

MÄORI INITIATIVES IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

In 1998, a team from the University of Waikato initiated a research project in cooperation with four Māori tribes on how they could define, plan and implement their own sustainable development. This paper reports on that research, focusing particularly on the outcomes achieved by Te Arawa and Tauranga Moana tribes. The project is a four-year undertaking, funded by the New Zealand Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. The aims include enabling tribes to articulate their own values and integrated understanding of development, establishing a comprehensive inventory of resources and tāonga, identifying ways of assessing costs/benefits of investment options, and exploring participatory methods for involving the community in strategic decision-making. Although only the initial phase of the project has been completed, some lessons have been learned and useful models created to assist indigenous groups interested in implementing their own sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

The project on Māori Sustainable Development began in 1998, and has involved four Māori *iwi* (tribes). The aim has been to identify ways of defining, planning and implementing “sustainable development” that were appropriate to tribal culture, and at the same time involve a representative constituency of membership in the process. This paper reports on experiences and results to date, and the future direction of the research. The paper begins with a background on the socio-economic status of Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and recent government efforts to overcome disparities and promote Māori development. The next section discusses the inception of the project, its design and aims. I also recount some of the main activities undertaken, and some of the interesting issues raised by the research. In regard to resource inventories, reference is made to other Māori initiatives to pursue a balanced or holistic approach to development. The next section considers some of the outcomes of the research to date, particularly for Te Arawa and Tauranga Moana tribes. The paper concludes by indicating some of the next steps, and suggests some of the wider implications of the research.

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MÄORI IN AOTEAROA/ NEW ZEALAND

Mäori presently make up approximately 15% of the Aotearoa/New Zealand population, and figure that is expected to rise to 18% by 2025. Their position in the national economy is undergoing change, though the pace of change varies from sector to sector. For example, in spite of (or because of) the wide-ranging structural changes in the economy since the last world war, occupationally Mäori men still tend to be employed as plant and machinery operators (25%) and labourers (16%). However, some 12% are also employed in a trade of some sort (Te Puni Kōkiri, 1999:13).

Mäori continue to be disadvantaged in comparison with the majority population in respect to almost every socio-economic indicator. Mäori workforce participation rates are 15% lower than that of non-Mäori. Mäori are almost two and a half times more likely to be unemployed than non-Mäori. Furthermore, Mäori are more likely to be unemployed for long periods of time. Research has shown a direct link between employment and educational outcomes (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2000). In education, secondary school retention rates during the past decade show an average of only around 70% of Mäori 16 year olds remained in school and 40% of 17 year olds. Mäori students who do remain through to senior level are less likely than non-Mäori to sit national examinations or be formally assessed. Mäori are less likely (50%) than non-Mäori (72%) to own their own home, more likely to live in rental accommodation (often overcrowded), and pay a higher proportion of their income in rent. In regard to health, Mäori male life expectancy is 67 years compared with 75 years for non-Mäori. Mäori hospitalisation rates are almost double those of non-Mäori.

Not surprisingly in light of colonial history and subsequent economic marginalization, the Mäori economic base is still comparatively small. Mäori nevertheless have made significant strides in economic development, some tribes more so than others. Many Mäori trusts and incorporations are taking steps to strengthen their economic position through business and investment initiatives locally, nationally and internationally. The South Island Ngai Tahu iwi, recipients of a substantial 1998 Waitangi Treaty settlement, have already almost doubled their assets.

The total size of the Mäori commercial asset base (not including housing) has been estimated at \$5.05 billion, of which around \$3 billion is in agriculture and horticulture, and \$890 million are business and commercial assets (property, investments and tourism). Although justice is the primary purpose of settling historical grievances, Treaty settlements are facilitating Mäori economic growth by extending the Mäori asset base. To date the Crown has transferred about \$522 million in cash, fishing quota and commercial property to Mäori through Treaty settlements. Mäori now own more than half the assets in New Zealand's fishing industry. Further Treaty settlements and acquisitions will enhance the Mäori economic position even more. Taken together, Mäori are already a major owner of New Zealand natural resources and an emerging commercial force.

