On Board an Ocean-Going Waka

Oxfam New Zealand's Journey Towards Transforming its Development Practices

An Action Research Study

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Tauparapara

He ao, he aotea, he aotearoa
A cloud, a white cloud, a long white cloud

Kuramārōtini, on board Matahourua with Kupe, expressed what she saw as their canoe came upon what came to be known as Aotearoa.

Statement of Authorship

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma.

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Abstract

International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) have been subject to ongoing debates and calls for change about their work in the development sector. They also face emerging challenges in a contemporary context of change and uncertainty including a disconnect with their ethical foundations, restrictive business models, and complexities around the nature of social change. Given this reality, many leading INGOs are looking to transform their development practices so as to remain relevant and contribute to change in the future. These trends raise significant questions around how INGOs can transform themselves to engage well with such challenges.

This thesis examines the efforts and journey of the leadership team and staff within one INGO, Oxfam New Zealand (Oxfam NZ), to transform their development practices. The analysis and insights are based on action research and appreciative inquiry methodology. The analysis draws on four postdevelopment ideas (autonomy, solidarity, plurality and ontology) as a means to understand the steps that were taken on Oxfam NZ's journey. It also draws on wayfinding scholarship to explore the nature of Oxfam NZ's overall journey of transformation.

The insights provided by the thesis were that INGOs can engage well with the challenges they face by considering how to connect more strongly to place and the cultural specificities of local contexts; develop values which are meaningful for staff, and that can be applied in their relationships with partners and each other; and to undertake a change process that is imbued with their values and is emergent and open-ended.

I suggest that the combination of postdevelopment ideas and waypoints offer a way into, and a means of, understanding the practice of INGOs which has not been presented before in the development studies literature.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to both my partner, Matthias, and my parents for their unending care and support during this entire process. This thesis was researched and written alongside a move to another country, the birth of my daughter and a global pandemic. These events brought with them many challenges. My many thanks to all my family and friends who have supported me in any way they could throughout these challenges and always with love.

Contents

Images and tables[1]

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Abbreviations used

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CID	Council for International Development
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
CORSO	Council of Organisations for Relief Services Overseas
DFID	Department for International Development
DLP	Developmental Leadership Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
INGO(s)	International Non-Government Organisation(s)
MFAT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Oxfam GB	Oxfam Great Britain
Oxfam NZ	Oxfam New Zealand
PAR	Participatory Action Research
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UK	United Kingdom

Glossary

I have used the online Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori dictionary[2] as the source for all translations. I have followed the guidelines set out by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori/Māori Language Commission (2012) on Māori language orthography. It should also be noted that a word-for-word translation of some words into English does not fully explain some of the nuances of te Reo Māori.

Māori	English
aroha	affection, sympathy, charity, compassion, love, empathy
haere mai	welcome! — a greeting
haka	performance of the haka, posture dance - vigorous dances with actions and rhythmically shouted words
kaha	be strong, able, capable, courageous, intense, energetic
kaitiakitanga	guardianship, stewardship, trusteeship, trustee
kaupapa	approach, topic, practice, agenda
kāwanatanga	government, authority, governorship
koru	spiral motif
kotahitanga	unity, togetherness, solidarity, collective action
mana	prestige, authority, power, influence
mana motuhake	separate identity, self-determination, sovereignty
manaaki	support, hospitality, caring for
manaakitanga	hospitality, kindness, generosity, support
marae	courtyard in front of the wharenui, where formal greetings and discussion take place
mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge

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[2] https://maoridictionary.co.nz/

Maungawhau	Mount Eden (Auckland)
māia	bravery, courage
pepeha	to say, exclaim (see whaikōrero)
rangatira	chiefs (male or female)
Tāmaki-makau-rau	Auckland
tangata whenua	indigenous people, people of the land
te ao Māori	the Māori worldview
Te Ika-a-Māui	the North Island
tēnā koutou	thank you
te Reo Māori	the Māori language
Te Rōpū Whakamana i Te Tiriti o Waitangi	the Waitangi Tribunal
te Tiriti o Waitangi	the Treaty of Waitangi
Te Waipounamu	the South Island
Te Whāriki Kia Mohio ai Tātou kia Tātou	the Tapestry of Understanding
tika	truth, justice, fairness
tikanga	custom, way, practice, protocol
tino rangatiratanga	self-determination
tuamaka	round cord plaited with five or six stands
tauparapara	incantation to begin a speech
waiata	song, chant
waka	canoe
whaikōrero	formal speech
whaiwhakaaro	to consider, take into account, think, reflect on
wharenui	meeting house - main building of a marae
whānau	extended family, family group
whāriki	floor covering, woven floor mat

