10

EARNING TRUST, CREDIBILITY AND LEGITIMACY

Introduction

In the late 1990s, one of the pioneering scholars of multiparty collaboration, Eugene Bardach, introduced the concept of interagency collaborative capacity (ICC). ICC refers to the *potential* to engage in collaborative activities and, according to Bardach (1998: 20–21), consists of: 1) *objective components*, which take the form of formal agreements, personnel, budgetary and other resources; and 2) *subjective components*, which are mainly concerned with expectations built around:

> beliefs in the legitimacy and the desirability of collaborative action directed at certain goals, the readiness to act on this belief, and trust in the other persons whose cooperation must be relied on for success.

The objective components of collaboration are addressed elsewhere in this volume (see Chapters 5–8) and it is to *subjective components* that we now turn in this discussion of trust, credibility and legitimacy.

The processes that enable and sustain collaboration sometimes challenge established patterns of authorisation, operation and governance— especially in public sector entities. Social-purpose organisations in the public and not-for-profit sectors extol collaboration without exhibiting a strong grasp of collaborative practice. Incorporating 'collaboration'

as a box that must be ticked in grant applications and other processes is a well-established ploy that attracts cynicism (Pell 2016). Even authentic attempts at collaboration can be thwarted by institutional, systemic, cultural and attitudinal barriers.

Importantly, effective collaboration relies on partners and stakeholders arriving at a mutual understanding about purpose, aims and actions. Mutual understanding 'legitimises and motivates ongoing collaboration', leads to 'shared commitment' and entails the ability to understand and respect the positions and interests of others in ways that confirm that participants in a collective endeavour are 'trustworthy and credible with compatible and interdependent interests' (Emerson et al. 2012: 14).

Successful collaboration sometimes requires stakeholders to give up power and control, to take risks and to operate outside accepted frameworks. Collaboration leaders must earn and retain the trust of stakeholders—both internal and external—and maintain legitimacy and credibility. They also need to be keenly aware of the need to provide assurance that the collaborative process is being authentically pursued and appropriately governed.

In this chapter, we consider the example of Change the Story, a collaborative initiative whose aim was the development of a comprehensive national framework for the prevention of violence against women and their children. From the outset, Change the Story confronted the challenge of forging broad agreement in a diverse and sometimes fractious policy space. Observations from other cases will also be drawn on.

We also consider the utility of social licence to operate (SLO) as a means for framing demonstrations of stakeholders' trust in collaborative processes (Butcher 2018). The relevance of SLO to collaboration will be discussed in the context of the establishment of Children's Teams in New Zealand communities in which Māori form a significant share of the local population.

The meaning of trust, credibility and legitimacy

Before we proceed, let us first consider what the terms trust, credibility and legitimacy mean in the context of multiparty collaboration. As a starting proposition, our research compels us to emphasise that the qualities of trust, credibility and legitimacy have to be *earned*; they cannot be compelled and certainly cannot be taken for granted.

Organisations operating in multiparty settings might occasionally hope to capture one or more of these qualities by *association*. For example, when government agencies purchase services from not-for-profit organisations they also benefit from the legitimacy not-for-profits confer on government-initiated and funded programs (Casey 2004).

Leadership and legitimacy

Collaborative leadership has been addressed elsewhere in this book (Chapter 7). Even so, it is essential to stress the influence of leadership on trust, credibility and legitimacy. Our observations suggest that three critical factors—integrity, competence and power—need to be addressed. Further, we believe that 'integrity' corresponds to 'trust', 'competence' corresponds to 'credibility' and 'power' corresponds to 'legitimacy'.

To a large degree, the ability of collaboration leaders to engender *trust* on the part of internal and external stakeholders will be a function of the personal qualities brought to the role. In general, the qualities that combine to create *integrity*—such as honesty, consistency, intelligence, authenticity and empathy—will go a long way towards reassuring those whose cooperation and licence are essential to the achievement of collaboration aims. And, to the extent that collaboration leaders have the backing of key authorisers, stakeholders can have assurance that their word has currency (see Chapter 7).

