partners alike. The Roca partners whom I interviewed volunteered a consistent view: that Baldwin's personal vision, values and quest for learning not only were inspirational; they were a key to the organization's success.

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<sup>118</sup> Distributed Leadership was the title of a three day workshop offered within the Sloan School of Management, MIT in January 2002. It was developed and run by Deborah Ancona, Tom Malone, Wanda Orlikowski and Peter Senge. Central concepts included the Sloan leadership model (sensemaking, relating, visioning and inventing), as well as the different types of leaders described by Senge, working at different levels.

<sup>119</sup> Senge, Peter M., *The Leader's New Work: Building Learning Organizations*, Sloan Management Review, Fall 1990: 7-23.

<sup>120</sup> Senge, Peter M., *Leading Learning Organizations: The Bold the Powerful and the Invisible*, in *The Leader of the Future*, Goldsmith and F Hesselbein, Eds, Jossey Bass, 1996, p. 4.

## ***Setting outcome goals in Massachusetts***

I did not set out to examine whether or how well the state agencies in Massachusetts were setting outcome goals. It is apparent, however, that there is little cross cutting departmental strategic management planning. Senior managers I interviewed all talked about undergoing a great deal of internal change, partly because of budget cuts and partly because there was pressure, both internal and external, to achieve better results. One senior official in a large department was unable to see me because she was involved in major budget cuts and staff redundancies.

Almost a prior condition to crosscutting strategic planning is communication and a certain degree of understanding about each other's portfolios. Ed Dolan explained an innovative way he had found to work with two other departments. In order to establish a better working relationship with the Department of Education, he hired a former school principal to do a review of his department's (Department of Youth Services) approach to education. He found it was important in communicating with his education colleagues to have someone advising him "who spoke the language of education." He did the same thing in working with the Department of Labor, hiring a consultant from the employment world to help "translate" the concepts and practices used by Labor. Both these initiatives are at the level of fundamental communication and understanding of each other's challenges. It is not surprising then that state agencies have taken inspiration from Roca's vision. They could do no better than align their own outcome goals, strategies and priorities to those of Roca and in effect, through the groundswell of support for the VIA project, this is what has occurred. Roca has filled an outcomes vacuum.

## ***Performance measurement at Roca***

The interesting aspect of Roca's new outcome evaluation system, which it has just recently put in place, is the shift in language from negative to positive outcomes measured. For example instead of measuring how many teen pregnancies occurred per thousand young women, Roca wants to report how many young women acquired a certain standard of education and life skills and subsequently found employment. As Baldwin says, they want to "measure the wholeness of a young person, which includes how well they are doing in their relationships and the degree of the personal transformation they are making." Roca, as a grassroots organization, is less concerned with measuring performance than outcomes. It aims to add qualitative measurement to existing quantitative metrics to get a much deeper appreciation of outcomes.

## ***Holistic and supportive projects and programs at Roca***

Knowing how to use collaborative and generative learning practices has led Roca to adopt increasingly holistic and supportive approaches and programs. Starting from a

single issue, that of teen pregnancy prevention, it has used its generative learning capacity to move to a systems approach for change in its community. In effect, Roca as an organization has moved through three stages: advocacy, community building and systemic change. Through peacemaking circles and other forms of community building, Roca has done what Osborne advocated more than 10 years ago when he was writing about the need to adopt an economic opportunity strategy to deal with poverty (see chapter two).

Through its broad mix of projects and programs ranging from outreach and street work, to home visiting, integrated health and environmental programs, to community leadership and peacemaking, Roca is working holistically and systemically towards its vision of “young people and families thriving and leading change.” The addition of VIA project funded by the Kellogg Foundation will effectively augment education, vocational training and employment placement, making a much more rounded and integrated strategy. What Roca offers, over and above an economic opportunity strategy, is a people-centered approach that is characterized by dignity and the ability to contribute to one’s community through a growing sense of self-worth.

The Youth STAR program is a good example of a holistic and supportive activity or intervention. According to Cindy Davenport, Director of Operations at Roca, “The whole idea of Youth Star is to help young people see the community differently and have the community see young people differently.” This is achieved through partnering with different community groups to achieve tangible change. Davenport describes what she calls “the basic organizing principle” or mental model at Roca as: “We can do together what none of us can do separately.” She tells the story of Youth STAR members who led a project in collaboration with the city of Revere to clean up Rumney marsh (one of the last remaining urban wetlands in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to be restored). The marsh was heavily endangered through toxic levels of industrial and domestic waste. Over three years, Youth STAR members, all former gang members and street kids, took on the project, learned about the eco-system, led the physical clean up and invited community participation. They talked with local environmental lawyers about changing industrial emission and domestic waste dumping policies and learned how to create media attention. With help from community members, they built platforms in the hope that the ospreys, which had stopped nesting there because of the pollution, would return. Their reward came when the ospreys appeared again in the Rumney marsh to nest. The changing mental models – on all sides - came through Youth STAR members working together with city officials, lawyers, environmental groups and members of the community and learning that together they could get past stereotypes and labels and make a difference to their common quality of life.