Chapter One

Since the end of World War II INGOs have played a major role in the provision of international aid and development, and in advocating and working toward the eradication of poverty and injustice. Over these 70–plus years, they have grown significantly in size and in overall number and the work that they do and the approaches that they take, have long been both commended and critiqued by academics, development professionals and local partners alike. On the one hand INGOs have been praised and even romanticised as the heroes and heroines of international aid and development, using rights-based, participatory and empowering approaches, and filling the gap left by governments unable to deliver services for their citizens. On the other hand they have been criticised as being too bureaucratic and managerial, out of touch with their grassroots and political beginnings, prone to paternalism and enamoured with models and blueprints, predictable outcomes and upwards accountability. It has also been argued that INGOs, by using neoliberal models of development, are part of the economic and political system which generates poverty and injustice (Middleton, 2006; Wilson, 2017). Edwards (2020) and Doane (2019) also argue that the incentives within INGOs to preserve the status-quo are a key influential factor in the debate.

As INGOs are trying to undertake their work they are also contending with many complex and contextual influences including issues related to their ethical foundations, their business models and the challenges presented by continuous social change. There has emerged a disconnect between their moral and ethical foundations and how they go about their activities, and between their utopian visions to eradicate poverty and injustice and what they actually achieve in practice. The rise of inequality both globally and within nation states and middle income countries suggests that the achievement of these visions are progressively unlikely to occur. There is also concern whether the business models of INGOs are sustainable and appropriate, particularly where their income is linked to conditions. This is particularly true for those which rely heavily on income from their national governments. Such conditionality has contributed to INGOs becoming more transactional in nature and preoccupied with fundraising in order to survive as organisations. Further, this has been exacerbated by a rise in right-wing populist politics and growing nationalism which has led to reductions in government spending on foreign aid and turned the conversation about aid into one which is largely focused on national political and economic interests. A third concern is that the complexities associated with social change suggest that change cannot be brought about through simple linear interventions but require a dynamic and integrated approach.

Given this reality, many INGOs leaders are questioning if their current business models and ways of working are able to meet these challenges, and whether INGOs can remain relevant and contribute to change in the future. INGOs need to adapt to a dynamic international development context, and the question that this thesis explores is how can INGOs transform themselves to do this and engage well with the challenges they face.

This thesis is an investigation of one INGO, Oxfam NZ, where the leadership team and staff had begun a journey to engage with these challenges and attempt to transform their development practices. This journey became as much about organisational and institutional workflows as activities on the ground. Oxfam NZ is a secular and rights-based organisation with a strong advocacy focus. In this regard it differs from many other INGOs which are Christian-based and focus on the provision of aid and welfare services.

I define development practices as encompassing both the programming, advocacy and humanitarian activities of INGOs as well as their organisational practices and culture. I do this because my experience and academic study has led me to conclude that there is a mutually inclusive interplay between the practices and cultures embedded within INGOs and the how and why of the activities they undertake. The transformation process at Oxfam NZ had begun following the appointment of a new Executive Director and the 'Oxfam 2020' project, both of which occurred prior to my fieldwork time. The essence of what was occurring was captured in a presentation given by the Executive Director entitled *Transforming amidst Complexity: Sailing a waka* [canoe] *on a rough ocean.* In this presentation the Executive Director outlined why the leadership team were attempting a journey of transformation and how their reflections on organisational identity and kaupapa (approach, practice) were a key part of this journey. In essence she said that the organisation needed to change. Its funding model was unsustainable and there was discontent with the current development practices and the inherent contradictions therein, and there was an inability to readily adapt to changing local and global circumstances.

The presentation had a profound impact on me not only because of its content but also because of my longstanding scholarly interest in development and development studies and experience working as an Australian Aid Ambassador in Lao PDR and with an INGO in Sweden. My Masters Degree examined development programming in Zambia. When I decided to undertake my doctoral studies I decided that this research would again focus

on development studies. In this context what was significant for me was that the presentation was a call for action and reflected what Arturo Escobar proposed in his book *Designs for the Pluriverse* (2018). He proposed the need for 'ontological design' which encompassed the following question: How does one design for a complex world? To me, the Executive Director's presentation about Oxfam NZ's transformation reflected a journey to understand what factors should frame or underpin the development practices of staff; development practices which would need to be sustainable in a complex and ever-changing world.