Collaboration leaders can influence levels of *credibility* via demonstrations of organisational and operational *competence* (see Chapter 5). The 'soft' qualities of honesty, integrity and consistency will not amount to much without the application of the 'hard' skills required to demonstrate accountability for performance. In some respects, this is about intentions versus actions. Stakeholders reasonably expect collaboration leaders and partners to *do* what they *say*, and do it competently.

Lastly, the perceived *legitimacy* of a collaboration can depend on the manner in which it addresses differences in *power* among collaboration partners, where 'power' is a function of size, formal authority and control over resources.[1] As observed by Bowden and Ciesielska (2016: 29):

> [T]hose thrust into collaborative leadership roles in cross-sector partnerships from the private and third sectors, and citizens, need to learn new capabilities to maximise their contribution and enable their cross-sector partnership to be a success.

Collaboration between not-for-profits and businesses

A major strand of the collaboration literature concerns the forging of synergistic relationships between not-for-profits and businesses. Although cross-sector partnerships between businesses and not-for-profits are a relatively new development in the Australian context, in the United States, they have existed for more than two decades in the domains of education, health care, the environment, child care, community and economic development, the arts and public safety (Googins and Rochlin 2000: 127).

Galaskiewicz and Colman (2006) and Austin and Seitanidi (2012) each propose a four-part typology for collaborations between not-for-profit organisations and businesses. Although they use different labels, the two typologies are in essence identical (see Table 10.1).

Table 10.1 Collaboration between not-for-profits and businesses

McInerney (2015: 294)	Austin and Seitanidi (2012: 736–44)
Philanthropic, which generally takes the form of unilateral payments from firms to not-for-profit organisations, but can include cooperative service delivery	Philanthropic collaborations, in which the directionality of the resource flow is primarily unilateral, from the company to the non-profit organisation
Strategic, when firms offer resources to not-for-profit organisations and receive exclusive rights to benefits in exchange	Transactional collaborations, in which the directionality of the resource flow shifts from unilateral to bilateral and entails an explicit exchange of resources and reciprocal value creation

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1   Even partnerships between not-for-profit organisations can exhibit stark differences in power and influence, with the 'stronger' partner generally seeking to exercise a leading role and less powerful partners relegated to subsidiary roles.

McInerney (2015: 294)	Austin and Seitanidi (2012: 736–44)
Commercial involves arrangements that provide direct benefits for both parties through the sale of co-branded or licensed products or services	Integrative collaborations, in which the partners' missions, values and strategies demonstrate a high degree of congruence and collaboration and are seen as integral to the strategic success of each organisation
Political, which occurs when firms and not-for-profit organisations seek changes in political arrangements that benefit them both	Transformational collaborations, in which interdependence and collective action are the operational modalities through which large-scale social benefits can accrue to a significant segment of society or to society at large

Cross-sector partnering between not-for-profit organisations and businesses can also act as a 'powerful vehicle for implementing corporate social responsibility (CSR) and for achieving social and economic missions' (Austin and Seitanidi 2012: 728). Indeed, much of the literature concerning collaborations between businesses and not-for-profits is derived from the corporate social responsibility point of view and is concerned primarily with the advantages to be gained from collaboration, such as profitability, competitive edge and enhanced reputation (Schiller and Almog-Bar 2013: 943).

Cross-sector partnerships with not-for-profits offer a number of potential benefits to businesses, including:

- opportunities to train employees through 'service learning'
- increased employee morale through volunteering or engagement in social purposes
- access to unique data that can help define market trends for certain communities
- the potential to develop new markets and processes
- conferred legitimacy and the provision of a social licence to operate
- support during times of crisis
- support for employee interests (Googins and Rochlin 2000: 136–37).

