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# Co-design and policy

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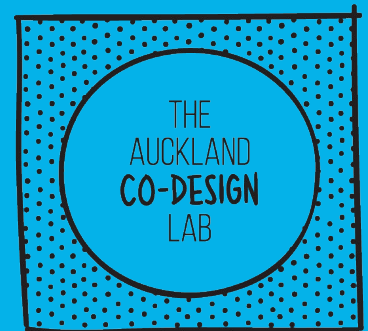
Alastair Child

The Policy Lab, Melbourne - seminar

29 August 2018

[www.aucklandco-lab.nz](http://www.aucklandco-lab.nz)

@CodesignLab\_AKL



# My co-design journey



Education and early years

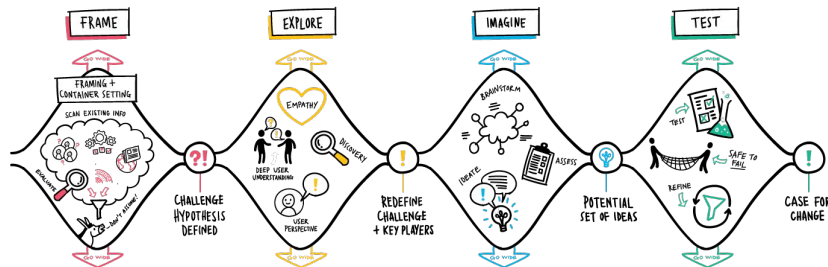
TRANSFORMING EARLY YEARS



MAKE IT.  
BETTER.

**INNOVATION  
KNOWSLEY**

Public sector innovation projects

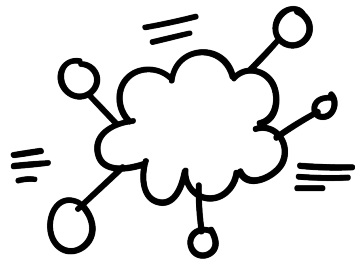


Auckland Co-design Lab



The Southern Initiative

# Why the growing interest in co-design?



## Challenge

*“...past efforts to solve complex policy problems have been too fragmented and not built on an understanding of the complex social systems they must work in..”<sup>1</sup>*

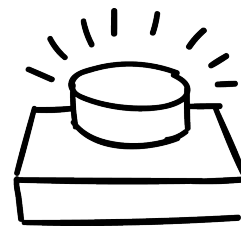
From Complexity to Collaboration, Elizabeth Eppel, Girol Karacaoglu & Donna Provoost 2018



## Response

*“...leaving governments with little choice ‘but to innovate’ through more ‘experimental approaches that requires new capabilities and skills”<sup>2</sup>*

The Rise of public sector innovation labs, Michael McGann, Emma Blomkamp, Jenny M Lewis, 2018



## Opportunity

*“There has never been a better time, full of opportunity for social innovation work, as right now in New Zealand.”<sup>3</sup>*

Policy by Design—reflections on the Auckland Symposium, Dr Emma Blomkamp

# About the Lab

Set up in 2014 by Auckland  
Policy Office

Central and local  
government collaboration

## Role

- Explore co-design
- Complex social issues
- Foster collaboration and build capability



**connecting to  
community & place**

Drawing on local knowledge and strengths  
Building credibility and connections  
Establishing local needs



**curiosity, optimism,  
creativity**

Being radically open minded  
Looking at problems from different angles  
Working with polarities and tensions



**making it happen**

Finding ways through when under pressure  
Providing support  
Behaviour change  
Coordinating action  
Implementation

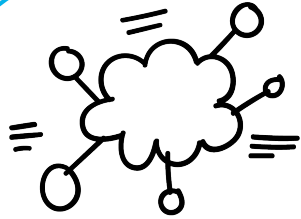


**outcomes**

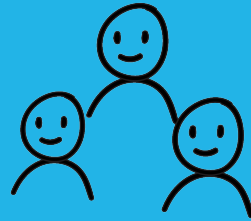
Looking for the biggest oppo  
Pragmatic and strategic  
Identifying energy and opport  
Responsive to changing landsc  
(not precious)



# The Lab's focus areas



**Challenges and  
projects**



**Practice  
development**



**Generating and  
sharing  
knowledge**



# Southern Initiative

Place based team - South Auckland

Community and social innovation

Focus on 'cradle to career'