I was interested in this transformation process and in particular how that transformation process could occur and what impact it could have on influencing how practitioners viewed and undertook their development practices. What factors, concepts or questions could be important to that transformation process? When a member of the leadership team from Oxfam NZ made it known to Professor Roche, Professor of Development Practice at La Trobe University and my principal doctorate supervisor, that they were looking for assistance on their transformation journey, we both saw this as an excellent opportunity for me to actually observe and participate in this journey. By doing so I could observe what changes did occur at Oxfam NZ, whether these changes generated new ways of thinking about the development practices of staff, and further, whether these changes created a newfound ability in staff to adapt and respond to a changing local and global environment. The insights I gained from my research into and observations of what occurred at Oxfam NZ and which are included in this thesis add to the literature relating to postdevelopment in practice (Klein and Morreo, 2019) and provide new and insightful perspectives to the scholarship around the transformation of development practices within INGOs.

I use the concept of appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987) to guide my action research. I also use and demonstrate an application of the theory and scholarship of Chellie Spiller, Hoturoa Barclay-Kerr and John Panoho (2015) and their Wayfinding Leadership Framework to an INGO. Appreciative inquiry is commonly known as a strengths-based approach. The aim, as outlined by Zandee (2014, p. 2), is to explore instances of the positive and the possible, to create images of future aspirations and to design new alternatives for action. This is very different to some traditional approaches to research which focus on diagnosis and analysis of problems and deficiencies. Appreciative inquiry however does not mean that there is an absence of criticality. Rather, what I have done in this thesis is to provide constructive analysis and insights which support what is positive and possible. This reflected my intention to be an action

researcher who made a contribution to and assisted in opening up new possibilities for development practices for Oxfam NZ. I discuss in depth my position as an action researcher in Chapter Three and the unique challenges of being both an insider and outsider within an organisation.

Spiller et al. (2015) explore what can be learned from the tradition of Polynesian navigators and applied in a modern organisational context. Although it is not specific to INGOs their work speaks directly to organisations who face uncertainty and this is why it has significant relevance for the analysis I provide in this thesis. This framework is designed to teach individuals how to 'observe patterns of relationship, to respond to reality as it unfolds, to work with relational values and to respond to change and challenging circumstances' in organisations (Spiller et al., 2015, pp. 3–4). The framework also draws on indigenous Māori and Polynesian knowledge.

Background

The critique of INGOs and the call for change in their development practices is a global phenomenon. It is also longstanding and has come from within and external to the development sector. Banks et al. (2015) argue that INGOs have progressively lost touch with their original mandate and connections with grassroots communities. They have become professionalised and de-politicised and despite introducing technical and managerial models to systemise their activities they have had limited success in their efforts to promote long-term structural change to alleviate the causes of poverty. One result of this is that local organisations and practitioners are demanding different kinds of relationships with INGOs and more space to determine their own development (Barber and Bowie, 2008; Menocal and Rogerson, 2006).

There has also been a change in the public perception of INGOs. In the 1990s INGOs were perceived by some as trusted, effective and credible agents for social change and justice (Roche and Hewett, 2013). However, a global survey conducted in 2017 showed that trust in INGOs by the majority of respondents had declined in 21 countries and that INGOs were even distrusted by the general public in eight countries (Edelman, 2017). The key reasons cited for this shift were high-profile scandals, the increase in the number of INGOs and the mixed messages from INGOs on social media about what they are and what they do.

Another important shift has been in the acknowledgement that INGOs operate in a complex global development environment (Barder, 2012; Burns and Worsley, 2015;

Mowles, 2015; Mowles et al., 2008; Ramalingam, 2013; Ramalingam et al., 2008). The contemporary environment is considerably different from when many INGOs were first established after World War II and there has been an increase in humanitarian crises across the globe alongside numerous complex social and environmental problems (climate change, movement of people and capital, global health pandemics). INGOs now face a situation of constant change and uncertainty in their operating environment. Many are also experiencing falling revenues and with the entry of many more actors into the development sector there is increased competition for the same pool of resources traditionally directed to INGOs.

While there is widespread desire for change, it has proved to be difficult for INGOs to implement change in practice. One reason for this is that the underlying structure, power dynamics and self-interest of INGOs remains largely unchanged, despite a significant level of research into how they might tackle these issues and successive critiques of orthodox development practice (Booth, 2015; Fowler, 2013; Lewis, 2014; Tvedt, 1998). Further, within the sector there is a degree of continuity in the way that INGOs approach development practices: acting as an intermediary between the Global North and Global South[3]; using public fundraising and national government aid money as income; dividing countries into developed and developing; and approaching development challenges through the implementation of fixed-term projects.