In terms of support, Roca embodies the principle of community ownership through an “all are welcome here” approach, signaled through its core values of belonging and generosity. A distinctive characteristic of Roca, as Carolyn Boyes-Watson puts it, is: “Everyone belongs at Roca because they are worthy and a member of the community...this is one of the mental models that is key to Roca and is quite different from the mental models of most agencies, public or private, which expend considerable

energy defining boundaries of legitimate participation which inevitably involve exclusion.” Roca believes in its young people and families and they know that. A young British street worker, Darren Way, who spent time studying Roca as a Winston Churchill Fellowship recipient in 2000, captures the spirit of Roca in the story of his arrival there:

As a stranger walking through the door I was amazed to see how much love and curiosity that the youth showed me in such a short space of time and how the young people directed and followed me around the Center’s classrooms all too keen to show me what talents they had; and were also open to hear what I may have to bring...they instinctively knew that I came alone and I was in an unfamiliar country and that they themselves knew all too well what it is like to feel vulnerable.<sup>121</sup>

Community ownership goes hand in hand with the community building which is so integral to Roca’s projects and programs. As the Echo Chart depicts, “Community building calls for the creation of spaces where people can work together, generate partnerships and develop projects to build community and create long-term systemic change.”

### ***Senate Bill 555: a collaborative approach for incremental social systems change***

There can be no doubt that Oregon as a state is committed to better outcomes for its children, young people and families. This is expressed through its vision in Oregon Shines, through Benchmarks, the work of the Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) and the Oregon Progress Board OPB), which have been given more authority and responsibility for specific outcomes through SB 555 and the Oregon Children’s Plan. It is, therefore, important to view SB 555 as a part of a series of initiatives and actions designed to achieve better outcomes. The senior officials and the legislators I spoke with understand that they need a “whole systems approach” to achieve the Oregon vision. This requires changing the way in which state and local public agencies work and interact with one another and with the community. As one person said, “It is like trying to turn a super tanker.” A number of people I interviewed had systemic change firmly in mind as a way of operating; others “are not ready for it.” It is important to note, too, that while the planning phase has gone relatively smoothly, the real test of SB 555 will be during the implementation phase. In the following, I focus on what has been achieved to date, particularly through planning at the local level.

### ***Collaboration and generative learning in Oregon***

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<sup>121</sup> Way, Darren, op.cit., p. 82.

In chapter two I established a case for community empowerment as an essential part of collaboration. Practical ways of achieving community empowerment include: building trust; getting access to good information about what is happening in the community; finding ways to work with community groups; and building accountability into relationships with community organizations. From the three counties I researched, it is clear that the SB 555 initiative has not only provided impetus for communities to take ownership of their local comprehensive plans, but also has helped to build trust, collect better information and develop ways to working collaboratively. Local directors of the children and families commissions have taken the lead on this and I was impressed by the energy and commitment of the three I met who have been successful in bringing thoughtful and creative ideas for community empowerment to the planning table. In one county, local commission members told me the local commissioner has “really energized the community to be coordinated and integrated” to achieve better outcomes. It was clear that he had been able to gain their trust.

The local planning processes in each county included the mapping of supports and services for children, young people and families to determine existing resources and strengths in distinctive areas as well as gaps and barriers to doing better. It was interesting to observe the different styles and approaches in each county, attesting to the “one size does not fit all” mentality encouraged by OCCF. In Linn County, surveys, forums, planning events and focus groups were used to seek views and develop the local plan. In Washington County the local commission director convened three “issues circles” to discuss better outcomes in basic needs, community safety and education. Tillamook County started by interviewing 30 community leaders and from those interviews convened a core group of 20 individuals, representing a wide cross-section of local agencies, as well as non-profit, faith and community groups like the Economic Development Council and the YMCA, which developed a plan. This created a “web of participation and influence” to help gain the greatest possible community involvement and ownership. Building better relationships has been a main driver of the local planning activity.

An example of active community empowerment flowing out of the planning process includes a youth advisory board which has been established in Washington County to “give a voice to young people.” Washington County is also planning to set up community learning centers. These are “existing schools that serve the community from early in the morning till late at night, twelve months a year...to provide access to a range of educational, enrichment, social, recreational, health and social services for all residents of the community.”<sup>122</sup>

The SB 555 concept of community mobilization provides an added dimension to community empowerment through “private efforts.” Representative Winters explained how this was working in the context of the Children’s Plan: “Counties need to have 25% local funding for the Healthy Start program. One source is local businesses.” Another example of community mobilization is where “the local business community has got

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<sup>122</sup> Washington County local comprehensive plan, *Together, A Community Plan for Children and Families*, January 2002, p. 339.

behind an initiative to set up relief nurseries for daytime respite care.” The idea for relief nurseries came from “the courts, which were detecting child abuse problems.” Representative Winters said that these facilities have become very popular and have long waiting lists.