Not-for-profits enter into collaborations with businesses to 'augment their resources, increase their exposure and networks and acquire new skills and practices' (Schiller and Almog-Bar 2013: 942–43). Among the potential benefits flowing to not-for-profits from business are:

- access to financial resources/contributions
- the provision of technical expertise/innovation

- exposure to new management practices or training
- access to volunteers/workforce
- greater opportunities to leverage relationships with other stakeholders (policymakers, funders)
- more diverse and skilled board participation/development (Googins and Rochlin 2000: 133).

Partnerships between not-for-profits and businesses can also lead to unlikely alliances between organisations that are guided by fundamentally different logics. Differences in purposes, values and strategic priorities can result in relationships that transition from confrontation to collaboration—a journey that can be assisted by third parties acting in the role of strategic allies to the collaboration (Arenas et al. 2013: 724–27). These third parties might be individuals or organisations and fall into one of four ideal types: facilitating allies, participating allies, mediators and solution-seekers (see Table 10.2).

Table 10.2 Typology of third parties involved in the transition from confrontation to collaboration between businesses and civil society

	Allies of civil society	Neutral
Not involved in the solutions	**Facilitating ally** • has influence or control over resources of company • recognised as member of organisational field • able to transfer information and knowledge	**Mediator** • trusted for an unbiased, even-handed approach • credible for expertise • able to translate meanings and knowledge • helps overcome misgivings and reluctance
Involved in the solutions	**Participating ally** • same as above, but takes active part in designing and/or implementing solutions	**Solution-seeker** • same as above, but takes part in designing and/or implementing solutions

Source: Arenas et al. (2013: 734).

Here it must be said that collaboration with business did not feature significantly in the cases we investigated for the study, although a number of the initiatives we looked at would consider that certain sectors of the business community have a notional stake in the objects of the collaboration. For example, each of the backbone groups involved in the WHO STOPS Childhood Obesity initiative have sought to enlist the participation of local businesses and chambers of commerce, focusing on the promotion of healthy food options. Likewise, the various initiatives

focusing on community resilience under the CBEM are acutely aware of the role played by local businesses in supporting disaster response and recovery efforts. In the justice space, Throughcare works with local employers to provide work experience, apprenticeships and employment opportunities for offenders prior to and following release from a custodial sentence. Although in these instances engagement with the business community falls short of collaboration, it is entirely conceivable that, over time, these relationships might mature into something durable.

The concept of 'social licence'

The concept of SLO originated about three decades ago in the Canadian mining industry as a mechanism for enterprises to gain the permission for mining operations from affected communities—particularly indigenous communities. SLO has now spread to other resource industry sectors, such as forestry and renewable energy, and is also being applied in the international aid and development space. A key feature of SLO is that it most often applies when enterprises are 'operating out of place', often in postcolonial settings, and is centrally concerned with obtaining the 'permission' or 'licence' from communities for activities that affect them.

Is collaboration the right strategy?

Collaboration is not always the most appropriate—or necessary—strategy (Goldsmith and Eggers 2005). Collaboration takes time and has high transaction costs, and, in some circumstances, there might be alternative strategies that are more suitable to addressing the problem at hand (Bowden and Ciesielska 2016: 24; Hartley et al. 2013: 828). However, to the extent that 'collaboration' has become a buzzword in public policy, many organisations in the public and not-for-profit sectors might feel the need to 'tick the collaboration box'.

For example, Pell (2016: 4) suggests that a requirement to collaborate can generate *compliance* rather than *innovation* insofar as 'the ingenuity of public servants is channelled into writing convincing accounts of how collaboration has been achieved'. Having collaboration as a policy goal, she argues, can result in joined-up documents, not joined-up services, resulting in 'an immaculate track record of collaborative working on paper' (Pell 2016: 4).

Goldsmith and Eggers (2005) summarise the factors favouring a networked governance model versus a hierarchical governance model (Table 10.3).