It is noted by Green (2015, 2016) that the current development practices of INGOs are no longer 'fit for purpose' and many frontline staff in the development sector find that autonomy, trust and motivation are hindered by organisational processes (Honig, 2018). However, there is substantial uncertainty, contention and contestation about what 'fit for purpose' might look like and about how to work towards this end, particularly considering the broader political and systemic constraints that confront INGOs. INGOs are struggling to simultaneously plan and operate within the complex new global development environment, address the challenges that they face and evolve their organisations so that they can better understand and become what 'fit for purpose' might mean in their context.

Both Chris Mowles (as cited in Stacey and Griffin, 2008) and Katharine McKinnon (2011) examine the impasse or disconnect between the ideals of INGOs and the reality of implementing those ideals. McKinnon (2011, pp. 177–178) argues that finding a way out

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[3] The terms Global North and Global South are commonly used in development literature. They are not related to geography but describe nations or communities in terms of their economic and geo-political power. I elaborate on the definitions further below.

of the impasse should focus on the 'particularities of any discourse of intervention, its politicisation and its political goals', and she also argues that development practices require compromise, partiality and negotiation. Her arguments are similar to those of Leftwich and Wheeler (2011, see also Leftwich, 2009) who emphasise the important role that politics plays in developmental outcomes at all levels and across all sectors. Leftwich and Wheeler argue that development design, implementation and outcomes could improve if development practitioners were able to 'work politically'. By this they mean having a strong understanding of the multiple dynamics involved in specific contexts and in everyday interactions. I consider this to be a very useful definition in describing how development practitioners within INGOs can act and behave in order to create change and one which I use in this thesis. Further insight into this impasse is provided by Carothers and de Gramont (2013) who advocate for reintegrating a positive political value within INGOs. What is advocated is an approach which centres on 'thinking and working politically'. This approach emphasises strong political analysis, response to and understanding of the local context, and flexibility and adaptability in programme design and implementation (see Thinking and Working Politically Community of Practice, 2015).

For Mowles, this impasse also raises questions of identity for INGOs. He sees INGOs as existing somewhere in a space between church and corporation. Many INGOs indeed do have religious affiliations but what Mowles is referring to is a conceptual identity of INGOs because they are often aligned with the concepts of morality, missionary work and charity. However, many INGOs also seem like corporations, due to their size and structure and corporate style governance arrangements, and this forms part of and contributes to their identity. For example, in terms of size, Oxfam International is a global confederation with 21 independent organisations and over 30,000 employees and volunteers in total. Mowles examines how INGOs turned to managerialism as a means to overcome the impasse between INGO ideals and reality. Managerialism was also introduced to meet the conditions associated with government funding. Mowles argues, however, that this turn to managerialism has made it even more difficult for INGOs to resolve the impasse between INGO ideals and reality and that managerialism is symptomatic of a worldview which sees social change as something that can be predicted and achieved through linear and logical planning models (Mowles et al., 2008, p. 809).

Like Mowles, I was interested in studying the trend by INGOs towards the use of management tools to manage and implement development practices. Significantly, at the time that I began my research for this thesis an approach to development called 'Doing

Development Differently', which had emerged in 2014 from the Centre for International Development at Harvard University, was popular amongst academics and development professionals who were advocating for a change to development practices. The approach looks to strengthen the ability of international aid and development organisations to have greater impact and results by embracing principles such as complexity, local ownership, being problem-driven, adaptation and tight feedback loops (Andrews et al., 2013; see also Ramalingam, 2016; Wild et al., 2015). It places local problem identification and solving at the forefront and seeks to adapt planning, support and management such that these activities support local attempts to address those problems.

The 'Doing Development Differently' approach to development was the genesis for me in setting up my initial research project to study the changes in development practices that were occurring in INGOs. I was eager to investigate if and how INGOs had applied this approach, or at least the principles that it promotes, whether it had brought about alternative development practices and whether there was any evidence of changed outcomes.