- Strengths based
- Whānau / family centric
- System level change





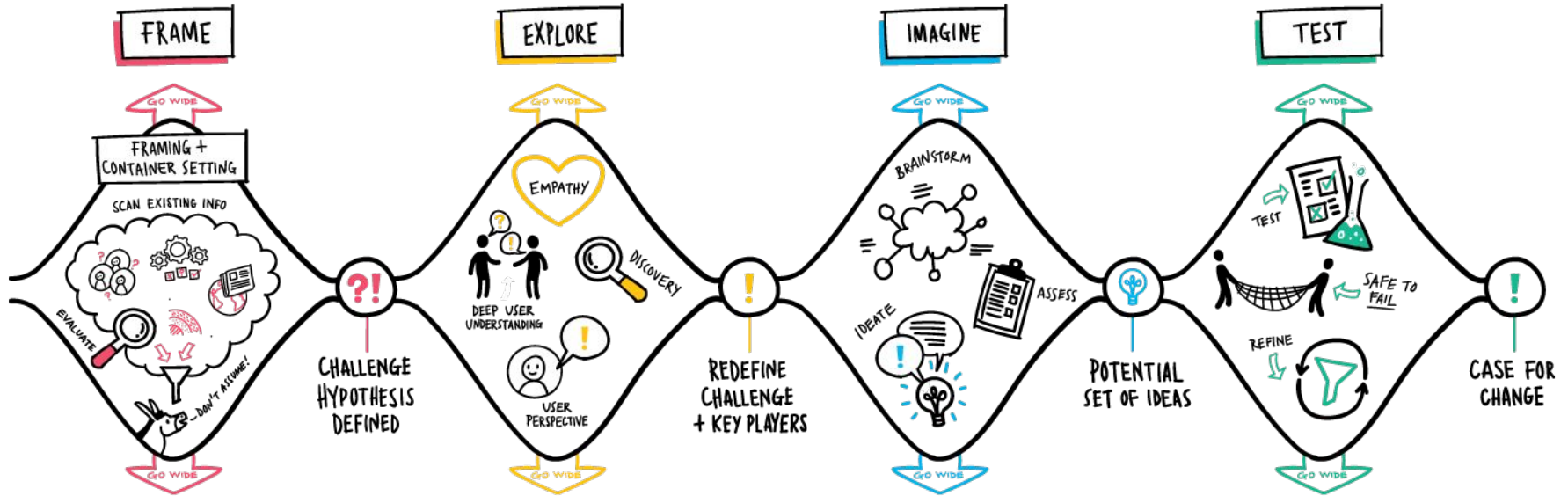
# Co-design Lab / Phase 1

Jan 2015 to Jan 2017



Co-design process / challenges and case for  
change / insights

# Co-design process





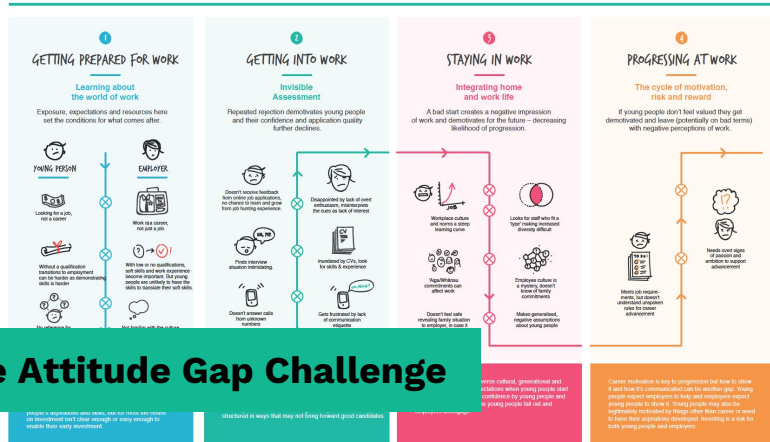
# Story of phase 1



## Drivers licensing challenge

### EXAMINING THE "ATTITUDE GAP" AN EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY IN SOUTH AUCKLAND

There are many key points of tension along the "employment journey" where young people and employers are disconnected and may 'drop out' - creating further problems in the future.

