Building capacity for sustainable Iwi development

Russell Bishop and Sarah Jane Tiakiwai
Te Kura Toi Tangata
The School of Education
Te Whare Wānanga
University of Waikato
[rbishop@waikato.ac.nz; rimu@waikato.ac.nz]

Abstract

Since 1998, four iwi groups have participated in a Maori Sustainable Development project with researchers from the University of Waikato.[1] This project has sought to develop a better understanding of iwi aspirations for economic, social and cultural development. Based on this research, the project seeks to identify, in conjunction with iwi, capacity building models and options in order to provide sustainable economic, social and cultural development. One finding of the research, based on the responses from iwi who have participated in this project, identifies iwi values and identity as the basis for a capacity building model for Maori sustainable development. It is this that is the focus of this paper.

Introduction

Since 1998, four iwi organizations (Tauranga Moana Maori Trust Board, Te Arawa Maori Trust Board, Te Runanga o Ngati Porou, Raukawa Maori Trust Board) have participated in a Maori Sustainable Development project with researchers from the University of Waikato. This project has sought to develop a framework to better understand iwi aspirations for economic, social and cultural development. Based on this research, this project has tried to identify, in conjunction with iwi, capacity building models and options in order to promote sustainable economic, social and cultural development. One finding of the research, based on the responses from iwi who have participated in this project, is that cultural identity has and should form the basis of capacity building models for Maori sustainable development.

This paper contextualises the Maori Sustainable Development project, and suggests that capacity building for iwi is shaped and guided by this notion of cultural identity, underlined by the assertion that Maori want to "live as Maori" (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 30), and "advance as Maori" (Durie, 1998, p.5). Informed by Maori development theory, which is located within a kaupapa Maori paradigm, this paper argues that capacity building from this theoretical position builds upon Maori notions for self-determination, or tino rangatiratanga, as conceived by the Hui Taumata in 1984 and carried forward by the Hui Whakapumau in 1994.

This paper will define capacity building and sustainable development, drawing on the examples and discussions provided by Maori through what has been acknowledged as the decade of Maori development (Durie, 1998). From this position, a clearer notion of Maori development theory emerges.

Western-based capacity building and sustainable development theory has to a large extent ignored indigenous attempts to articulate their own theories (Loomis, 1999). Based on notions of economic advancement, much of this theory exhorts and promotes philosophies that are more akin to New Right thinking than incorporating intrinsic Maori values. Maori development theory is located within a kaupapa Maori

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paradigm, which in essence seeks greater autonomy for Maori in determining their future development, and from which an "influential and coherent philosophy and practice for Maori conscientisation, resistance and transformative praxis to advance Maori cultural capital" has emerged (Smith, 1999, p.61). To this extent, the Hui Taumata (1984) and the Hui Whakapumau (1994) reflect this coherent philosophy. Furthermore, these hui have grounded and shaped Maori development theory, providing a benchmark from which Maori have been able to determine their own directions for the future. This paper will briefly outline the Hui Taumata and Hui Whakapumau, particularly in relation to how these hui have informed Maori development theory.

This paper outlines how the four iwi groups involved in the project have sought to develop their own models for development, based on the notions of Maori development theory, which reinforces the "advancement of Maori peoples as Maori" (Durie, 1998, p.53).

The Maori sustainable development project

The "Maori Sustainable Development in Te Puku o Te Ika" four-year research project, initiated in 1998, is funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST). The project consists of four objectives which seek to address:

- the development of a framework for understanding iwi aspirations of research-led social, cultural and economic development;
- identification of impediments to development;
- models and options for development; and
- identification of a means of building human capacity to sustain Maori social, cultural, and economic development.

Led by a team of researchers across a number of Faculties at the University of Waikato, the project aimed to work with the iwi groups involved, to assist them in identifying their aspirations, the impediments to the achievement or realization of these, and then to assist them in identifying models and options in order to provide sustainable economic, cultural and social development.

The project developed reports for each iwi group based on these objectives. A number of common themes were identified from these reports. These themes included a desire by iwi to explore options available to them in order to provide more effective services to their tribal members, a desire by iwi to maximize their resources (current and potential) for greater profit and return back to their tribal members, and the ability to undertake commercial and economic activities without compromising their values and identity as iwi. This paper focuses on this last point, which was identified as an inherent underlying principle that encompassed iwi approaches to capacity building for sustainable development.