My opportunity to work with and observe what was occurring at Oxfam NZ meant that I changed the direction of my research away from a general study of INGOs to one which focused on what was actually happening in a particular INGO, one which had already begun a journey to transform its organisation and its development practices. There were a number of different lenses which I explored to examine and understand the journey of transformation at Oxfam NZ. These included the use of complexity science, which offered insights in terms of moving away from a linear approach to change in the operational context of INGO practice and an understanding of the interconnectedness between the different actors in the aid and development industry. Another was organisational management literature that allowed for reflection on leadership and culture. Yet another was the anthropology of development literature which opened up space to ask questions about the discourse of development. My engagement with all of this literature was critical as I accompanied the leadership team and staff on their journey of transformation. What became clear to me was that as the journey of transformation progressed at Oxfam NZ, development practices emerged which reflected a deeper engagement with power inequities, local indigenous knowledge and sets of values. I found that the conceptual frameworks that I had begun with limited the depth of my understanding of the concerns of my research partners (McKinnon, 2008). As a response to my fieldwork I found the use of postdevelopment scholarship and Spiller et al.'s Wayfinding Leadership Framework more useful to understand what was occurring at Oxfam NZ. I have worked

with concepts from both postdevelopment and Wayfinding Leadership and place them alongside each other in my analysis.

Postdevelopment

Postdevelopment scholarship emerged in the 1980s. One of the first key publications which brought together some of the ideas emerging from these debates was *The Development Dictionary: a guide to knowledge as power* (Sachs, 1992). As the title implies, authors began to question both the power dynamics which shaped the discourse of development and the concept of development. Postdevelopment scholars such as Escobar (1995), Latouche et al. (1993), Rahnema (1997) questioned cooperation which placed western, modern and capitalist ways of life as dominant and desirable. At the same time these desirable ways of living had also come with colonisation and the exploitation of both people and the environment. Klein and Morreo (2019) provide an excellent summary of postdevelopment in their recent publication *Postdevelopment in Practice: alternatives, economies, ontologies*. As Klein and Morreo outline, postdevelopment today is not only concerned with the critique of development in the Global South, but also with the Global North.

The concepts of Global North and Global South, which were referenced above, I use throughout this thesis. These terms reference the 'Brandt Line', a visualisation created to illustrate socioeconomic inequalities between nations (Brandt, 1980). They describe nations or communities in terms of their economic and geo-political power. The concepts emerged as part of the challenge to the ideas of the 'First' and 'Third World'. Postdevelopment scholars have also made proposed additions to the terms (Kothari et al. in Klein and Morreo, 2019, p. 101). Such scholars propose that the Global North includes nations which were historically dominant but this concept also expands to include the colonised and now wealthy ruling elites. The Global South concept encapsulates the economically poor and the colonised but also minorities who are located in the Global North. The concepts are not definitive in their own right nor do they refer to specific geographical regions. They are fluid and provide a useful delineation between developed and developing, terms which carry with them, I would argue, inherent value judgements and fixed notions of what 'developed' and 'undeveloped' means. I find these concepts, Global North and Global South, helpful in order to understand the complexities in the power dynamics both between and within nations. Oxfam NZ is an INGO based in Aotearoa New Zealand, which is broadly considered to hold both economic and geo-political power, that is, it belongs to the Global North. However, the Global South is

also present as Aotearoa New Zealand has a colonised and broadly economically disadvantaged indigenous Māori population.

It is important to state that early postdevelopment scholarship was not without its critics. It was in fact subject to much criticism and this criticism centred on the ideological nature of the scholarship. Olivier de Sardan (2008, p. 5) argues that these early writings depict development in a very negative way and describe it as a monolithic enterprise, an all-powerful discourse or entity. I share Olivier de Sardan's point of view and his suggestion that an empirical mapping is needed to further understand the many variations and practices of development. I would argue further that development cannot be defined or seen as a single or simplistic concept. It is full of complexity.

In more recent writings postdevelopment scholars offer possible pathways to alternative development practices together with a critique of traditional development practices. For example, Escobar (Esteva and Escobar, 2017, p. 6) proposes that development cooperation should be moving more towards 'cooperation for civilizational transitions or cooperation for autonomy'. In this type of development practice there would be coalitions across the Global North and South, there would be no distinction between individuals or groups who have and those who need, and each collective group would have the right of self-determination. This type of development cooperation he describes as 'cooperation for social justice' and is a step beyond what INGOs are currently undertaking. However, he also argues that 'cooperation for social justice' is insufficient in its own right to address local and global problems. Despite these criticisms he acknowledges that the work that INGOs do has strong elements of concern for human rights, reduction of inequality and support for local communities.

Demaria and Kothari (2017) argue that in the postdevelopment imagination 'development' is no longer the guiding principle which drives motivation and behaviour. They suggest stepping out of a 'doing', 'directing', or 'delivering' role and a focus on more reflective practices of being. What is proposed is a slowing down or even a switching off of the preoccupation with success, impact and progress.