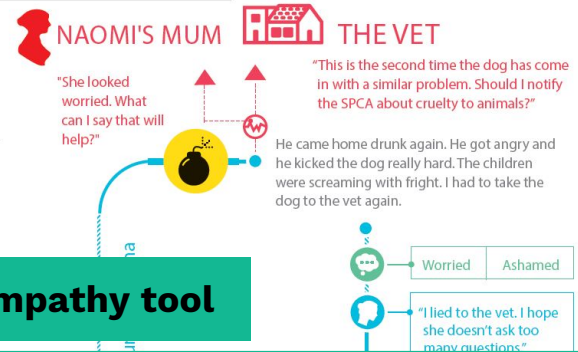


## The Attitude Gap Challenge



### Who can help change the script?

This journey starts when the children are 9, 14, and 16. At the end of this journey the couple will still be together.

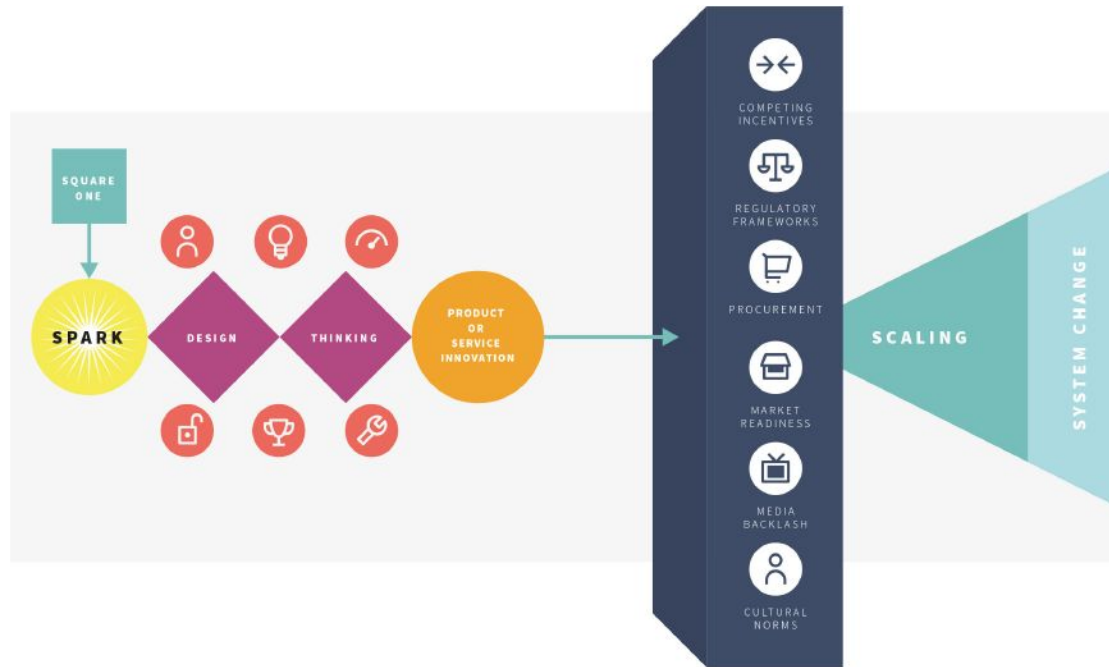


## Family violence empathy tool



## Co-design masterclasses

# The system immune response



\* From Design Thinking to Systems Change: How to invest in innovation for social impact by Rowan Conway, Jeff Masters and Jake Thorold, July 2017

# Insights / reflections

Co-design challenges helped reframe complex issues, **elevates and engages unheard voices** and shines a light on **unintended policy consequences**

Co-design values **existing evidence**. Lived experience data helps tell the stories behind population data. If the **conditions are right** people want to engage and participate

A '**case for change**' requires a **policy pathway for implementation**. Thinking about practical next steps and strategic alignment must be **integral to the design process not a bolt on**.



# Co-design Lab / phase 2

Feb 2017 to present



Practice development / capability building /  
insights

# Capabilities and conditions for co-design



## Stream 1.

### How we work with people, whānau & stakeholders

How are whānau and other stakeholders involved in design and delivery of outcomes?



## Stream 2.

### How we design & innovate

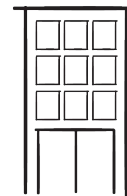
How do we apply design and evaluative approaches to identify, iterate and embed responses and the capacities needed to



## Stream 3.

### Our organisational integration & responsiveness

How do we manage responsively and work together to build our learning?



## Stream 4.

### Our structural conditions

How do our structures, policies, funding, resourcing and measures enable participatory and whānau-led approaches?