Table 10.3 Factors determining government's choice of a governance model

Factors favouring networked model	Factors favouring hierarchical model
Need for flexibility	Stability preferred
Need for differentiated response to clients or customers	Need for uniform, rule-driven response
Need for diverse skills	Only a single professional skill needed
Many potential private players available	Government the predominant provider
Desired outcome or outputs clear	Outcome ambiguous
Private sector fills skill gap	Government has necessary experience
Leveraging private assets critical	Outside capacity not important
Partners have greater reach or credibility	Government experienced with citizens in this area
Multiple services touch same customer	Service is relatively stand-alone
Third parties can deliver service or achieve goal at lower cost than government	In-house delivery more economical
Rapidly changing technology	Service not affected by changing technology
Multiple levels of government provide service	Single level of government provides service
Multiple agencies use or need similar functions	Single agency uses or needs similar functions

Source: Goldsmith and Eggers (2005: 51).

Hilvert and Swindell (2013) suggest a decision-making framework for those considering the appropriateness of pursuing a collaborative approach (Table 10.4).

Table 10.4 A decision-making framework for choosing a collaborative approach

Examine the rationale behind collaboration	There are five prominent motivations for public sector managers to pursue collaboration: 1. It is the 'right thing' to do. 2. Levering resources. 3. Better outcomes. 4. Building constructive relationships. 5. Better processes (O'Leary and Gerard 2013). Understanding the rationale behind a collaborative effort 'will help to achieve results that will better meet the needs of the participants and work to capitalise on strengths of the relationship as well as address goals of the proposed collaboration' (Hilvert and Swindell 2013: 245).

Consider the type of collaboration that should be pursued	Public managers need to be aware of the types of collaborative arrangements that best meet the needs of the particular situation, goal or problem at hand (Hilvert and Swindell 2013: 246). Options include:
	1. Public–private arrangements involving a public agency and a private firm or a not-for-profit organisation.
	2. Public–public arrangements involving collaborations between at least two units of government, including:
	   • 'vertical collaborations' across different levels of government
	   • 'horizontal collaborations' involving at least two units at the same level of government (Hilvert and Swindell 2013: 245).
	Collaborations might also take the form of:
	1. a 'virtual agency' that exists as a web portal or social network platform
	2. a more 'traditional' model as a new agency established 'to deliver the shared service/services of interest to the partners'
	3. a 'nonroutine collaboration that only comes together on shared delivery situations on an as needed basis' (for example, in an emergency services or disaster relief effort) (Hilvert and Swindell 2013: 245).

Determine the correct number of partners	Public managers should understand why they wish to collaborate to best determine the correct number of partners; there may be optimal numbers of partners in a network, but too many will increase the opportunity for 'free riding' by individual partners (Hilvert and Swindell 2013: 246).
Determine the value of asset specificity in examining the potential for collaboration	Public managers need to understand the degree of 'asset specificity' associated with public goods—being the degree to which the infrastructure or technical expertise required to provide a public service is highly specific to that service and, therefore, unlikely to be readily available in the market (Hilvert and Swindell 2013: 246).
Assess the difficulty involved with contract specification and management	Public managers need to ask how difficult it would be to manage a contract for services with 'more difficult monitoring requirements or those that are more challenging to specify in contractual language' as these might be unsuitable for delivery through collaborative arrangements (Hilvert and Swindell 2013: 246–47).

Identify the barriers	The challenges commonly associated with collaborations include opposition from government line employees, restrictive labour contracts/agreements, opposition from elected officials, turf wars, political culture, reaching consensus/buy-in, lack of mutual trust, high coordination costs and free-rider problems (Hilvert and Swindell 2013: 247).
Identify the benefits	Among the most frequently cited benefits of collaboration are economic benefits, better public service, relationship-building, more and better ideas and synergy (Hilvert and Swindell 2013: 247–48). However, managers engaged in collaborative efforts generally do not rigorously or empirically monitor these arrangements once they are in place and so fail to systematically quantify or monetise the barriers and other costs associated with the collaboration (Hilvert and Swindell 2013: 248–50).

Source: Hilvert and Swindell (2013).