Oregon legislators set out to achieve two forms of collaboration – horizontally between state agencies and vertically between state and local agencies and communities. In fact there is a third form - horizontal collaboration at the local level between government agencies, non-profit organizations, the business sector, and community groups. Based on my interviews and research, it is clear that all three forms of collaboration are gathering momentum in Oregon. This is not necessarily a smooth process. For example there appeared to be some parallel, rather than integrated planning occurring in education. The Department of Education in presenting its plan for a “healthy kids learn better” project to the SB 555 Steering Committee, explained their approach as “complementary, because teachers need a framework that talks to them.” This is consistent with the separate accountability arrangements for education described in the previous chapter and therefore not surprising. This is an example of old ways of thinking or mental models not changing sufficiently or fast enough to grasp the new way of working.

Several officials in Oregon described themselves as “translators.” They include the two local planning and systems development coordinators at OCCF who traveled around the counties. These two people effectively act as networkers. The directors of local commissions also “translate” between the state agencies and the local communities. All of them need to work at both levels and can be described as linchpins in vertical collaboration as well as in horizontal collaboration. Translators appear to have a role in helping to change mental models at the state level about the local level, and at the local level about the state level. The idea of translators has congruency with the concept of distributed leadership, discussed earlier in this chapter, and is important to generative learning.

Clara Pratt, referring to the work of Eugene Litwak, described the interface between state and local agencies and communities as the point where formal and informal networks meet.<sup>123</sup> Pratt writes: “This and other work by Litwak has influenced understanding of how informal networks (e.g., families, friends, peers, neighbors) provide essential supports that complement the functions of formal networks (e.g., health care and social services) and the important principles of collaboration and linkages between informal and formal networks.”<sup>124</sup> Litwak argues that the two types of networks have different types of structures: “The formal organization requires segmental ties, impersonal, objective evaluations, and economic motivations, while families necessitate permanent ties, affective, loving evaluations, and diffused relations.” “The dilemma,” Litwak continues, “is how to maintain these types of groups alongside each other, despite their contradictory structures.”<sup>125</sup> What can help is the use of “linkage mechanisms” to

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<sup>123</sup> Clara Pratt, in her work on community mobilization in the context of volume four of *Building Results*, draws on the work of Eugene Litwak in his publication, *Helping the elderly: the complementary roles of informal and formal networks*, New York, NY: Guilford, 1985.

<sup>124</sup> From a draft of *Caring Communities*, as part of *Building Results 4*, p. 16.

<sup>125</sup> Litwak, E. op.cit. p. 7.

“continually adjust the social distance” between the two groups to allow them to coordinate their efforts, despite conflicting structures.

Translators can facilitate linkage because they understand the values and rules of each network and are adept at moving between both. Ideally though, the two different systems will start to move closer to each other by changing their structures. Put simply, the formal systems will acquire some informal characteristics and the informal systems will acquire some formal characteristics. This is where acquiring an understanding of mental models is important. Without a deep understanding of the way in which each system or network functions, enduring change is not possible. The question that arises is how long do you need translators in the system for? Over the short to medium term they are a good way to help achieve understanding about the different mental models inherent in formal and informal systems. Over the long term they may become a barrier to the two systems moving closer together in terms of mental models.

A second reason why the label of informal and formal networks is useful is because both types are essential for achieving better social outcomes. As we have seen clearly in the Roca case study, there is an interdependency that is central to collaboration. Too much of one kind of network is unlikely to achieve the results sought. In the case of a top down approach, as in Oregon, it is necessary to allow enough flexibility and “breathing space” for the informal or grassroots systems to come up with innovative, practical solutions to local issues and problems. Donna Middleton (executive director at OCCF) recognizes this: “I worry about too much top down pressure.”

### ***Outcome goals, performance budgets and steering organizations in Oregon***

Oregon Benchmarks are outcome goals for the whole state and performance is measured against these every two years. Local planners have drawn on these outcome goals to help identify their local priorities, using Oregon Benchmarks either explicitly or implicitly as outcomes goals. For example the Linn County plan identifies 19 “high level outcomes” under four overarching headings: strong nurturing families, healthy, thriving children, positive youth development and supportive communities. High level outcomes 13, 14 and 15 are “decrease juvenile arrests, recidivism and maintain Oregon Youth Authority bed use.” From checking the Benchmarks reports it is possible to see that these high level outcomes are indeed aligned with Benchmarks but the plan does not make this explicit. The plan provides comparative state and county data on juvenile crime and arrests, reports on locally generated data from an assets survey prepared by the Search Institute, an analysis of this data, strengths and resources, and gaps and barriers to better outcomes in these areas.<sup>126</sup> These plans not only help to identify local priorities and get buy-in from the community but also serve to share knowledge and best practices between counties.

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<sup>126</sup> Linn County *Comprehensive Plan Phase II*, Coordinated by Linn County Commission on Children and Families, January, 2002, p. 52.



Between Oregon Benchmarks, SB 555, the Oregon Children's Plan and the local comprehensive plans, however, there is a "layer upon layer" effect that could be confusing or unhelpful in achieving better results. There was no evidence, at least to the outside observer, of any plans or activities being given up to make room for new ones. At least one county has aligned its vision for the community with Oregon Shines II and developed its local plan to align with its vision. But that task is a large one and beyond the capacity of many counties. Another weakness of Oregon Benchmarks is that the budget is not aligned. Osborne and Plastrik comment: "In Oregon, for example, performance budgeting is the next logical step. The state has set broad statewide outcomes goals, and some departments have developed performance measures that align with those goals. But neither the governor nor the legislature constructs a budget structured around those goals and measures. As a result, the legislature has not systematically shifted resources to achieve the Benchmarks, other than in 1993 at

Governor Robert's urging. A performance budget would help Oregon do this.<sup>127</sup> Jeff Tryens at the OPB, who is helping to oversee this process, commented that "the new guidelines for performance measurement development is a solid step forward toward better alignment." He added, "I am not aware of any state that has been able to actually tie dollars to achievement of high level outcome targets."