**More info:** [www.aucklandco-lab.nz/practice/](http://www.aucklandco-lab.nz/practice/)



# Story of phase 2

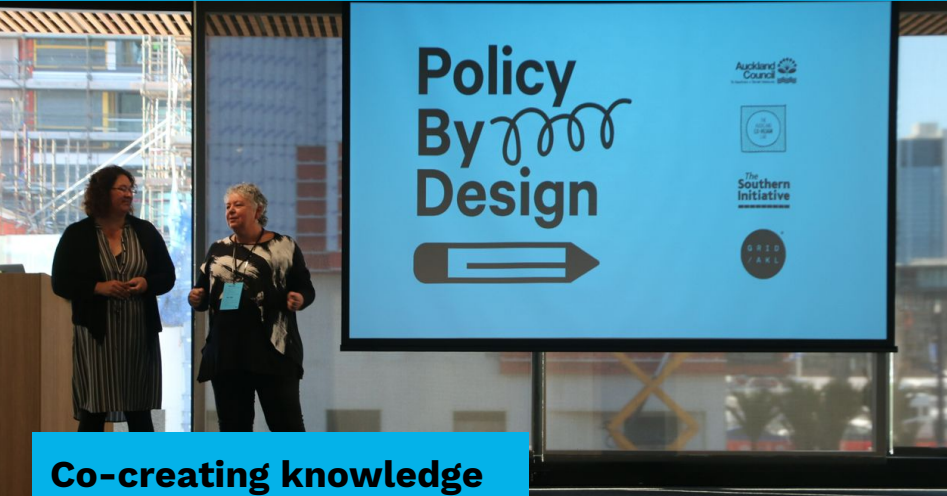
## Co-design projects



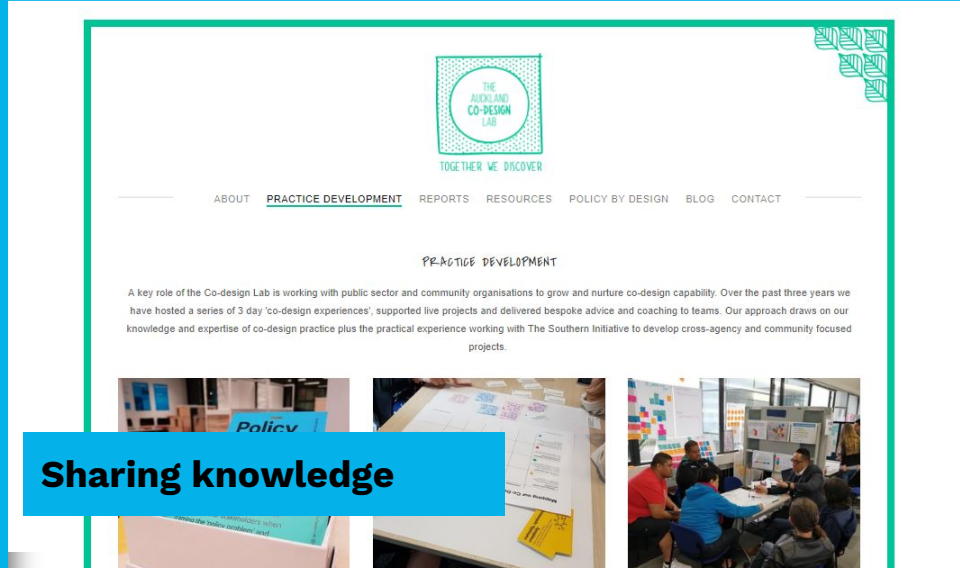
## Practice development



## Co-creating knowledge



## Sharing knowledge





# Mini case study

## Early Years Challenge

Co-design / whānau centric /  
strengths based / toxic stress /  
/ communication / TSI