As a final note, Wilson et al. (2016: 4) caution that 'institutional voids' are not easily—if ever—filled by partnerships, and suggest that, on occasion, 'partnerships have arguably crowded out other relevant interest groups or introduced "solutions" that are as controversial as the problems they were intended to address'. They also observe that, when initiating a partnership, potential collaborators face a trade-off between capitalising on the opportunity to start with a 'coalition of the willing' or investing the time and effort to establish the precise motivations of potential partners, and consensus around the exact nature of the problem (Wilson et al. 2016: 4). The difficulty of getting collaborative initiatives off the ground is compounded further by 'persistent questioning' regarding the legitimacy and effectiveness of partnerships owing to the 'hype' that collaboration is a 'panacea' for solving social problems (Wilson et al. 2016: 4).

What the cases tell us

We look to the cases for insights into matters of trust, credibility, legitimacy, social licence and community empowerment; we hear, in the voices of people who have planned, designed and led collaborative initiatives, much practical wisdom.

Collaboration 'practice'

Although trust-building is an integral part of building collaborative ways of working, the traditional incentive structures of large organisations often fail to reward—and sometimes actively discourage—the skill sets required for the kinds of trust-building on which collaboration rests.

A number of people interviewed for this study emphasised that collaboration is a 'practice' and collaborative practice is not set out in a duty statement or a job description. And, as one interviewee in North Melbourne remarked: 'I don't think it's something that you can just pick up.' Another added: 'I've learned to appreciate the whole idea of building trust and extending collaboration. That's what I've learned from this.' Rather, collaborative working is about adhering to a set of values and exhibiting behaviour consistent with those values. An interviewee in Canberra reinforced the importance of practical collaboration skills: 'I've seen many examples where [collaboration] has been attempted and it's fallen over because you haven't had the skills, the commitment, the trust.'

The skill set necessary for effective collaborative practice has been thoroughly discussed in Chapter 4 and does not need to be revisited here. Let us reiterate, however, that organisations wishing to participate in collaborations need to inculcate collaboration skills *and* ensure that those skills are valued by the organisation. This latter point is particularly important because trust is not exclusively a function of stakeholders' faith in frontline collaboration practitioners; it also depends on an authorising environment that places trust and confidence in the judgement of those same practitioners.

Collaborative practice often entails exercising discretion and judgement outside the usual comfort zones associated with formal bureaucratic systems in which fidelity to rules-based operating systems sometimes seems to take precedence over building and sustaining stakeholder relationships. Building trust with external stakeholders means allowing people working at the collaboration front line to exercise judgement, take proportionate risks and give undertakings without necessarily having to refer every matter back 'up the line'. These observations are echoed in many of the interviews conducted for this study:

> If you're thinking about public service then the key is to be outward-facing and to be engaged beyond your expertise area. (CBEM)

> I think that the relationship that [the collaboration leader] has at the CEO level is very important—that they trust. It wasn't always so, but they've developed trust in [her] expertise and leadership … There's both a personal thing about [the collaboration leader] but it [is] also about the quality of the staff that she has as well, and that you have to work with that strategic level as well as with the workers. To me, that's the strength—that there's both. (WHO STOPS)

> A lot of what we spoke about openly was how do we develop trust, and that included being really open about things like making commitments … There was often an explicit understanding that we had to work in a collaborative way that involved trust and risk-taking and a new way of working. (Throughcare)

Credibility

Credibility is the combination of several qualities: authenticity, honesty, believability and reliability. A credible person is not necessarily one who readily acquiesces to every demand or shapes their position so as to avoid contradiction:

> It's very important to keep your credibility up. And credibility sometimes, perhaps, means doing things that some people don't like. So, getting runs on the board in terms of delivering on your strategic plan and delivering on your promises and commitments is very important. But I think even more important is the credibility of the organisation. Sometimes things get delayed or you may not be able to deliver—you've run out of funding or something—but, to me, for this organisation, it's the credibility that's … really important. And that means always sticking to your evidence base and never deviating from that … If it's not evidence based, we don't say it. And I think that's what credibility is about. (Change the Story)

A credible person acts with integrity, conviction and purpose, is able to back their position with evidence, but also accepts when they are wrong and adjusts their position accordingly. A credible person is realistic about the constraints imposed by their authorising/operating environment but also willing to test the boundaries. A credible person is not afraid to take proportionate risks, is willing to share decision-making and, having made an undertaking, follows through with their commitment. A credible person acts prudently and is willing to shift the goalposts but is also transparent about the prospects of success.