Both the OPB and OCCF are steering organizations but neither has any significant degree of budget control. Osborne and Plastrik maintain that if steering organizations are going to work properly they need control of the mainstream budgets and that tinkering at the edges will not be good enough. Transferring budgets from mainstream departments to steering organizations, effectively creating a funder/provider split is not an easy step to take. An alternative way of looking at the steering role is to think of it as the "honest broker" in the system, where it builds a reputation for analytical rigor, impartiality and sound relationships. This way it can develop trust, collect and disseminate good information, promote best practice and generally "oil" the system. Between them, the Progress Board and the Commission on Children and Families share a lot of these characteristics. Tryens notes: "Shifting funding to OPB or OCCF control would let the responsible agencies off the hook for taking responsibility for results that are rightfully theirs. I don't agree with Osborne's conclusion on this. The Progress Board steers using its political and public credibility and does not, in fact, want control over agency operations."

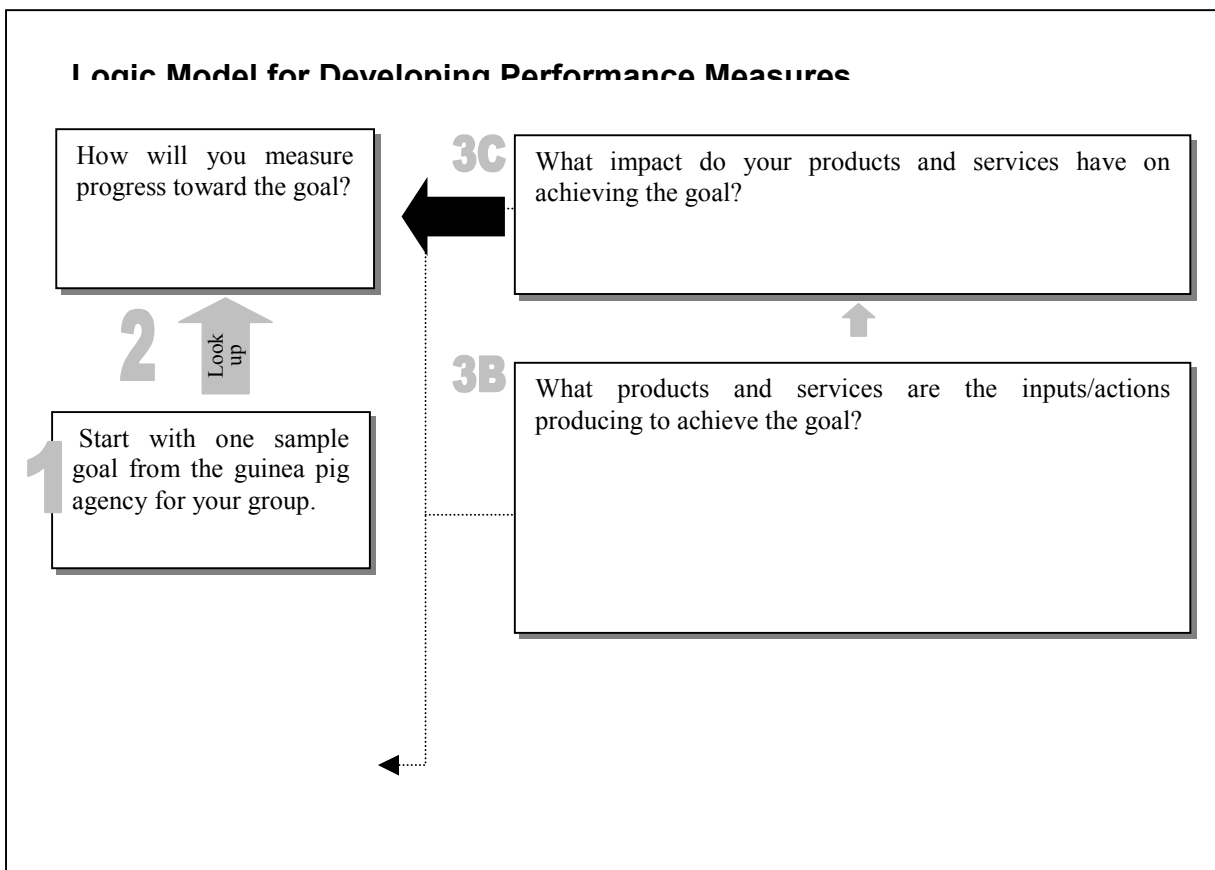
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<sup>127</sup> Osborne and Plastrik, *Reinventor's Fieldbook*, op cit. p. 43.