Successive government efforts to address these problems and promote Mäori development have met with mixed success. In 1975 the Labour government enacted the Treaty of Waitangi Act, which signalled the recognition of Mäori rights and settlement of Treaty claims via the Waitangi Commission. In part government has suffered from a coherent, and certainly consistent and informed approach to Mäori disadvantage and Mäori development. Since 1984 the Labour Government has shown interest in recognising Mäori self-determination and initiated a move toward policies of iwi (tribal) sovereignty and *devolution*. But from the outset, this approach had to contend with the rise of Neoliberalism (esp Agency Theory), which came to dominate public sector thinking and split the Labour party. Neoliberalism, as in the United States, preferred talk of self-determination and favoured *mainstreaming* and *decentralisation*. In summary, the Crown has been willing to explore decentralisation of functions, but not devolution of authority.

Only recently has serious attention been paid to increased Mäori self-determination as a basis for fostering development. Indeed, in some government circles there is still reluctance to concede that the most effective means of overcoming Mäori disparities and disadvantage is for Mäori to define their own outcomes and manage their own development (Loomis, 2000b). International and local research suggests the most effective way to overcome disparities and foster indigenous development is for government to get out of the business of running indigenous affairs. If this is the case, then clearly govern-

ment's role shifts from providing services to (a) addressing the causes of disadvantage, and (b) providing resources for Māori to build the capacities they need to make their own decisions and pursue their own development.

There has been a tendency within Māoridom to concentrate on obtaining recognition of Māori rights and on settlement of Treaty claims. Māori academic Professor Mason Durie argues (1998, 2000a) that it is time to turn from focusing on grievances, and begin asking "what kind of development do we want"? What traditional values and ethics do Māori want to guide their efforts, what kind of governance structures, and what positive outcomes for themselves and for future generations?

THE MÄORI SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The Māori Sustainable Development (MSD) project arose within this context, with increasing discussion about the nature of "Māori development". Various commentators had been pointing to traditional values and practices, and emphasising that the Māori approach was holistic. Cultural values, social institutions and the well-being of people and the environment were as important as running "successful" commercial enterprises. Māori saw social and cultural dimensions as integral to development. Durie rightly observes that standard approaches to development, and government programmes in general, tend to be compartmentalised and thus often at odds with Māori understandings. The dual challenge for Māori is how to articulate this alternative approach in a such way that it can guide iwi and hapū development planning, and how to operationalize a holistic approach through an "investment" process that involves balancing complex trade-off decisions (see Loomis, 2000a).

This project was intended to enhance Māori social and economic development by assisting tribal authorities in Te Puku o Te Ika (central North Island)¹ and their memberships to define each iwi's (tribes) understanding of sustainable development, and determine objectives for the use and preservation of their resources and tāonga (treasures).

The basic concept of the research was first presented and discussed at a meeting of Te Roopu Manukura, the University of Waikato's

Māori advisory body. The discussion provided useful suggestions on the design and process of the project, and gave an overview of the project to iwi who were interested in being involved. Four iwi were eventually selected, based on a matrix of variables covering a range of development circumstances. After further consultations with representatives of the four tribes, an initial design was drawn up by the team. This design was subsequently presented at *hui* (meetings) of the boards of all four groups over a several month period, and the agreed project design translated into a workplan relevant to the needs and priorities of each group.

The project was organised around four objectives, arranged roughly in logical sequence so that one contributed to another (Figure 1). They ranged from broad conceptual issues to questions of implementation.

Emphasis in the initial phase of the project was placed on the first three objectives. The aim of *Objective 1* was to arrive at a broadly applicable conceptual framework for defining "sustainable development" that incorporated Māori holistic understandings of the interdependence between social and political systems, economic activities, culture, nature and spirituality. This conceptual framework was expected to form the basis for each Māori group to articulate their vision and values, compile resource inventories and engage in participatory development planning.