The results of each iwi group have not been isolated within this paper, as it is the belief of the research team that the knowledge that the iwi groups have so willingly shared during the course of this project should be protected. Indeed, a major part of

the project has been the construction of specific, iwi reports. These have been reported back to the iwi groups who participated in the research project. This paper draws together the common themes in order to provide some comment as to the issues facing iwi organizations in their efforts to build capacity for sustainable development.

Hui Taumata 1984

Durie (1998, p.7) identified that the Hui Taumata (or Maori Economic Summit), which was held shortly after the Labour government took office in 1984, looked to positive Maori development as a new policy initiative. There were four main objectives of the Hui Taumata:

- to reach an understanding of the nature and extent of the economic problems facing New Zealand as they affect Maori people;
- to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the Maori people in the current position;
- to discuss policies for Maori equality in the economic and social life of New Zealand;
- to obtain commitment to advancing Maori interests (Durie, 1998, p.7).

Loomis, Morrison and Nicholas (1998, p.1) agree, noting that the Hui Taumata "underscored for Maori the need for greater commercial acumen, better resource utilization and improved levels of education", as well as linking "the principles of tino rangatiratanga, iwi development and economic self-reliance". Essentially, the Hui Taumata became the springboard from which theories of Maori development emerged. In particular, the Hui Taumata became the catalyst for tribal development.

While the Hui Taumata was touted as a vehicle from which Maori development could occur, and be determined and shaped by Maori and for Maori, concern was expressed at how the Hui appeared to be captured by interests from proponents of the New Right. The Labour government instigated an aggressive policy approach that advocated a free market economy, greater individual freedom, deregulation and increased competition – all reflective of New Right monetary theory (Kelsey, 1990). Durie (1998, p.11) states that some of the objectives advocated at the Hui Taumata "were all too often indistinguishable from agencies of state, and sceptics argued that the whole exercise was a carefully orchestrated manoeuvre to rid the state of its ongoing financial obligations to Maori".

However, in spite of these concerns, participants at the Hui Taumata recognized the need for Maori to become more self-reliant and emphasized greater focus on Maori development through economic self-sufficiency. The end product of the Hui Taumata - iwi development - was incorporated into the Labour government's Maori policy and, together with devolution, became the instigator for the establishment of Maori Trust Boards and iwi organizations in the 1980s (including Te Runanga o Ngāti Porou, Tauranga Moana Maori Trust Board and the Raukawa Maori Trust Board).

Hui Whakapumau 1994

A decade after the Hui Taumata, the Hui Whakapumau was held to "look back on a decade of Maori development" and to try to "anticipate developmental strategies and priorities for the next ten years" (Durie, 1998, p.52). The New Zealand economic and political landscape had changed considerably since the Hui Taumata, with the

National government moving further towards New Right economic policies and a greater trend towards user pays. For Maori, issues of access to tertiary education, employment opportunities and maintaining a basic standard of living were pervading themes of the Hui Whakapumau. These themes were expressed at a number of levels. The role of Maori women as leaders, the need to provide direction for rangatahi and the need to be able to cater for Maori elders were also all discussed and debated. More importantly, however, presentations at the Hui Whakapumau stressed the need to retain a Maori identity.

Since the Hui Taumata in 1984, Maori had managed an increased profile, which was in part due to the Sealord settlement (resulting in the establishment of the Maori Fisheries Commission, Te Ohu Kaimoana) and some tribes were negotiating settlements on their land confiscation claims. These movements had resulted in Maori becoming more involved not only in their own economic and political activities, but also in those of the nation.

Perhaps because of these rapid advances towards greater economic and political self-determination, it was noted throughout the Hui Whakapumau that these advances must not be at the exclusion of a Maori identity. Indeed, as identified by Chief Judge Eddie Durie (cited in Durie, 1998, p.52):

> It would therefore appear important . . . that the leadership and direction should remain with those who have developed from out of the people, and who share a commitment to the cultural values that have sustained past generations. There is not much point in an efficient Maori organization if it lacks a Maori heart.

These sentiments were shared by a number of the speakers, and became the main theme to emerge from the Hui Whakapumau.

A decade of Maori development

Between the Hui Taumata (1984) and Hui Whakapumau (1994), Maori had indeed made considerable advances in what has commonly been described as the decade of Maori development (Durie, 1998). The introduction of the Maori Language Act 1987 and the formal establishment of kohanga reo, kura kaupapa and whare wananga formalized the desire by Maori to educate Maori children according to Maori philosophies and values, taught in te reo Maori. In 1990, the country celebrated and protested the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.