## Performance measurement in Oregon

There is no doubt that performance measurement of outcomes for children and families has been given a major boost by SB 555. This initiative has built on the Oregon Progress Board's existing experience in performance measurement, since it has been producing Benchmark performance reports for six years. SB 555 has also been the springboard for more comprehensive performance measurement in Oregon, in that a subsequent piece of legislation, House Bill 3358, requires the OPB to develop performance measurement guidelines that all state agencies have to meet as part of the budget process. OPB has adapted the logic model developed for SB 555 for this purpose, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Oregon performance measurement model



Source: Adapted from the Department of Administrative Services/OPB, Training Instructions, March 2002.

In figure 7 training instructions for the logic model are given which take the agency through each step starting with an agency goal, linking to Oregon Benchmarks or another high level outcome and to the agency budget. The agency then needs to identify outputs

and intermediate outcomes that will help achieve the high level outcome. Performance measures are set at output or intermediate outcome levels. Agencies are also asked to think about and identify their inputs, actions and strategies, ideally reflecting best practice, and how these will help achieve any given goal.

In an innovative move, the Oregon Business Council has arranged for eleven graduate students of public policy from schools around the country to undertake 2002 summer internships spread between one county and six state agencies to help them develop their performance measurement frameworks. It is expected that this work will have spin-off for SB 555 performance measurement.

This is an impressive beginning. When compared with my shortened version of Osborne and Plastrik's checklist in chapter two, Oregon is certainly on the right track, including using outside expertise to help develop the system. It will be important to review and refine the system over time. It will also be interesting to see the way in which legislators make use of information derived from performance measurement in their future budget decisions.

### ***Holistic and supportive projects and programs in Oregon***

The Oregon Commission on Children and Families has signaled a strong paradigm shift to prevention strategies to achieve better outcomes. Building on its work with Oregon State University, and working with other departments, notably the Department of Human Services and the Oregon Justice Commission, OCCF is building a research base of knowledge about holistic and supportive interventions for better outcomes. The Building Results work that Clara Pratt and her team at Oregon State University are doing is exemplary. This is a real strength of Oregon's approach. They have good research resources available in a range of universities, have built good relationships, and take advantage of both to improve their knowledge base. They also draw on nation-wide research resources such as the Search Institute of Minneapolis, which has developed 40 developmental assets that every young person needs in their life to help them thrive ranging from caring neighborhoods and schools to knowing how to resolve conflicts in nonviolent ways. The goal is for young people to have between 31 and 40 assets. The Search Institute has found a direct correlation between the number of assets a young person has and the likelihood that they will succeed in school and throughout their lives. Both Tillamook (in the Kids First initiative) and Linn counties are using this material in their interventions.

An example of a holistic and supportive project in Tillamook County is the "Great Beginnings" initiative. This is essentially a committee of the local commission on children and families. Its mission is "to engage the community in addressing the needs of infants and children (0-8) and their families through advocacy, education, community planning and coordination of services and supports for early childhood care and

education.”<sup>128</sup> This committee ensures that family, education and health supports are in place to enable children to learn well. Based on its participation in the comprehensive planning process, the committee found that a significant number of school-age children were struggling to read at grade level. To remedy this, the committee applied for and received a three year grant of \$90,000 from the Oregon Community Foundation to increase early literacy skills in young children.

It is likely that as the county comprehensive plans are implemented, counties will share knowledge about best practice and what works more widely, and put in place an increasing number and range of holistic programs for children, young people and their families. As information from the performance feedback loops start to flow, the challenge will be to identify projects and programs that are not effective, stop doing them and expand what is achieving positive results. The second challenge, as mentioned earlier, is to persuade legislators to align budget to outcome goals to fund holistic projects and programs.

**Summary of findings**

In order to bring the material in this chapter together with the conceptual and operational frameworks from chapter two, I have summarized the main findings from the cases under the relevant headings in Table 5. It is important to remember the interconnections and flows between each strategy and corresponding set of operational approaches, tools and competencies, which are illustrated in the circle diagrams in chapter two.

Based on these two cases, I see three principal lessons for public servants: accepting that governments are not “in this alone” and tapping into the knowledge and expertise of communities through collaboration is essential to achieving better social outcomes; recognizing that formal government systems and informal community systems are fundamentally different and valuing what informal systems can offer, (e.g., grassroots innovation); and focusing on getting the right mix of cross-cutting strategies for systemic social change. In the next and final chapter I draw on these findings to discuss some relevant issues and challenges for New Zealand.