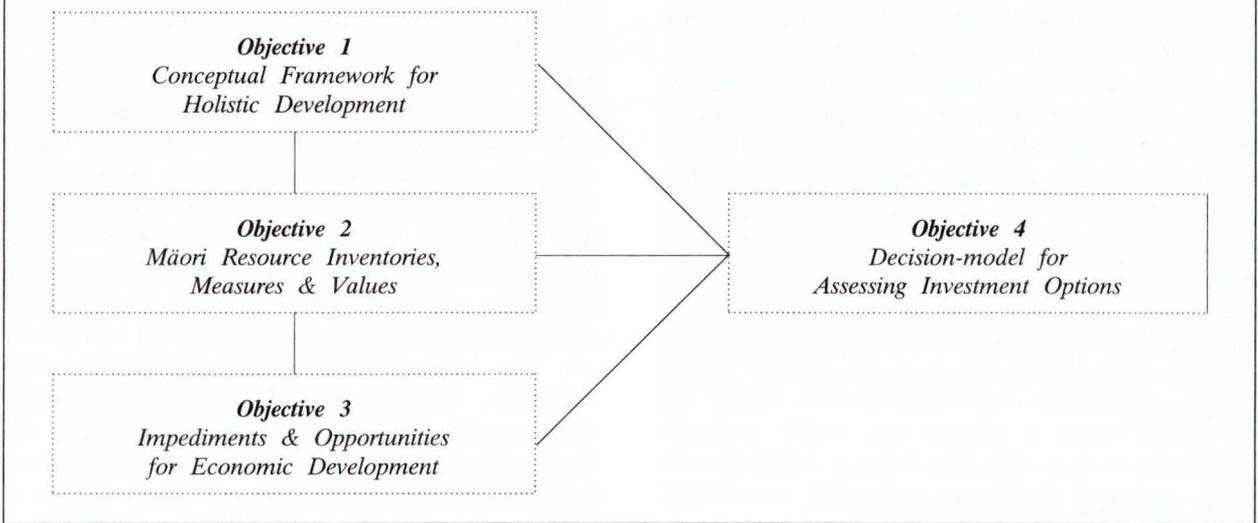
For *Objective 2*, the aim was, having established a conceptual framework and vision statement, to clarify the meaning and significance of important Māori concepts for development (e.g., *tāonga* or things of value), and establish or refine inventories of economic, natural, human, social and cultural resources.

The aim of *Objective 3* was to undertake analyses of factors of disadvantage and competitive advantage for Māori generally and for each group specifically. The intention was that these specific analyses could be incorporated into each group's operational model of resource management and development, and assist in identifying their development opportunities and capacity needs.

Research Experience

A substantial portion of the first year was taken up in presentations, briefings, consultations and further planning with these four tribal groups.

FIGURE 1
Māori Sustainable Development Project Objectives



The substance of these sessions had to do with (a) clarifying where each iwi was in the development process, (b) identifying how the various components of the proposed research project could be aligned to provide in-time input to each tribe's development undertakings, and (c) spelling out the roles and protocols for managing the project. In the end a total of 13 meetings were held with iwi boards, and a further 12 planning meetings with tribal administrative staff and iwi researchers who became part of the team.

Initial emphasis was placed on articulating a general conceptual framework for indigenous development, incorporating research on indigenous models elsewhere and the key notions of iwi leaders, elders and informants. The former information was garnered from an international literature review and a think-tank by the research team, while the latter notions emerged from interviews and wānanga (consultative workshops) with tribal groups.

As the research gathered momentum, each tribal board established a committee composed of staff, board members and volunteers to work with the research team. Each tribe also selected an individual to serve as a part-time iwi researcher, to be part of the research team. Their role was to facilitate local arrangements, assist with interviews and help with analysis and report writing. Extended interviews were held with a wide range of tribal leaders and members,

as well as focus groups. These provided the basis for compiling a list of core values and ideas about development, and identifying long-term outcomes. This information was compiled and reported back to the tribal boards for further deliberation, before being circulated in summary form to tribal members for consideration.