Postdevelopment scholarship offers tools for thinking beyond a modernist framing of blueprints and top-down, neocolonial and neoliberal modes of development practices. Neoliberal models advocate the use of market forces and a reduced role of the state to bring about development. Brohman (1995; see also Jakupec, 2018) argues that these models neglect sociocultural and political relations, the environment and sustainable

development. Postdevelopment scholarship suggests radical change is required within the development sector in terms of how people and their communities and environments are encountered. It is more of a know 'how' and a know 'who' rather than a know 'what'.

For INGOs to change their development practices and by definition what they understand as 'development', there needs to be continuous efforts to uncover and elucidate a number of alternative guiding principles on which to begin a new way of thinking about development practices. The discovery of all such principles will require much scholarly research and debate and is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is my intention that the work undertaken in this thesis will provide insights into such principles and will add to, and sit within the context of existing practical initiatives within the sector for doing development differently. For example, such practical initiatives include Reimagining the INGO and Patros Shift-the-Power Community of Practice. Reimagining the INGO is a systems change initiative that seeks to transform global civil society by questioning the purpose, structures, power, and positioning of INGOs.[4] The Patros Shift-the-Power Community of Practice (Greijn et al., 2022) also focuses on systems change and the division of roles and power imbalances between civil society organisations in the Global North and Global South.

What I argue and propose in this thesis is that postdevelopment ideas can provide a lens through which one can analyse a process of transformation for doing development differently. This thesis draws on four key ideas in the postdevelopment scholarship to illuminate and understand what I observed occurred in Oxfam NZ in its efforts to transform its development practices. As the fieldwork unfolded, I sought to understand the meaning and significance of what I observed at Oxfam NZ, and it was in the postdevelopment literature that I was able to find a language to describe what I was witnessing. Through an iterative process of working with the literature and reflecting on interviews and observations I came to identify four key postdevelopment ideas that had particular resonance with what was emerging from my observations and interviews during fieldwork. Each of these four ideas detailed below provided a language for comprehending and articulating the deeper significance of the changes underway, drawing on postdevelopment conceptualisations.

Autonomy is the first postdevelopment idea that I use. This means the right to decide and determine how to live. It means not having someone or some other authority decide one's human condition. This idea emerges from the roots of postdevelopment scholarship that

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highlight the power of decision making in development practices and the right of people to decide their own way to wellbeing (Max-Neef, 1991). This idea was first discussed in the 'human scale development' concept developed by Max-Neef which later informed Escobar's writings on postdevelopment during the 1990s (Escobar, 1995). The 'human scale development' concept proposed an interdependence, identity and integration between human beings and nature, and a local organisation of power and small-scale production (Caria and Domínguez, 2019). This postdevelopment idea was relevant in terms of my understanding of how Oxfam NZ attempted to rethink and address power relations, how it attempted to devolve power and decision making to its regional offices and how it developed a strategy to create strong, respectful and inclusive partnerships.

Solidarity is the second postdevelopment idea. This is the idea that we all share a human condition and live in a global community on a singular planet. This applies whether you are in the Global North or the Global South. Postdevelopment scholarship questions the Cartesian approach as it applies to the international aid and development sector which divides communities and nation states into developed/developing, rich/poor, modern/traditional. This approach suggests that most of the power lies in the Global North which is seen as developed, rich and modern and this power has entrenched such binaries. Further, from this worldview flows the logic that communities and nation states who are developing, poor and traditional (Global South) need help to catch up to the Global North. Esteva and Escobar (2017, p. 8) argue that local communities in the Global South do not need or want 'help' or 'charity' to catch up but rather alliances and coalitions to face problems which are shared. Aboriginal activists in Queensland in the 1970s, including Lilla Watson, succinctly articulated this in saying (and I quote): 'If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together'.[5]

Solidarity is not a new concept for the development sector. Some INGOs did have this orientation previously but this has eroded over time (de Waal, 2015). However, a conceptualisation of solidarity that is not based the notion of 'charity' makes this idea more aligned with postdevelopment scholarship than with previous concepts and constructs of development that relied on ideas of altruism. Drawing on Esteva and Escobar's (2017) ideas I use the term solidarity as a a bringing together of three elements — a move away from the narrative of 'us and them'; a move away from the narrative of development as charity; and a move toward working on issues of shared concern for the

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[5] The origins of this quote are debated and outlined on the following websites: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilla_Watson and http://unnecessaryevils.blogspot.com/2008/11/attributing-words.html

Global North and the Global South. All of these elements helped me understand the efforts by the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ to create a sense of solidarity within the development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is acknowledged, however, that not all advocacy activities which derive from postdevelopment thinking and are associated with transnational solidarity campaigns by INGOs have positive impacts. As outlined by Wilson (2017) such advocacy can be problematic and paradoxically marginalise local activists and their engagement with ideas of development.