**Table 5: Summary: Aligning frameworks and findings**

Strategies	Approaches, tools and competencies
Collaboration and Learning Strategy: shifting power and control and away from the top and the center and learning how to work with communities	Practicing collaboration and generative learning: - Community empowerment through partnerships;

<sup>128</sup> www.co.tillamook.or.us

Strategies	Approaches, tools and competencies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local mapping, data collection and planning;</li> <li>- Understanding formal and informal systems;</li> <li>- Co-location of agencies;</li> <li>- The role of translators;</li> <li>- Community mobilization.</li> </ul> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Roca's Street work and Peacemaking circles;</li> <li>- Department of Youth Services using "experts" to create stronger cross-cutting linkages;</li> <li>- Local Comprehensive Plans in Oregon;</li> <li>- Local Commissioners for Children and Families in Oregon;</li> <li>- Local Planning and Systems Development Coordinators at the state level in Oregon.</li> </ul>
Core Strategy: designing a strategic management system; aligning budgets; and using steering organizations wisely	<p>Identifying social outcomes goals and performance budgets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prior condition is cross-cutting communication.</li> </ul> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Roca's Five Year Strategic Business Plan;</li> <li>- Oregon Benchmarks;</li> <li>- SB 555 vision and goals;</li> <li>- Oregon Children's Plan;</li> <li>- OCCF and OPB steering roles on Oregon.</li> </ul>
Consequences Strategy: introducing consequences for performance	<p>Designing a performance measurement system that goes beyond outputs to outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand what works and drop what does not work;</li> <li>- Create positive measures.</li> </ul> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Roca's positive life outcomes measures;</li> <li>- Oregon's logic model.</li> </ul>

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Approaches, tools and competencies</b>
<p>Strategy for at-risk community members: using systems thinking to recognize that social, economic and other factors are interrelated</p>	<p>Designing holistic and supportive projects and programs using a mix of strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community service projects;</li> <li>- Building a research base of what works;</li> <li>- Knowledge sharing and best practice.</li> </ul> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Roca’s Echo Chart and Medicine Wheel;</li> <li>- All Roca projects and programs;</li> <li>- Oregon’s “Building Results” series of publications;</li> <li>- Community Learning Centers in Washington County, Oregon;</li> <li>- Prevention interventions and programs like “Kids First” and “Great Beginnings” on Tillamook County, Oregon.</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER SIX

### Achieving social systems change in New Zealand

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#### *Introduction*

In this final chapter I relate the findings of my research to policy making and service delivery in New Zealand for at-risk children, young people and families. Before proceeding, however, I want to acknowledge that a number of public agencies in New Zealand, including the ones I quote in chapter one, are working to improve outcomes for at-risk children, young people and families. For example the Department of Child, Youth and Family responded to the Brown report in March 2002 with a publication entitled “New Direction – a way forward for Child, Youth and Family.” This paper is thus intended to complement work by departments and agencies in New Zealand. It is not intended to critique existing policies or services but to add to the body of knowledge and research on the overall topic.

The table I presented at the end of chapter five lists examples of approaches, tools and competencies that may be transferable or adaptable to New Zealand. How this might occur is a topic for further work and beyond the scope of this paper. This research does demonstrate, however, that tools like outcomes planning and performance measurement are essential to achieving better social outcomes. It also shows that particular methodologies like peacemaking circles are an especially powerful means of transformation. I would be interested to see peacemaking circles adapted for the New Zealand setting. It seems to me, as a non-Maori, that there are some parallels with Maori beliefs and values, including the emphasis on spirituality. This is an important area for future exploration.

What I particularly want to consider in this chapter is what changes at a deeper level may be needed in public management practice to achieve social systems change. It is useful to start with the three lessons listed at the end of chapter five, namely: governments are not in this alone; ways need to be found to encourage and foster informal systems because of what they can offer; and the right mix of cross-cutting strategies is essential for holistic and supportive project and programs. On the basis of these lessons I have identified five areas for future attention (which is not to say there are not more – just that these are the ones that are the most obvious to me). These areas are: power sharing and joint accountability; role of government as enabler; creating incentives for collaboration; longer term, relational contracting; and distributed leadership. The last three areas should be seen as means to reinforce the first two areas.

## ***Power sharing and joint accountability***

Power sharing and joint accountability are critical to the success of any collaborative venture. As we have seen in chapter two, the conceptual framework combines two important ideas in collaboration and learning strategy: shifting control away from the top and the center of public service organizations; and learning to see the world differently and understanding the systems that control events. In effect, if this strategy is to work, it is about power sharing.

This is not an easy concept to put into practice because no one likes to give up power, whether that power is explicit or implicit. Organizations, which are collections of individuals, are probably more resistant than individuals in giving up power. In New Zealand, top down contracting mechanisms have reinforced “power at the top” because the purchase paradigm requires the top to be the place where the decision making occurs about how much and what services to purchase. It is also important to recognize that accountability of the public service manager is one of the basic tenets of the 1980s public sector reform in New Zealand and will not be easily transformed into joint accountability.

Judge Mick Brown, in his report to the NZ Government, pointed to the difficulty of shifting power away from the top:

We need to educate the public at large as to what are the desirable objectives and the respective roles all participants can play. One of the jargon phrases which are now thrown about whenever we talk of transferring this control is, “*the empowerment of the families/community*.” I found that empowering exercise to be both stimulating and frustrating in about equal proportions. By definition the exercise is one involving a transfer of power requiring those who previously held that power to let it go. My own observation has been that while there may be some enthusiasm to hand over responsibility this is not accompanied by any great desire to hand over control. That I suggest is a matter requiring a high level of integrity and commitment by those who previously held the power, otherwise it simply becomes empty rhetoric.<sup>129</sup>

When collaboration does work, he says, the results demonstrate that it was worthwhile: “But on a more positive note where empowering takes place, where organizations do co-operate, and where a philosophy is shared, the results at times were outstanding.”<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Brown, Michael J, op.cit. p. 102.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.