The first phase research activities revealed several insights regarding Māori development:

1. a holistic framework is essential to meet Māori requirements;
2. development for most groups was understood to involve not merely successful economic development, but
 - positive outcomes regarding the general wellbeing of the whole tribe;
 - empowerment, through involvement of members in the development process itself; and
 - strengthening the identity and sense of self-worth of individuals.
3. it is essential to identify values early in the process; both tribal expectations and review of ecological economics literature indicate these values and principles are essential in guiding strategic development choices, and in the case of this project, in constructing a trade-off investment model. All four groups tended to place a higher priority on *uplifting people and enhancing their wellbeing*. A

widely quoted Māori proverb about what is valuable in life ends “He tangata, he tangata, he tangata” ... It is people, people, people!

4. operationalizing holistic or sustainable development seems to be the greatest challenge, particularly where tribal leadership have recognised the importance of involving as wide a range of constituents as possible in at least establishing the broad parameters of development. There are examples where such consultation and involvement was not done at least initially (e.g., Meadow Lake Cree; Waikato-Tainui).

For example, a *tāonga* is considered to be more than an asset (i.e., a material item or set of skills that produce an income stream), and even broader a “resource” in the standard economic sense. Non-market resources (e.g., sacred land, lakes) also had to be included. But there were many such things that cannot be treated as economic resources or commodities, either in terms of their use or in their valuation. Also *tāonga* that are non-material, some of which like spiritual values and wisdom, are not likely to have a market value; others like traditional ecological knowledge and cultural repertoires do have a potential market value. Discussions in the think-tank helped clarify (a) that there appeared to be three overlapping sets of value systems at work — market or exchange value, use value, and intrinsic value; and (b) that for the sake of tribes operationalizing trade-off decisions about development options and investments, there would seem to be a necessity of attributing some standard measure of value to all these resources and *tāonga*.

The tribal boards grasped early in the research the importance in developing their own frameworks of resource inventories, and using these to identify the range of resources and *tāonga* they controlled and/or for which they saw themselves having a guardianship responsibility handed down from the ancestors. In fact a number of larger *iwi* and *hapū* who have treaty claims, and/or who are embarking on development initiatives requiring financing or joint venture partnerships, are in the process of creating just such tribal resource inventories. Government has assisted by establishing a comprehensive database of Māori-owned land. A few tribes have utilised GIS mapping as a basis for beginning their inventories.

There are a few examples where Māori tribes have either used arbitrary values, or adopted shadow-pricing to establish the value of their material and non-material resources when negotiating with the Crown and/or potential joint venture partners. Muri Whenua tribes in Northland, with assistance from the James Henare Centre at Auckland University in mid-1990s, undertook a similar exercise. They undertook interviews and consultations on values to guide development, identification of opportunities, and compilation of natural resource inventories. Researchers then utilised a checklist and ranking approach to prioritising development projects, based on the important values identified in tribal interviews. Although this procedure is fairly simple for decision-makers to understand, in this instance it was the researchers who ascribed arbitrary numeric weightings to the variables. And, which the prioritising procedure does result in ranking development projects, it does not reflect or allow for the kind of cost-benefit analysis and trade-off investment decisions implicit in a balanced or holistic approach to development.

One of the more advanced groups in terms of compiling inventories and participatory development planning is Ngāti Raukawa in the lower part of the North Island (cf Loomis, 2000a). The Raukawa confederation of tribes has now begun to focus on operationalizing a balanced approach to development planning and management that aims to maintain or strengthening all their key resources, tangible as well as intangible.

The Director of the confederation’s tertiary *wānanga* (learning centre), and one of the leaders of the group’s development effort, is Professor Whatarangi Winiata. Reporting to a recent national conference (Winiata, 2000), he stated that their ongoing project — *Whakatupuranga Rua Mano* (Generation 2000) had been a journey of identity as well as social and economic development. The project, which began in 1975, set out to identify where they were as a people, where they wanted to be by 2000. The project has involved a loose confederation made up of three *iwi* and their *hapū* (sub-tribes), each with its own distinct *whakapapa* and *kawa*, residing in the lower part of the North Island. Historically they have occasionally come together for common purposes.