Plurality is the third postdevelopment idea. A key critique found in postdevelopment scholarship is that development imposes universal ideas, be they in terms of economic or social development, or basic needs (Esteva and Escobar, 2017, p.2). Universalism is a key feature of modernity. Rather than progressing towards a single, globalised world, a pluriverse would be a world where many alternatives to the Western modern idea of human wellbeing are accepted and valid (Kothari et al., 2018). A pluriverse, Escobar (Esteva and Escobar, 2017) states, is not to romanticise grassroots social movements or ethnic communities. A pluriverse is all of us and not just indigenous communities or commons movements in the Global South. A pluriverse recognises different knowledges, ideas, cultures and worlds which both complement and antagonise each other. There is no dominant worldview. The idea is that many worlds can coexist with difference.

Büler (2003) takes up this concept and discusses how respect for human dignity should form part of the development lexicon, and in particular should be the guide for participatory development activities. She extends her argument to suggest that this is not a one sided relationship, and using a formulation of the Zapatistas in Mexico, says that:

> ...dignity is not just about being ourselves. For there to be dignity, the other is necessary. Because we are ourselves always in relation to the other...So dignity should be the world, a world where many worlds fit...A world where all worlds fit. (Büler, 2003, p. 6)

This quote highlights a number of concepts which are therefore core to the idea of a pluriverse in a postdevelopment sense. These are the concepts of dignity and relational interdependencies. Such concepts are arguably not postdevelopement ideas in and of themselves and I therefore construe them in this thesis as forming part of the postdevelopment idea of the pluriverse.[6] Mignolo (2013) calls the pluriverse an

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[6] For a broader discussion on the concept of dignity and the history of its use in development see Knight and Sahai (2018).

'entanglement of several cosmologies' and importantly highlights the role of power within it and in particular the powerful legacies of colonisation. Thinking with the idea of a pluriverse helped me explore questions regarding the concept of universalism and whether engagement with different kinds of knowledge and worldviews can influence the transformation of development practices.

Ontology is the fourth postdevelopment idea. Ontology is the study or description of 'being' or reality (Johnston et al., 2009). Escobar (2018) places ontology and a reframing of how we encounter things and people at the centre of postdevelopment. This idea, as with the three already outlined, is also concerned with opposing a division between nature and culture, mind and body, individual and community, between us and them (Escobar, 2011, p. 139). In such an interpretation, ontology is relational and multiple, that is, a pluriverse. Escobar (2018) argues that in order for reform to take place in the development sector, it must take an 'ontological turn'. Aspects of such an 'ontological turn' could include attachments to place and body, understanding our surroundings and context, or breaking down the 'us and them' colonial divide. For Escobar, ontology and plurality are closely linked. To foster a pluriverse is an ontological struggle, that is, a struggle of different knowledges, ideas and cultures. I would also contend that ontology is concerned with an understanding of self and of belonging. An understanding of who we are and who we are becoming, as individuals and as collective groups, and where we belong, matters as it impacts upon how we behave and engage with others. This is fundamental for organisational identity. Drawing on Escobar's discussion of an 'ontological turn', I was able to understand the challenges that the leadership team and staff faced in terms of organisational identity, the context and environment in which they existed and what they were attempting in transforming their development practices. Like all INGOs, Oxfam NZ also works in partnership with a range of different stakeholders so how staff engaged with others was a critical part of their work. Having a clearer sense of identity and kaupapa could influence how staff work with and relate to other stakeholders or partners.

The postdevelopment literature covers a broad range of concepts. The four ideas that I have discussed above are by no means an exhaustive list but have provided insights for my analysis in rethinking how development practices could be transformed.

While the focus of this thesis is on Oxfam NZ, it is important to acknowledge that there are a number of examples cited in the postdevelopment literature of groups or movements practicing postdevelopment or alternatives to traditional development

practices. Such writings include those of Buen Vivir from Latin America, Ubuntu from South Africa, Ecological Swaraj from India and DeGrowth from Europe (see Kothari et al., 2014 for a discussion of each group). Many of these groups have emerged from noncapitalist communities and see themselves as operating outside state capitalism or state socialism. The term 'sustainable development' is considered by some of the groups as an oxymoron for development practices which mask a neoliberal and economic growth agenda.

