

Community Provider Survey Summary Report
for Community Mapping Project

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a survey of community providers (186) undertaken for the Community Mapping Project. The survey was conducted across Christchurch community and voluntary organisations. The purpose of the survey was to increase understandings of:

- Demand for services
- Factors limiting the ability of organisations to meet demands for service;
- Factors limiting the ability of organisations to provide the standard and quality of service that they would like to provide;
- The extent to which organisations see a need for additional services in their local community or sector;
- Key factors that lead to successful outcomes for clients; and
- Key factors enabling organisations to function well.

The survey divided the respondent organisations into eleven categories based on the main activities and purpose of those organisations. These categories are: i) Health ii) Knowledge and Skills iii) Safety and Security iv) Social Connectedness v) Human Rights vi) Paid Work vii) Economic Standard of Living viii) Sport and Recreation ix) Arts Crafts and Hobbies x) Culture and Identity and xi) Kaupapa Maori.

2. CONTEXT

The survey findings are discussed in the context of four other reports relevant to this survey. The first of these is the *Communities and Government: Potential for Partnership, Whakatapu Whakaaro* the report of the Community and Voluntary Sector Working Party in April 2001¹. The Working Party considered the relationship between government and Iwi/Maori, community and voluntary organisations and found that “a vibrant and responsive

¹ Ministry of Social Development. (2001). *Communities and Government: Potential for Partnership, Whakatapu Whakaaro*. Report of the Community and Voluntary Sector Working Party.

community sector is an essential element of a strong civil society” (2001, p. 10).

The findings of the survey are also presented in the context of the *Christchurch City Council Community Funding Review Report*² community consultation findings. Part of this review, undertaken in 2002, was to seek the views of community organisations about funding issues. Reference is also made to the feedback from community organisations on the Council’s draft *Statement of Intent*³.

The Child, Youth and Family report, *Strengthening Social Services*,⁴ on the capacity, capability and viability of social services funded by that organisation is also of relevance to this survey⁴.

3. MAIN FINDINGS

The findings of this survey provide important indicators of the ways in which the community and voluntary sector can be strengthened. Four main themes emerge as important contributors to the successful functioning of community and voluntary organisations in Christchurch.

3.1 Funding

Funding levels were identified as an important determinant of the ability of an organisation to employ adequate numbers of skilled and qualified staff, to reward them appropriately and to offer them secure careers. A lack of funding also detracts from the primary functions of the organisation due to the necessary reallocation of staff and volunteer time to fundraising activities.

² Christchurch City Council. (2003). *Background Report 1: Consultation Findings*. Community Finding Review.

³ Christchurch City Council. (2001). *Draft Statement Of Intent*.

⁴ Child, Youth and Family. (2003). *Strengthening Social Services*. Assessment of the capacity, capability and viability of Child, Youth and Family funded social services.

Survey respondents highlighted the inadequacy of funding in terms of its level and longevity, with some emphasis upon the need for District Health Board (DHB) contracts to better reflect client demands on organisations, and to provide greater security to these organisations over the long term. Regardless of funding sources, many organisations revealed that demand for their services was consistently being out-stripped by supply. This reflected an inability to maintain adequate levels of staffing, resources and facilities. Groups also noted that a lack of publicity could mean that potential clients were missing out on services due to a lack of knowledge of the services available. Significant compliance costs (in accounting for funding received) also encroach upon precious staff time and resources.

The Community and Voluntary Sector Working Party reflected many of the funding issues raised by the survey. It noted concern for the fragility of the community sector, and found that many organisations faced a constant battle to break even. Particular concern was noted with regard to funding arrangements in terms of a lack of control over funding cycles or contract terms, indicating a need for more collaborative approaches to funding allocation. Other difficulties identified included the inadequacies of partial funding, the inappropriateness of the competitive environment created by tendering processes, funding not meeting increased demand for services, and the burden of complex compliance costs. These findings lead to a Community and Voluntary Sector Working Party recommendation for substantial change in funding delivery practises and underlying relationships.