Winiata observes that if this confederation is to survive, *hapū* and *iwi* will continue to exist and survive so long as they fulfil the needs and aspirations of their members, in a similar man-

ner to any voluntary association. The activities and services must be of value to the people of the confederation. But in addition, values that guide survival and development will have to be paid attention. *Mana a hapū* and *mana a iwi* relations will be crucial (broadly, governance). If the tribes are to continue to work together, they will need to address issues such as

- what to do about the emergence of new hapū
- what can they do together, what forms and mechanisms, to survive as a confederation
- must establish links between health and wellbeing, and *mana a hapū*, *mana a iwi* [i.e., development and governance]

The next stage is to specify the values and processes which will guide the journey from this point forward. For example, at present the strategy of development is based on principles including:

- People are our wealth; develop and retain them.
- Te reo is a tāonga; halt the decline and revive it.
- The marae is our principle home; maintain and respect it.

All of these and other values amount to the tribes' sovereignty or *tino rangatiratanga*.

At the moment, the confederation is concentrating on further refining and documenting their resource inventory. These are 16 key variables or indicators of Māori/iwi health and wellbeing which Raukawa have developed through their wānanga and research activities (cf Loomis, 2000a). Only some of these are material-based, since the tribes don't subscribe to the view that material indicators are the only measures of wellbeing. The confederation is proceeding to develop and enhance all these, in spite of disadvantages, lack of resources and unsettled Treaty claims.

In terms of tribal strategic planning, a number of long-term principles have been adopted to guide their discussions with members about desired outcomes and future prosperity. At the broad level, *iwi/hapū* development and management are expected to focus on achieving and strengthening *mana a iwi* and *mana a hapū* (i.e., the ability of tribes and sub-tribes to maintain and enhance their own health and wellbeing; i.e., self-determination). This is not an approach which managers should take, but an approach they *must* follow. Development is understood as

not just about making money or maximising profit, but the extent to which their *mana* is recognised by others: how have they enhanced their tāonga, how have they practised generosity to others, managed their resources, built up their people, and retained their culture. As Winiata concludes: "We will be a distinctive people only to the extent that we are maximisers of *mana* and well-being of our people, not merely profit maximisers" (ibid).

MSD PROJECT: TRIBAL OUTCOMES

In terms of concrete achievements thus far in the Māori Sustainable Development project, both the Te Arawa and Tauranga Moana have formulated vision statements, identified key values to guide development, and set out strategic objectives for pursuing the next phase of development planning and participatory decision-making. Te Arawa held a tribal economic development summit during the first year of the project, which was aimed at drawing together the disparate interests and activities of their various hapū under the theme "Cooperating to Compete". The conference laid the groundwork for subsequent economic development planning.

Equally importantly, both groups have set out their own draft frameworks for a comprehensive resource inventory. In each case the "resources" included non-material and non-marketable resources. (See Figure 2 for example inventory template.)

In the case of Te Arawa and Tauranga Moana, there are plans to use GIS mapping in conjunction with other computer databases that track tribal demographics and monitor changes in tribal resource status over time (e.g., educational attainment, health, housing, employment). Both *iwi* groups have completed a comprehensive baseline assessment of the relative status of the tribal population a range of key socio-economic, educational and wellbeing indicators. In addition, they now own the databases and tribal researchers have helped compile a methodology guide which these groups can use in the future to monitor impediments and development progress. Tauranga Moana Trust Board research progressed to the stage where it was appropriate to proceed to compile a commercial history and identify opportunities, which will provide a

FIGURE 2
Resources and Assets Inventory
(Main groups, Human, Cultural, Physical, Economic)