The negative aspect that Brown is referring to is a phenomenon that, I believe, has caused a high degree of skepticism, if not cynicism, in the New Zealand context. This is because experiments in community empowerment or community consultation have not usually resulted in actual power being handed over to a community group. Sometimes consultation has resulted in a community group feeling less empowered because an invitation to dialogue that does not include active listening is violating a first principle of genuine dialogue.

Holding genuine dialogue within the community means building sound relationships and finding ways to agree joint outcomes. In the field of mediation and negotiation, a technique known as interest-based problem solving is used to reach joint outcomes. Parties hold dialogue, make trade-offs and agree on joint outcomes. Each party stands to gain more than it stands to lose because joint outcomes have greater overall value for the joint parties. Peacemaking circles offer a means of constructive dialogue between people who come from diverse places and backgrounds. State agency support for Roca stems largely from participation in peacemaking circles, as I discussed in chapters three and five.

In Oregon, a comprehensive strategic planning exercise means that all major stakeholders have bought into outcomes before the real work of identifying who is responsible for what activities begins. Oregon started this work more than a decade ago. The more recent initiatives through Senate Bill 555 and the Oregon Children's Plan, have brought focus to Oregon Benchmarks for children, young people and families. It would be a huge challenge for New Zealand to do something similar, but not to take action, using bottom up as well as top down techniques, will cause continued frustration, as expressed in Brown's report, and worse, continuing poor outcomes. It is important that New Zealand develops its own way forward on these issues, drawing on international experience and expertise as much as possible.

I am not advocating across-the-board abdication of public service accountability. But I am advocating that in order to deal with at-risk members of the community, negotiated, joint power sharing and accountability arrangements need to be put in place. I envisage that the main parties who need to engage in dialogue and discussion will include central and local government, community leaders, and leaders from non-profit organizations who have knowledge to address specific problems. It would be essential for Cabinet ministers to be involved or at least to agree to joint processes. Useful questions for deciding whether power sharing might be appropriate include the following: Does a community group or existing non-profit organization have expertise or knowledge worth sharing in this area? Have various strategies been unsuccessfully tried but the problem is persisting or becoming worse? Does each party have the capability to fulfill its roles and responsibilities in relation to each joint outcome goal? Who has the most to gain by improving outcomes?

### ***Government as enabler***

This notion acknowledges that organizations and groups outside government may be better placed to undertake projects and activities that will achieve better social outcomes and that government has a role in facilitating this. Traditionally the role of government has been that of regulator, which has meant a heavy focus on monitoring and compliance activities. Of course government must maintain essential regulatory activities like collecting taxes, ensuring law and order, public health safety and so on because these activities contribute to good government, which is an important part of civil society. Effective government systems are also an important condition for good economic performance.

If government wants to achieve better social outcomes, it will, as the research shows, need to learn to work from a systems thinking perspective. I believe the most effective role government can play is an enabler of social systems change. Collecting data on social problems and analyzing their many interrelated causes is an important task. Being able to take constructive steps to transform the lives of individuals and communities who are at-risk is another separate task for which public organizations are often ill-equipped, as we have seen in the case of Roca and in Oregon. Investing in grassroots, non-profit organizations or community initiatives that will bring about innovative and transformative change in the social arena is a positive action government can take.

Experience in Oregon shows that building capacity at the local level is fundamental to change and transformation in the community. Oregon has used its “seed” funding to help local organizations build capacity for innovative projects and programs. The experience of Roca demonstrates that grassroots organizations can be greatly assisted in building their internal capacity to help deliver better outcomes for the community. Grassroots organizations like Roca have the advantage of being highly flexible in the way they can grow and respond to opportunities for change at a more rapid pace. This contrasts with slower moving bureaucracy. They are also more likely to lead radical as opposed to incremental change, as discussed in chapter five.

The initiatives at the state and local levels in Oregon to partner with universities are good examples of government as enabler. I would like to see New Zealand adopt active “global and local strategies” for knowledge in the social field that reach all the way to the local level. A global knowledge strategy, for example, would enable practitioners and communities to tap into recognized international sources of research and knowledge, using appropriate technology. It would also ensure that people from central and local government as well as communities are continually engaged in external knowledge acquisition through either virtual or real time research and study.

A local knowledge strategy would ensure that the “no one size fits all” maxim is understood and applied. By comprehensively mapping our communities as Oregon has done, we could learn – before trying particular projects – what the local problems and concerns are, what resources and priorities exist for tackling them, and what special characteristics belong to each community that might affect outcomes.. Mapping would also help identify where government could best invest in local capacity building. It is possible that communities would need knowledge of planning, accounting, governance,

ethical conduct or other expertise which would help them to perform better. Roca was funded (by a foundation grant) to develop internal capability with outstanding results. As enabler, I believe government would be able to focus more easily on outcomes and would be less preoccupied with outputs. Focusing on the end result or outcome goal has to become second nature to public officials in New Zealand. Government as enabler also accommodates better the notion of formal and informal systems which are fundamentally different, yet needing to work together. The fact that values, language, mental models and ways of “doing business” are very different between government agencies and communities need not stand in the way of collaboration if both modes of operation – bottom up and top down – are valued and outcome goals are joint.