A number of tribes were heavily involved in negotiations and research over land confiscation and Treaty of Waitangi claims, and a number of iwi organizations had been established in response to the Labour government's policies of devolution, and initiatives such as Mana Enterprises (a scheme to facilitate Maori entry into business) and MACCESS (training programs). An attempt had also been made to assist Maori into the commercial arena through the establishment of the Maori Development Corporation (MDC). However, this attempt was plagued by profit decreases and ownership issues that resulted in the Crown selling its shareholding. It became, as a result, subject to a Waitangi Tribunal claim (Durie, 1998).

Durie (1998, p.94) states that the decade of Maori development highlighted the emphasis "placed on iwi policies and iwi delivery mechanisms". However, this period also saw the rise of urban Maori authorities, such as the Waipareira Trust in West Auckland and the Manukau Urban Maori Authority (or MUMA). These urban authorities challenged the perception that iwi authorities were solely responsible for their tribal members. They also provided a forum for displaced urbanized Maori, many of whom had moved to the cities during the 1950s and 60s and had subsequently had little or no contact with their tribal roots.

Another significant development during this period also challenged the role of traditional iwi organizations, particularly in terms of the distribution of economic benefits back to Maori people. The establishment of Te Ohu Kaimoana (the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Commission), the end product of contentious negotiations between the Crown and Maori regarding the advancement of Maori fishing, resulted in highlighting issues regarding appropriate organizational models that adequately, appropriately and effectively represent all Maori in a contemporary context. Exacerbated by Treaty claims, this issue has at the time of writing yet to be finally resolved, despite representations to the Privy Council in London, New Zealand's highest judicial authority.

Despite these unresolved issues, the impact of the Hui Taumata and the Hui Whakapumau in advancing issues of Maori development was nevertheless significant. Primarily, the decade of Maori development gave Maori a greater profile and increased opportunities for participating in commercial and social development initiatives. More importantly, the decade of Maori development enabled Maori to begin determining their own development based on their needs and aspirations.

Capacity building: An overview

According to Loomis, Morrison and Nicholas (1998, p.4), capacity building is "the process by which individuals, community groups, organizations and nations develop their abilities to perform functions, solve problems and achieve desired outcomes". Eade (1997, pp. 32 – 3) states that capacity building "should not create dependency" (including dependency on donor funding sources such as government agencies); "does not mean weakening the state" (particularly in relation to government's responsibilities or good governance of its citizens); "is not a separate activity" (that is, capacity building initiatives are not seen as replacements, or "instead of" other programs occurring); and "is not solely concerned with financial sustainability" (rather, it works to enhance it).

Eade's statements regarding what capacity building is *not* help to clarify development and capacity building discourse. Furthermore, Eade (p.23, citing Eade and Williams, 1995) provides a definition of capacity building, and its relationship to development:

> Strengthening people's capacity to determine their own values and priorities, and to organize themselves to act on these, is the basis of development.

Cornell and Kalt (1998, p.2) have examined the notion of capacity building and its relationship to the development of Native American tribes, finding a "positive correlation between self-determination and successful development as defined by the tribe". The decade of Maori development, as described earlier, identified the role of

iwi in such development initiatives, and provided concrete Maori examples of development theorizing in line with Eade (1997) and the assertions of Cornell and Kalt (1998). The findings and objectives of the Hui Taumata (1984) and the Hui Whakapumau (1994) reinforced the ability for iwi to be conduits for positive and self-determined development and advancement. From this position, a clearer picture of how iwi organizations can be involved in development-based and capacity building activities emerges. As a result, more iwi organizations (such as those who participated in the Maori Sustainable Development project) have moved towards determining and redefining their role in achieving positive tribal development.

The role of Iwi authorities in capacity building for sustainable tribal development

Increasing numbers of iwi authorities and tribal groups are looking towards the settlement of Treaty claims. These claims are seen as a means by which iwi are able to instigate capacity building processes in order to assist in the self-determination of the people they represent. However, other iwi (including the four iwi groups involved in this research project) have not waited for such settlements to occur in order to move towards achieving more positive development. Furthermore, those iwi that have settled (for example, Tainui) have emphasized that such a settlement has not meant that the state can be absolved from its responsibilities (as described above by Eade), to provide for its tribal, Maori, New Zealand citizens. The dilemma for iwi organizations lies in balancing the practical, immediate needs of iwi (many of which are state responsibilities, such as education, health and welfare) and the need for iwi organizations to provide for the future financial and economic sustainability of their tribe.