The Child Youth and Family *Strengthening Social Services* report also identified some significant issues in keeping with the findings of the survey. Organisations had concerns about the level of resources required to take part in funding processes, and also noted that the lack of co-ordination between funders is frustrating for funding recipients. However, some groups commented that a gradual shift towards more meaningful measurement of outcomes is proving helpful. While this shift is not being experienced by all groups, it should be noted that this finding is in keeping with the direction advocated by the Community and Voluntary Sector Working Party Report.

The Council's consultation for the *Funding Review Report* and the feedback on the draft *Statement of Intent* echoed the concerns raised in the survey. Community organisations were acutely aware of the high demand for funding, and of the resources required to seek and then account for funding. They encouraged the Council to further streamline funding processes to minimise the resources groups need to allocate to fundraising. They also supported efforts by the Council to strengthen its relationship with the sector, and hoped that this improved relationship would assist the sector in becoming more secure.

3.2 Volunteer and staff related issues

Survey respondents assert that a strong volunteer base conserves funds for the employment of professional staff and relieves paid staff of some of the more basic but nonetheless crucial tasks of the organisation. The Community and Voluntary Sector Working Party Report, *Communities and Government: Potential for Partnership, Whakatapu Whakaaro*, similarly suggested that the knowledge and expertise found in community and voluntary organisations has been undervalued in the past and that this has had a negative impact on the viability of many organisations. The Council's funding review consultation supported highlighting the value and importance of volunteers. Some groups noted that the work of volunteers underpins all the activities of the community and voluntary sector, and so adequate support and resourcing is vital.

Personnel and management factors were identified in the survey as important factors for organisations. Valuable personnel characteristics included having enough staff, the positive attitudes and commitment of staff and volunteers, as well as the skill level and professionalism of staff. The Child, Youth and Family *Strengthening Social Services* report supported this finding by highlighting the need for appropriate staff training.

Survey responses indicated that successful outcomes for clients are also facilitated by the development of an environment conducive to their success.

This includes, for example, the development of relationships with staff and the involvement and support of friends and family. The Child, Youth and Family research also reflects this finding.

3.3 Management structures

The survey found that good management structures were significant to successful organisations. In particular, well established up-to-date protocols and policies were considered important as was having a member of staff employed solely to oversee and co-ordinate the efforts of volunteers and staff. Tailoring the service to the needs of the client and operating by principles and philosophies appropriate to the cause of the organisation were other key factors. The organisations' ability to network with other service providers and use appropriate referral systems was also considered essential in providing good services for clients.

The Community and Voluntary Sector Working Party *Communities and Government: Potential for Partnership, Whakatapu Whakaaro* report highlights the huge diversity amongst community organisations in size, in the issues they address, and in their organisational structures. The growing need for community organisations to become more professional was also noted. This has created further pressures on organisations already struggling to provide services.

3.4 The level of co-ordination and networking among like organisations

Survey responses revealed several key areas where additional service needs were recognised. Many responses were non-specific but indicated that while a service might be adequate, more people could benefit if it had greater coverage. Some organisations suggested that improvements could be made through better organisation and co-ordination among services as a means of eliminating gaps. Specific services mentioned were those facilitating living in the community, and services for parents, youth and teens such as out of

school care and youth specific alcohol and drug services. Specific staff inadequacies were recognised as a need for more Maori counsellors, male childcare workers and male counsellors to work with fathers.

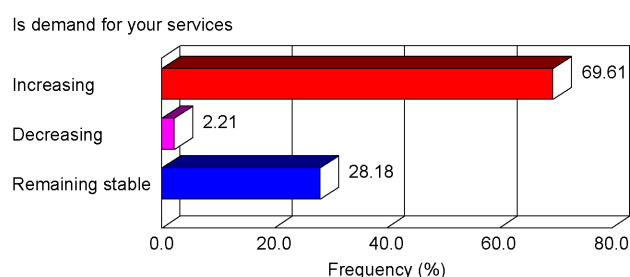
The City Council funding review consultation found that many organisations network and work together effectively. However, they also noted that pressure on resources sometimes means that they do not participate in collaborative projects as much as they would like to. Many groups felt that working together helps promote the effective use of resources. The Community and Voluntary Sector Working Party report also noted that relationship building and the increased sharing of information would be important in determining the ability of the sector to move forward. Similarly, the Child, Youth and Family research identified networking amongst service providers as an important factor in improving service delivery.