We have elected to portray credibility in terms of the qualities brought to the table by individuals. An individual actor possessing each of the qualities mentioned above can only be effective if they have executive sanction to use them:

> Yes, you've got to have that credibility and you've got to know what you're doing, for sure. And you can't be doing it on your own. You can't go out and do anything on your own; you really need that mandate and that strength from the organisation and from senior managers in the organisation … But if you've got a ministerial mandate to do something, it really makes all the difference. It certainly does. (Whangarei Children's Team)

It is sometimes remarked that collaboration often occurs informally without the benefit of executive sanction or direction. Sometimes this occurs because the task of seeking approval to collaborate is too time-consuming and bureaucratically difficult. Sometimes, it is because collaboration partners do not have confidence that approval will be granted. And, if approval *is* granted, it is essential that collaboration partners at the coalface not be obliged to continually run the risk of having their decisions and commitments undermined or countermanded from above without due cause, because the cost to the credibility of the collaboration might fatally jeopardise hard-won goodwill:

> At a leadership level, it's giving your staff permission to share information and managing and then having trust and confidence that you will manage that risk. For some of our staff who unfortunately think their profession, whatever that might be, makes them more important and more at risk than others if they work collaboratively, they can be a barrier to doing the right thing for children. (Manaaki Tairawhiti Children's Team)

> I'd say there's another dimension that was critical to achieving [trusting relationships], and it was an individual within that constellation of relationships that showed the leadership and in whom people had the confidence that if they were saying that this is the potential and possibilities, they trusted that person to commit to it. (CAP directorate)

Credibility can be compromised or lost entirely if collaboration practitioners either do not possess the personal qualities outlined above or are inhibited from expressing those qualities because of constraints imposed by their authorising environment. It should be added that, in

some contexts, credibility is also a function of the practitioner's knowledge of, empathy for and attachment to the circumstances of those whose lives stand to be affected by collaboration:

> Given the localised nature of things, [practitioners] need to have strong credibility and understanding of the local operating environment that they are leading out the work in. So, to that end, I'd say most of the time—not necessarily always—they need to be someone that's had their knees under various tables in the community for some time … I think the trick really goes back to having someone there that's got good local credibility and who knows who they need to be working with and influencing to get things happening in the right way. (Whangarei Children's Team)

Legitimacy

Legitimacy is the third leg of a three-legged stool on which the remaining legs represent trust and credibility. Without all three the stool cannot stand.

Demonstrating the legitimacy of a collaborative initiative is a complex matter. Among the broad questions that might be asked by collaboration partners are:

- What authority do we have to act in this space?
- What capacity do we bring to the collaboration?
- What is our track record with respect to the central issues of concern?
- Have all relevant stakeholders been consulted and their viewpoints considered?
- What is our standing with the diverse communities of interest with a stake in the issues?
- What issues of contention or contradiction might serve to impair our relationship with other collaboration partners and stakeholders?
- How does our history in this space and our capacity to act add value to the collaboration?

Again, it is important that authorisers act as enablers, not inhibitors, of collaborative action:

> I would say one of the key things [you] need to do early on is a bit of a stakeholder scan. So, who are the absolute key people, organisations, processes, that we have to engage to make it work? What is often a failure for these things is where key people are

> left out … On the legitimacy front, making sure you've got the authorisers in mind. So, even if particular senior people in this process are not going to be engaged, at least knowing that they won't be an obstruction or, even better, are going to be actively supportive or provide the wherewithal to enable it to go ahead. (Throughcare)

It is clear from the interviews that establishing and demonstrating legitimacy were foremost in the thinking of those charged with the establishment of the collaborations we examined:

- For **Change the Story**, the involvement of Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) was integral to both the credibility and the legitimacy of the initiative, as was a comprehensive national consultation involving diverse stakeholders from all parts of the sector.