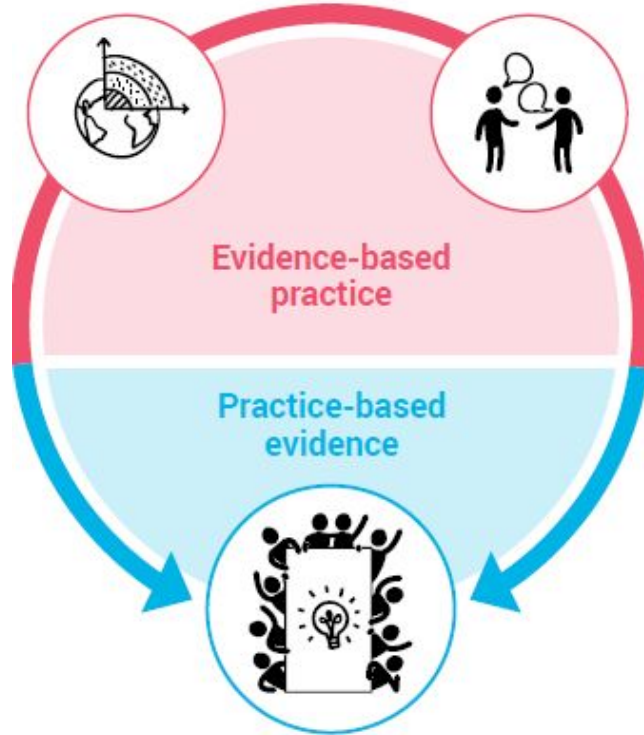
**More info:** [www.aucklandco-lab.nz/projects](http://www.aucklandco-lab.nz/projects)

**Big data, Quantitative**

Focus on 'what', 'where' and 'who' is experiencing various indicators of disadvantage

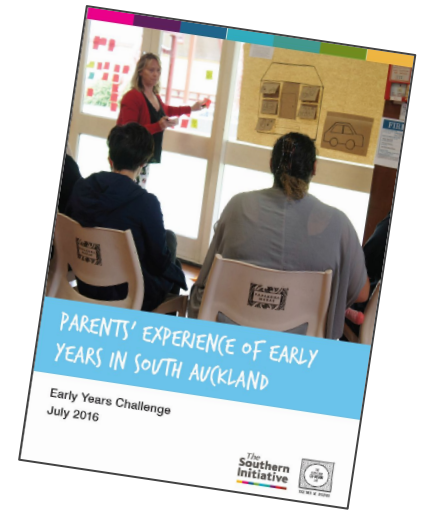
**Thick data, Qualitative**

Focus on 'why' and 'how' people experience disadvantage, and what can help to shift indicators



**Testing, prototyping, learning what works**


Working with communities in context to create action and foundations for shifting outcomes.



# The practice of whānau-centric co-design

The practice is constantly evolving in response to the team's learning and changing environmental factors. The whānau-centred work and the co-design process interact constantly and have their own underlying principles and rhythms.




An interesting insight is that co-design corresponds naturally with culturally-rooted practices that create mutual trust and learning and shared power and momentum.

<p><b>Whānau centric principles</b></p> 	<p><b>Manaakitanga</b> Hosting whānau in a way that empowers them, and removes any barriers to participation.</p>	<p><b>Whanaungatanga</b> Establishing meaningful relationships in culturally appropriate ways. Engaging whānau in a way which builds trust.</p>	<p><b>Tino Rangatiratanga</b> Whānau have the autonomy to decide how and when they will participate. Co-decide as well as co-design.</p>	<p><b>Mana</b> Whānau are the experts in their lives. Ensuring a balance of power.</p>	<p><b>Ako</b> Mutually reinforcing learning.</p>
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**Co-design principles**



**Human-centred space**

-  Create a neutral, creative, empowering space
-  Be user/whānau-centred rather than system-centred
-  Embrace ambiguity: we don't know the question let alone the answer






**Humble, curious, empathic mind set**

-  Beginner's mindset: humility not expertise, suspend judgment
-  Empathy: immerse, observe engage, ask why
-  Seek to understand drivers and emotions beneath the surface

**Radical collaboration**

-  Seek and harness a diverse range of skills and experiences
-  Partnership: Design 'with' not 'for'
-  Start with lived experience
-  Redefine the question to reflect diverse perspectives, then work together to generate multiple ideas

**Iterative learning**

-  Build capability in partners as well as learning from them
-  Bias towards action; learn by doing
-  Use the power of duos and groups
-  Build to think - harness kinaesthetic skills
-  Iterate and test in multiple rounds of empathy using tangible prototypes

**In practice**



**Creating the space**

- Create safe spaces - physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural
- Provide respite from toxic stress *i.e. a calm space away from worries with all immediate needs catered for*
- Reduce whānau-defined barriers to participation *e.g. enabling tamariki to attend, within school hours*
- Avoid trauma triggers *e.g. institutional settings and symbols*

**Relationship and nurture**

- Invite people in a way that shows that they are valued
- Never judge
- Practice deep empathy *i.e. listening, accepting*
- Show respect
- Establish genuine, consistent and caring connections *e.g. same people each time, real relationships*

**Flipping assumptions and sharing power**

**Demonstrate that whānau are:**

- An asset not a problem
- Partners not subjects or recipients
- Co-deciders and co-producers not just co-designers
- The experts in their own lives not the beneficiaries of experts' knowledge/advice
- As professionals cede power and act as conduits, partners, container builders, coaches, learners.