4. DETAILED FINDINGS FOR EACH SURVEY QUESTION

This section provides details of the survey responses under each question heading. Further details about the responses from the different types of organisations can be found in the tables attached as an appendix to this document.

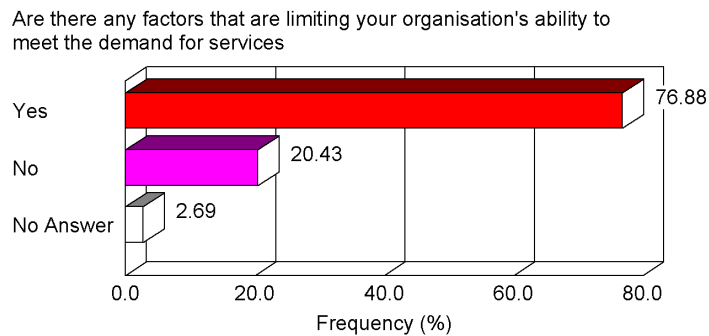
4.1 Is demand for your services increasing, decreasing or remaining stable?

For almost 70 per cent of the organisations surveyed the demand for their services is increasing, while for 28 percent it is remaining stable, and for two percent it is decreasing.



4.2 Are there any factors that are limiting your organisation's ability to meet the demand for services?

Almost 77 percent of respondents claimed that there were factors limiting the ability of their organisation to meet this demand for services. Twenty percent indicated no such problems and the remaining five percent provided no response.



An overwhelming proportion of respondents noted major issues with being able to secure adequate funds in order to operate successfully. Many organisations noted their inability to access adequate, reliable and ongoing funding. For those organisations funded by DHB contracts, a recurring problem is the inadequacy of the contracts in relation to the actual demand for services experienced by these organisations. Organisations also noted the difficulties associated with not fitting funding criteria, and of a lack of coordination amongst the requirements of different funding bodies. These funding issues are intimately connected to the trend for service demand to outstrip supply and the lack of opportunity to expand current programmes and services.

For many organisations, staffing issues emerge from a reluctance to not respond to client needs despite a lack of resources. Subsidies are quickly used up, particularly by organisations that provide services to clients who are unable to pay the full price of the service. Often the consequence of this is that minimal resources become stretched over an even wider client base.

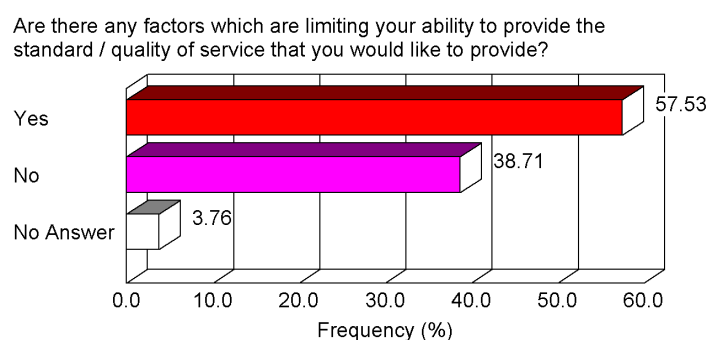
Another staffing issue is the inability to pay staff appropriately or to maintain sufficient staff numbers with the level of expertise required to carry out specified services. Some organisations identified issues with being able to respond appropriately to client needs by providing staff for specific groups such as Maori or men. A related issue is the problem of attracting and maintaining sufficient numbers of volunteers to carry out the ongoing activities of the organisation.

Inadequate facilities were the third most common issue identified. Many organisations report that more appropriate, larger and more accessible premises would facilitate them in their activities.