- The impetus for **Throughcare** came from the community sector, and a process of shared governance involving community sector and public sector partners ensured consistent communication with all relevant stakeholders.

- The approach to **CBEM** has been strongly grounded in the lived experience of people and communities that have been directly affected by natural disasters and who have experienced at first hand the successes and failures of past disaster recovery efforts.

- **WHO STOPS** and its subsidiary projects in Portland and Hamilton have derived significant legitimacy from the involvement of Deakin University's GOC and the academic researchers who have contributed their expertise to the task of building community awareness and a sense of local agency.

- **Children's Teams** in Rotorua, Gisborne and Whangarei, New Zealand, have worked hard to establish their legitimacy by reaching out to *iwi* and community leaders, and by ensuring that key positions are held by people who are capable and who have deep local connections to place and Māori culture.

Social licence

As discussed in Chapter 9, a concern for 'place' is a persistent theme in each of the cases examined. It is also a source of tension. In some instances, this entails an expectation that collaborative responses to problems will

be tailored to the lived experience of the people and communities who require an intervention (Change the Story was somewhat different, but was nevertheless led, to a degree, by the interests and perspectives of stakeholders—as opposed to imposing a model from the top).

The notion of a social licence arises with expectations that the mode of intervention, and the relationships necessary to support a collaborative response, will have the confidence, trust and even permission of the communities in which it is operating. Because, whether or not those in charge of delivery live locally, their authorisers are usually 'out of place'. To the extent that collaborations are based on relationships and trust, and trust is offered conditionally, the licence exists in the exchange of trust implicit in collaborative action.

Linked to the notions of legitimacy and trust is the perceived need for collaborations to have the express or implied permission of communities of interest to engage in collaboration. These might be communities in the conventional sense of villages, towns or regions characterised by a shared identity and established social networks; they might also be 'interests' as manifest in civil society groupings, beneficiaries or users of services, institutions or even professional groupings (clinical practitioners, industry groupings and so on). Prima facie, it would seem obvious that for the concept of 'communities of interest' to be meaningful there would need to be avenues available for expressing and aggregating the views of a community, however it is defined.

The collaborations represented in the cases each exhibit both bottom-up and top-down approaches. Each is steered from below—either from the community or from a community of interest—while using top-down processes to moderate community views and shape a practicable path forward. In the case of the CAP, there is an evident tension between the local Children's Teams and governance group and the CAP directorate/ministry in Wellington.

In New Zealand, particular emphasis is placed on the relationship between Crown entities and Māori/*iwi*. A high proportion of the population in each of these communities identifies as being of Māori descent: 37.5 per cent in Rotorua (StatsNZ 2013b), 48.9 per cent in Gisborne (StatsNZ 2013a) and 26.2 per cent in Whangarei (StatsNZ 2013c). Moreover,

in each of these communities, Māori and Pacific Islander households figure disproportionately in the caseloads of agencies charged with the protection of children.

In these communities, public administration is still viewed through a postcolonial lens by Māori/*iwi* (Ruckstuhl et al. 2014) and, for this reason, the rollout of Children's Teams is seen by many in the Māori community as requiring an SLO. As recalled by a former Wellington-based official:

> One of the things that we've had fed back to us when we've moved further north is—this is particularly from *iwi*: 'Hang on a minute, this is another thing that the Crown and government are imposing on us without actually talking to us about it first.'

Final observations

The following broad observations are germane to issues of trust, credibility and legitimacy, although they also have wider ramifications for collaborative practice.