### ***Creating incentives for collaboration***

This is largely about aligning budgets to a collaborative way of doing public business. The current budgetary pressures in the health, welfare and education areas are likely to continue for the foreseeable future and possibly worsen as the population ages. We need therefore to think about changing the current paradigm related to setting budgets and funding. Instead of rewarding for failure (as Osborne and Plastrik have pointed out, the worse the social problem the more money is made available to try and deal with it), we should think about rewarding public organizations and communities for solving problems and achieving outcome goals. This could mean rewarding them for community building, as well as collaborative or innovative projects.

Two different approaches might be adopted. One is a budget contingency fund each year to seed promising projects and provide rewards in real time to collaborative experiments that are working well. A second approach would be to shift existing funding to new projects. It is always difficult to move funding away from existing services and activities. Having a good performance measurement system in place, like the one Oregon is developing, which helps public officials and communities decide what activities to stop doing, is fundamental to freeing up resources to reward activities that are known to be linked to positive outcomes. A comprehensive database and good evaluation logic are both important ingredients of a good performance measurement system. It should be possible to set up criteria for both approaches based on the definitions for community building, collaboration and innovation in chapter two.

Another idea for creating incentives is to take a group of capable managers and advisors from central and local government off-line and have them work together to come up with new approaches to tackle disturbing issues in the community.

### ***Moving to longer term, relational contracting***

Relational contracting acknowledges that relationships between governments and communities are central to achieving better social outcomes. This builds on the idea that

formal and informal systems need to move closer to each other. I have already mentioned the importance of relationship building in community empowerment. The objective of relational contracting would be to draw on the strengths of both formal and informal systems to achieve joint outcomes. The intangible characteristics of innovative organizations that I discussed in chapter two, such as building trust, honesty, rigor, and faith, could be made explicit, for example, through a shared values statement in a contract.

Moving from output to outcome contracting for longer periods of time than one or two years will be an important task of public organizations. The purpose is to ensure that the mixed strategies required for holistic and supportive projects and programs are continuous over several years. It does not mean that contracts could not be amended in a three to five year timeframe if there was good reason to do so. The contract should be seen as a shared undertaking to achieve joint outcomes, with individual responsibilities clearly spelled out. It needs to be as flexible as possible to allow for a systems approach to achieving the outcome goal. A “do whatever it takes,” permissive approach within certain defined limits would be better suited to a collaborative model than the highly prescriptive approach that has been adopted as part of output contracting.

### ***Distributed leadership***

As discussed in chapter five, distributed leadership is about developing different kinds of leaders at all levels of the social system and facilitating decision-making at these levels, rather than keeping it only at the top. Two dimensions of leadership are important here. Senge’s depiction of leader as designer, teacher and steward is fundamental to distributed leadership, as is the idea that leaders are not only to be found at the top of a system or an organization but at all levels. Government as enabler should provide the ability to recognize leaders at different levels and nurture them. By supporting Molly Baldwin at Roca, state officials have helped to develop, over the years, a visionary leader in the community. Baldwin would be the first to remind us that one leader will not achieve her vision, however, and that there must be many leaders at all levels.

We have already seen that distributing decision-making into the community can be helpful for achieving social outcomes. Roca took on the responsibility for tackling the escalating high school drop out rate in Chelsea by proposing a different kind of school, and then asked state and city partners for support. The response was almost overwhelming. It would have been unthinkable for a state agency to put forward such a proposal because the community learning center or street school will be outside the public education system. That is, Roca will not seek accreditation in the public system because it believes that the public system is fundamentally flawed in the way it tries to teach the young people who come to Roca. This is a case of leadership in innovation coming from the bottom up, with state agencies being fully supportive or enabling in their response.

Roca's way of providing development opportunities for young people, no matter how damaged, to contribute and become leaders in their community is a fine example of distributed leadership and one worth emulating. In New Zealand, practicing distributed leadership could be as basic as identifying and working with local government and community leaders on a specific issue but allowing the decisions to be made in the community. It is important to give them real power and control over decision-making, as discussed under power sharing. It does not mean that all the decision-making power would go to communities. That would be to flip the current arrangements on their head and that would achieve little. What is required is modification of current arrangements on a common sense basis.

## **Conclusion**

The kind of society we want for our country in the future is a question that many New Zealanders are concerned about. Poor economic performance is one concern, poor social indicators are another. They are linked. Poor social indicators not only place internal pressure on the economy and diminish potential productivity levels, but they fundamentally challenge the values and norms of our society. If the future is to include better social outcomes as well as improved economic growth, we must find ways to underpin core values such as human dignity and diversity, high standards of education, and employment opportunities for all. For those New Zealanders who are “falling out of the system” we need to find ways to transform the system.

In concluding I quote Mick Brown again: “Dramatic change in this whole field of child care and nurturing will only occur with major attitudinal and societal transformation.”<sup>131</sup> My research has shown that achieving transformation or social systems change is fundamental to improving social outcomes in New Zealand. Collaboration between government and the community is central to this change.

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

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