A minor but emerging issue for organisations providing services in Health, Knowledge and Skills, Paid Work, Human Rights, and Safety and Security was the lack of public exposure. This creates an inability to reach all potential clients due to their lack of knowledge of the services available. Interestingly this means that while resources are stretched (to rule out advertising) there is still a desire to reach out further to those in need.

4.3 Are there any factors that are limiting your ability to provide the standard/ quality of service that you would like to provide?

Almost 57 percent of respondents claimed that there were factors inhibiting their ability to provide services to the standards that they would have desired. A further 39 percent reported no problems while four percent provided no response.



For all sectors, funding and staffing issues emerge as the most significant issues. In particular, many organisations report that significant improvements to the standard of their service would be easily achieved if there was enough funding to supply adequate numbers of staff with the correct level of expertise. A particular issue here is the fact that, given stretched resources, it is difficult to attract qualified staff because the wages offered are not always comparable to those offered by other service providers. This was a particular issue for the Health, Knowledge and Skills, Safety and Security, Kaupapa Maori and Social Connectedness organisation categories. Accordingly, some respondents indicated that if more staff could work for lower wages or volunteer their time then this would improve the standard of the service available. A significant disadvantage to employees of these organisations was the inability of the service to offer them career prospects given insecure funding. Similarly, a simultaneous trend of a declining volunteer pool, creates more work for paid staff who cannot always be adequately rewarded for their increased effort.

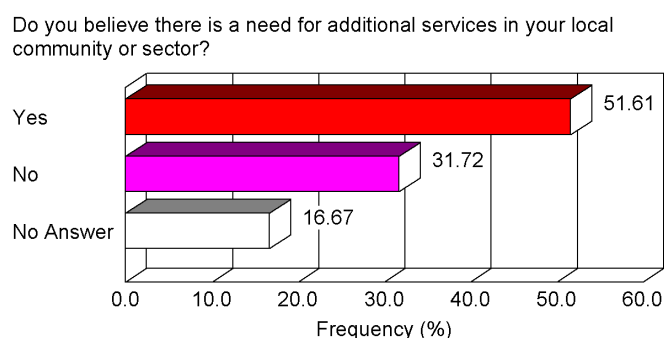
Insufficient or inadequate premises and facilities were noted by a number of organisations as inhibiting factors. Most commonly, the size and location of premises and the need for an upgrade of facilities to improve the comfort of the premises was mentioned. This was a particular issue for organisations working in the areas of Health, Knowledge and Skills, Social Connectedness, Arts, Crafts and Hobbies, Safety and Security and Sport and Recreation.

Finally, the burden of compliance costs was a particular issue for organisations contributing to Health, Human Rights, Safety and Security, Knowledge and Skills, Social Connectedness and Culture and Identity. These organisations indicated that these requirements encroached upon time and funding that could be better used elsewhere.

4.4 Do you believe there is a need for additional services in your local community or sector?

While 32 percent of respondents were satisfied that the level of services provided in their local community or sector was adequate, 52 percent

indicated that there was room for greater provision. Sixteen percent of respondents gave no response to this question.



For the majority of the data some clear themes can be identified as well as a wide range of gaps in provision⁵.

Many groups (across categories) suggested that there is a significant need for services that make it possible for more people to live in the community.

Some groups claimed that the services available were adequate but that their coverage would be improved with better funding. Similarly, greater organisation among services through networking or more co-ordination was suggested as a strategy to identify existing services and simultaneously rule out gaps and overlaps in provision. It was also suggested that services would be more effective if money and resources were made available to advertise them and increase public awareness of their existence.

Services for parents were a specific area deemed in need of attention. In particular, training and support for young parents, support for parents of children with mental illness or complex needs and an increased level of provision of respite care were identified.

The need for services for children and young people were commonly mentioned by organisations involved in Sport and Recreation, Knowledge and

⁵ The results to this query can be deceiving as the method of data processing has meant that for some responses some of the detail required to understand their significance has been lost.