**Intentional skill building**

- Deploy skillful coaching and deliberate confidence and skill building
- Provide 'biodegradable' support that fosters independence not dependence
- Allow people to be reflective and to build self-awareness
- Provide the conditions and container for peer-to-peer learning
- Create opportunities for learning through doing



# What we're learning



# Insights / reflections

Time limited sprints and challenges can create a call to action but **complex policy issues require time and patience**. Change is likely to be discontinuous.

**Communication is key.** Outputs from co-design work need to **engage policy makers** and invite action. It might mean **hiding your tools and process**.

**Shifting the dynamics of power and participation** created space for people to be involved in a more meaningful and reciprocal way that **helps build new capabilities**

***“Think like a system, act like an entrepreneur”***

*From Design Thinking to Systems Change How to invest in innovation  
for social impact - RSA*





**Thank you**

# Sources

1 From Complexity to Collaboration A provocation for change by Elizabeth Eppel, Girol Karacaoglu and Donna Provoost 2018

2 The Rise of public sector innovation labs: experiments in design thinking, Michael McGann, Emma Blomkamp, Jenny M Lewis, March 2018, Melbourne University

3 Policy by Design—reflections on the Auckland Symposium, Dr Emma Blomkamp  
<https://medium.com/@emmablomkamp/policy-by-design-reflections-on-the-auckland-symposium-8f1ca1e5d80c>

From Design Thinking to Systems Change How to invest in innovation for social impact - RSA

*The Southern Initiative, Auckland Council*  
[www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

*Auckland Co-design Lab - [www.aucklandco-lab.nz](http://www.aucklandco-lab.nz)*

**Spare...**

# Insights

**1. Connecting and utilising evidence** developed through design to inform policy development, evaluation and decision-making.



**3. Creating the conditions and capabilities** for prototyping, testing and experimentation in a policy context.



**2. Shifting the dynamics of power** and participation in people-centred policy development.





Co-design methodology



Principles and mindsets

Emphasis on challenges / sprints



Emphasis on practice development

Reports as outputs



Resources as outputs

Leading and developing



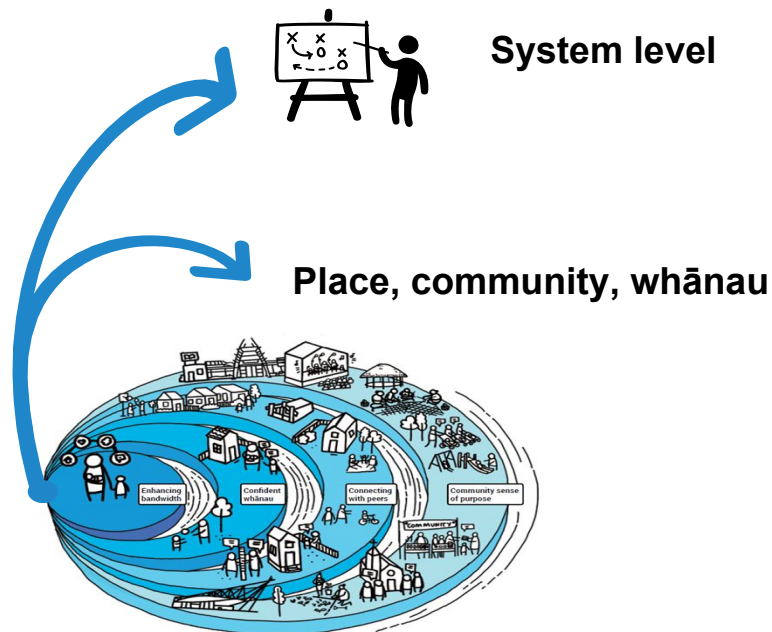
Growing capability and coaching

Resource intensive



Efficient

# Working at two level



*The combination...of TSI and the Lab creates...a partnership that combines an institutional structure focused on implementation with an innovation engine that can design and test approaches to achieve transformative outcomes.*

Dr. Ingrid Burkett, TACSI  
TSI: Reviewing Strengths & Opportunities