Iwi organizations have a dual and often conflicting role. Many are expected by their tribal members to grow the tribal estate, through prudent, judicious and profitable commercial investment and activity. Iwi organizations are also increasingly being looked to for sources of funding, particularly for education, business development and growth, health and welfare, and the maintenance of marae and cultural and tribal identity. In essence, iwi organizations and non-Maori business entities differ, in terms of their financial and commercial activities, in the way in which profit is seen and redistributed back to 'shareholders'. For iwi organizations, involvement in commercial activities assists directly in the social and cultural development of tribal members. Conflict arises when commercial profits are not large enough to ensure sufficient investment back into tribal initiatives and activities, and in balancing these needs with the need to provide for sustainable future development.

The role of iwi organizations in this process of capacity building and sustainable development, therefore, is complex. This is due to the need to prioritise strategic approaches towards development that often require consultation, negotiation and, at times, compromise or litigation regarding the dual role of providing for the social and economic needs of the tribe. Eade (1997) notes that these complex issues are important components of the capacity building process.

Identifying capacity: Iwi values and identity

The iwi authorities involved in the Maori Sustainable Development project identified that their development is based upon, and influenced by, their specific tribal values. Specifically, this has included the incorporation of core tribal philosophies and values

in their strategic planning processes, philosophies and values which underline their approach to economic investment and involvement in commercial activities. The iwi organizations see their tribal philosophies and values as underpinning their activities by distinguishing themselves from other iwi groups, and from other business and commercial entities in their regions, in New Zealand and internationally.

The iwi authorities involved are in different stages of their development. One iwi organization has redeveloped its governance structure, streamlined its management approach and undertaken extensive consultation with tribal members regarding its cultural and economic focus. This resulted in the development of a tribal-specific strategic plan for the future. Another iwi has only recently embarked on this course, commissioning economic and education reports as part of its strategic planning process. The other two iwi authorities are similar. Both are still moving through various strategic planning phases. All these iwi have Treaty claims lodged against the government and are at different stages in their research, negotiations and settlement approaches. The varying levels of progress are not a reflection of the relative speed with which iwi organizations have embraced the notion of capacity building for sustainable development. Rather, they reflect a range of historical and contemporary issues (including some that are unique to a particular iwi organization) that have impacted upon their ability and capacity to move forward in recent years.

However, the common link between the iwi involved in the Maori Sustainable Development project has been their desire to ensure that their unique tribal and cultural perspective is not only maintained, but is also incorporated into their daily activities and into the way they approach their options for sustainable development. In short, the iwi organizations have used their tribal identity and values as their capacity building model for achieving sustainable development. As a result, the iwi organizations feel that they have been able to ensure distinction between themselves (as iwi organizations) and 'other' commercial and non-commercial entities. Each tribe has identified its distinguishing features in terms of identity and values and has sought to determine what this means in commercial and non-commercial contexts. This has then been reflected and implemented, in varying degrees, in their approach to sustainable development. In effect, these iwi organizations have redefined the role envisaged for Maori advancement as outlined by the Hui Taumata (1984) and the Hui Whakapumau (1994) in the decade of Maori development.

Conclusion

The aim of the Maori Sustainable Development project has been to develop a better understanding of iwi aspirations for economic, social and cultural development. It has sought to identify, in conjunction with iwi, capacity building models and options in order to provide sustainable economic, social and cultural development. It has, furthermore, been based upon the Maori development theories initiated by the Hui Taumata (1984) and Hui Whakapumau (1994) during the decade of Maori development, theories which endorsed those aspects of the literature on capacity building which emphasise the need for communities to determine their own paths and ensure that economic sustainability is not the key mechanism by which development could or should be achieved.

The Maori Sustainable Development project has identified a common theme for the four iwi organizations who participated in this research project. This common theme

is the need for iwi organizations to maintain their identity and values as they seek to determine more sustainable futures for their tribal peoples. In essence, the iwi organizations stressed that iwi identity and iwi-specific values (and the ability to reflect this identity and these values in their commercial, economic, social and cultural activities) were of fundamental importance to an effective capacity building model for their future sustainable development activities.

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Endnote
1. Both this paper and the one that follows relate to the same research project. Here, the focus is largely on the capacity building aspect of the project and on its overall location historically and politically. In the following article, the emphasis is on values, aspirations and social, natural and cultural resources.

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