Skills, Health, and Safety and Security. This included out of school care and alcohol and drug services.

Staffing issues were also mentioned as contributing to a gap in service provision. In particular, groups identified a need for Maori counsellors, Maori nurses, male childcare workers, and staff to work directly with fathers.

4.5 What are the key factors that lead to successful outcomes for your clients?

Responses to this question varied widely reflecting the different purposes and experiences of the organisations involved. For the purposes of this analysis these responses have been grouped into broad themes in order to gain an appreciation of some of the key factors. In general, these relate most commonly to personnel and structural factors.

The attitudes, commitment, qualifications and skill of staff and volunteers were consistently noted as important characteristics. It was suggested that attributes relating to their professionalism, expertise and their propensity to 'go the extra mile' for the organisation and its clients had an important impact. The building of ongoing relationships based on trust with individual clients was also highlighted as significant, as was the provision of ongoing support for both clients and their families. The positive attitudes of clients, their friends and families were also considered important. Client success is also influenced by the provision of an appropriate safe and supportive environment.

Organisations identified networking among related organisations and being aware of the limitations of one's own expertise as important. The individual philosophies and approaches of different organisations were also consistently nominated as key factors in their success. This indicates the necessity of tailoring services to the clients by being responsive to cultural differences, providing ongoing support, being holistic, aiming for the empowerment and independence of clients, and enlisting the support of friends and family.

The accessibility, affordability and availability of services were seen as significant to the participation and success of clients. This was especially the case for those that are free or accessible by donation.

4.6 What are the key factors that enable your organisation to function well?

A wide range of factors contribute to the successful functioning of the organisations included in the survey. In many instances, themes emerge for the different organisation types that can be related to their unique aims and objectives.

Of particular importance for all sectors are the characteristics such as numbers, dedication, skill level and qualifications of paid staff and volunteers. For many organisations the level of skill and commitment required from paid staff and volunteers makes the capacity of the organisation to offer career and training opportunities important. This is particularly so for organisations requiring particular skills and qualifications among staff such as in the Health, Kaupapa Maori and Knowledge and Skills sectors. The ability of an organisation to maintain a solid volunteer base has also emerged as significant as it not only means that there are enough people to meet the demands of service users, but also that resources can be conserved for areas other than staffing.

Another recurring theme was the emphasis placed upon having well established and up to date management protocols and structures. These include skilled and dedicated boards and committees with representation from volunteers and key service users, supervision of staff and volunteers, continual evaluation and renewal of annual plans and strategies, and having a paid co-ordinator to oversee the activities of volunteers. Planning and policy emerged as significant in providing guidelines and structure to the organisation, for example by facilitating the management of funds and the achievement of goals.

Regardless of organisation type, a significant factor identified was the co-ordination and networking across like-agencies. This is beneficial for the infrastructural strength it provides to clients in terms of expertise, support networks and range of options among service providers. As may be expected, where adequate funding was provided, this emerged as a strong factor in the successful functioning of many organisations.

Finally, the experience and reputation of long running organisations was considered important both from the point of view that they were well-known and well-trusted within the community, and also that they now have in place tried and true systems of operation.

5. CONCLUSION

This survey has identified the issues that organisations consider important to the way in which they provide their services. There are significant similarities across the different types of organisations. However, it is also useful to note that different kinds of organisations all have their own unique experience of being part of the community sector. The views of organisations working in different areas are explored further in the attached tables.

It is also helpful to consider the results of this survey within the context of other related research. As the brief comments above indicate, the survey findings show an overall consistency with previous research. While each piece of research was conducted to explore different issues, it is possible to draw out some common themes. For example, Council consultation and feedback has consistently identified the pressures that groups are experiencing as they try to access sufficient funding to run their services. Similarly, the Child, Youth and Family research indicates that service providers are aware of the need to develop and retain staff by providing appropriate training. The Community and Voluntary Sector Working Party Report identified the overall need for an improvement in the relationships between funders and service providers. These projects all help build a picture of the situation for community groups.