<p>1. Human (understanding human & people resources; human capital, capacity & capability)</p>	<p>1. Information required (resource indicators) e.g., Pop. figures for hapū; iwi; demographic info.</p>	<p>2. The area covered — e.g., tribal rohe†</p>	<p>3. Where info. presently located, e.g., Beneficiary Roll, Census data, iwi & hapū registers</p>	<p>4. Access (property rights) e.g., limited and public</p>	<p>5. Forms, Applications e.g., Trust Board database, reports</p>
<p>2. Cultural (understanding cultural resources & vibrancy, cultural integrity, Māori values, tikanga Māori)</p>	<p>1. Information required e.g., no. of marae, kaumātua, tohunga, authoritative people willing to share knowledge</p>	<p>2. The area covered — e.g., tribal rohe</p>	<p>3. Where info. presently located e.g., marae database, iwi, hapū registers, asset lists</p>	<p>4. Access (property rights) e.g., Limited, tribal database</p>	<p>5. Forms, Applications e.g., computerised, reports, District Ccl district plan, oral knowledge</p>
<p>3. Physical (understanding physical & natural resources & access, physcl state & coastal condition land, use, mana whenua, awa moana)</p>	<p>1. Information required e.g., total area of land holdings, location, land blocks under Treaty claim, present land use</p>	<p>2. The area covered — e.g., tribal rohe, national, regional</p>	<p>3. Where info. presently located e.g., Trust Board, District Council databases, hapū & iwi claim reports, hapū reps, registers</p>	<p>4. Access (property rights) e.g., Limited, Confidential — Limited, Public — Limited, Commercial</p>	<p>5. Forms, Applications e.g., Valuation docs, maps; computerised database, regional and district GIS databases</p>
<p>4. Economic (understanding available economic resources, economic capital, investments, economic potential)</p>	<p>1. Information required e.g., business links, business owned; land trusts; Māori land</p>	<p>2. Area covered e.g., tribal rohe</p>	<p>3. Where info. presently located e.g., tribal bus. Network, industry groups, iwi hapū registers</p>	<p>4. Access (property rights) e.g., Limited, Confidential — Limited, Public — Limited, Commercial</p>	<p>5. Forms, Applications e.g., oral, records, files, National GIS database, maps</p>

† rohe means “territory” in Māori.

basis for the next stage of community strategic planning and prioritising development options.

NEXT STEPS AND WIDER IMPLICATIONS

The next phase of the research will explore the linkages between social and cultural capital;² cultural vitality, appropriate governance, and

capacity-building which research elsewhere has suggested are essential not only for “successful indigenous development”³ but for sustainable development more broadly. One of the major challenges for the team and collaborating tribes will be in finding culturally appropriate and effective means of involving a wider representative constituency in strategic trade-off decisions about development options. As well as assisting tribes

to assess capacity and put in place relevant institutions, policies and procedures that give effect to their own development approach rather than necessarily relying on Western models and values.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Although the research is in an early stage, it is already contributing to better outcomes for the Māori tribes engaged in the project by facilitating their development planning, assisting in identifying the resources they have and need for development, and in exploring ways of communicating with and involving wider tribal memberships in the development journey. In addition, the general findings and models, including a report on international indigenous models and perspectives, has been distributed widely to Māori trusts and incorporations as well as policy makers. The resource inventory template and methods, as well as the database format of tribal socio-economic and wellbeing indicators are being disseminated through publications and seminars.

The research has already contributed to a broader understanding of key components and processes of planning for sustainable development building on indigenous perspectives. At a practical level, experimentation with a holistic resource inventory framework has already revealed inadequacies in international models, and suggests that such indigenous models and methods may be valuable for operationalizing sustainable development in non-indigenous contexts.

NOTES

1. The literal Māori translation is "The Belly of the Fish," a reference to the North Island being the fish that the mythical voyaging ancestor Maui pulled up from the sea.
2. Serageldin 1996; Serageldin & Steer, 1994; Loomis, 2000a.
3. Cf. Cornell & Kalt, 1992; Cornell, 1998; Serageldin, 1994; Loomis, 2000a.

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