Consultation

Each of the collaborations in this study has commenced with a process of extensive consultation with a variety of internal and external stakeholders. Consultations have focused on both the framing of the problem to be addressed and the potential for a collaborative approach to address the problem. Consultation has occurred informally—for example, by providing ad hoc briefings for ministers, ministerial advisers and the executives of partner/affected organisations—and formally, in public forums with stakeholders and the wider community. To have a chance of success, collaboration needs to be built on acceptance and trust. And because collaboration usually involves a departure from BAU, it is essential to provide assurance to stakeholders—whether they are agency executives, frontline workers, interest organisations or end users. Consultation also affords opportunities to generate buy-in from stakeholders—a commitment to the aims of the collaboration and its modus operandi.

Evidence base

In each of the cases, a capacity to offer evidence in support of a collaborative approach has proved to be essential in winning support from partner organisations and from external stakeholders who might be concerned about any change to existing systems and processes (even where existing systems are demonstrably not working). This includes evidence about the nature and scale of the problem, the extent to which existing systems and programs have failed to demonstrate impact and whether collaborative approaches are impactful. While the first two are crucial to winning institutional and community support for collaboration, the last is essential to sustain the formal authorisation and social licence that enable collaboration to occur.

Expectations

Collaboration partners in each of the cases investigated for this study have struggled at times to temper the expectations of authorisers and communities of interest. As discussed in Chapter 2, collaborative approaches are often invoked when it has already been accepted that BAU is not working and there is no choice but to try something different. What this also means is that stakeholders of all types are impatient for positive results. Collaboration is not a quick fix, however; it requires a significant upfront investment of time in building relationships and trust, as well as the establishment of shared expectations and procedural norms. Authorisers, however, are often impatient for results and do not always appreciate that working collaboratively needs time and extensive groundwork or that definitive impact might not be immediately apparent (see Chapter 3).

Community empowerment

A recurring theme in each of the cases is about empowering and enabling communities of interest to assume a degree of intellectual and practical ownership of the aims and means of the collaboration. In relation to WHO STOPS, it is about creating an appetite for change and utilising a systems approach to identify intersections of interests where different actors can come together with some effect. In the case of Throughcare, it involves empowering offenders and their families to be involved in formulating

their aspirations and options post release, as well as encouraging support workers to venture outside their programmatic silos. In the case of Change the Story, it took the form of engaging across sectoral and jurisdictional boundaries to lead a conversation in which people with quite different perspectives felt they had been 'heard'. With regard to the Children's Teams, it invoked the (imperfectly realised) ideal of 'nationally supported, locally led'; and, in the case of the CBEM community-led resilience initiative, it explicitly involves engaging local influencers and encouraging them to work together towards common goals.

Practice considerations

1. In what ways might it be expected that collaboration will yield results unobtainable by sticking with the status quo?

2. Do the partner organisations' executive or leadership understand the rationale and expected benefits of a collaborative approach?

3. Has a stakeholder scan been carried out that identifies the people, groups, communities and organisations/institutions with a stake in the aims and objects of the collaboration (including internal stakeholders)?

4. Has an assessment been made of the nature and history of each stakeholder's interest in the collaboration, and the nature of any strategic/reputational risks (or benefits) that might be attached to that interest?

5. Has a full and frank assessment been made of the partner organisations' own history of action—or inaction—with respect to the problems to be addressed by the collaboration?

6. Has a full and frank assessment been made of the partner organisations' reputation with the public generally, and with relevant stakeholders in particular?

7. Do the partner organisations' executive or leadership understand the importance of trust, credibility and legitimacy in the context of collaboration?

8. Are there people within partner organisations with the reputation, skills, knowledge, judgement and temperament to lead/participate in a collaborative initiative?

9. What aspects of the partner organisations' operational culture might act to inhibit the expression of the range of qualities required to earn trust, establish credibility and demonstrate legitimacy?

10. Is the organisation prepared to back those working at the collaboration front line by: a) giving unambiguous formal authority to act collaboratively, and b) giving collaboration leads the authority to obtain the consent of affected interests to do things differently (social licence)? The latter is especially relevant in circumstances in which the collaboration seeks to address complex problems that affect historically disempowered communities, including indigenous communities.

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