Such alternatives to traditional development practices may suggest that postdevelopment scholarship may have limited use for the study of an INGO such as Oxfam NZ. In general many INGOs are based in the Global North, are registered as charities, operate within capitalist and industrialised states or are linked to former colonial states, and support the universal agenda of the SDGs.[7] There are many commonalities between the journey of transformation that is occurring at Oxfam NZ and the groups mentioned above. These commonalities give support to the use and insights provided by the four postdevelopment ideas in my analysis. I draw parallels in terms of what underlies these approaches (equity and justice, interconnectedness, diversity, solidarity, pluriversality), the search for new narratives, the equal concern with an ecological and socially just world, and the intention to have a political voice.

I use autonomy, solidarity, plurality, and ontology in two ways in the thesis. Firstly, and as noted above, I use them to illuminate and understand what steps the organisation was taking to achieve change and shape new practices. Secondly, and based on my findings, I use them to inform some suggestions for practice. I argue that autonomy, solidarity, plurality and ontology have been key to building strengths of Oxfam NZ and offer a way into, and a means of understanding the development practices of other INGOs. Such an approach could offer new insights and has not been presented before in the development studies literature.

Wayfinding

While I use autonomy, solidarity, plurality and ontology to understand the steps the organisation was taking to achieve change and shape new practices, I also use the scholarship of Spiller et al. (2015) to explore and understand the overall transformation process itself. For Oxfam NZ the change process was a journey of becoming a different

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[7] One notable exception in terms of geo-political power is the INGO Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). This is one of the biggest INGOs in the sector. BRAC operates in the Global South and as a social enterprise (Cho and Sultana, 2015).

kind of organisation (and one that is still ongoing). What I will argue is that the overall journey can be understood as an example of wayfinding in the sense that Spiller et al. use the term. Spiller et al. draw on an analogy of Polynesian navigators who undertook ocean journeys without instrument navigation. These navigators are wayfinders who navigate by using principles or reference points (waypoints). Spiller et al. built a leadership framework based on five waypoints, and argue that the framework can provide a leadership and management approach for a modern organisational context. In particular they propose that the approach is suitable and effective for dealing with issues associated with transformation processes, that is, complexity, unpredictability, facing challenges and the need to create meaning and purpose amid uncertainty. They also argue that wayfinding is a dynamic, living, breathing and real skill. Wayfinding does not require that you know your destination in advance, but that you focus on building the skills and capabilities needed to undertake the journey.

In the Wayfinding Leadership Framework there are five waypoints. Waypoint 1 is Orientation on How to Lead; Waypoint 2 relates to Implementing Values; Waypoint 3 is concerned with Human Dynamics; Waypoint 4, Deepening Practices in Leadership and Management; and Waypoint 5 is about Exploring and Discovering Destinations. In the thesis I use three waypoints (Waypoints 2, 3, and 5). During the analysis of my observations it became evident that these three waypoints provided a way to understand how Oxfam NZ was able to create 'meaning' in what was occurring in its transformation process. There were three commonalities between what Spiller et al. discuss and what I observed at Oxfam NZ — a discussion of organisations dealing with uncertainty; how and why organisations should create meaning and purpose; and the use of Māori culture and knowledge. As such this analysis provides an additional but complementary, and separate to the postdevelopment ideas, insight to understanding Oxfam NZ's transformation journey. Both explore the strengths of the journey and support the underlying intention of this thesis, that is to undertake an appreciative inquiry of this process at Oxfam NZ.

Spiller et al.'s Waypoint 2 is concerned with values as a means to guide the practice of organisations. Spiller et al. position values as being like the two hulls of a traditionally built Polynesian double-hulled sailing catamaran, a waka. In this sense the hulls are the foundation of the waka and therefore values are the foundation of an organisation. For Spiller et al. values are only meaningful when they are dynamic, respond to context and are put into action in an organisation. Similarly Stacey and Griffin (2008) are concerned with the practice of values in organisations. To this end they are interested in the

everyday as a site where values may or may not be put into action or where values come into conflict. My analysis also works at the level of the everyday. I explore the everyday practices of the leadership team and staff in order to further understand values and their role in processes of organisational change. Studying the everyday practices and interactions of an organisation is also supported by anthropologist Dorothea Hilhorst (2003, p. 5), who has made the argument the importance of analysing the everyday, specifically in reference to INGOs. Her ethnographic study of a local NGO in the Philippines looked at how organisations gave themselves meaning and how those various meanings interacted, came into conflict or converged. Hilhorst argues that NGOs are sites of multiplicity and that it is only through an examination of everyday practice that we can begin to answer some of the questions surrounding development practice in terms of, for example, meaning, power, leadership, and how people and structural processes work together.

Waypoint 3 focuses on Human Dynamics. Spiller et al. highlight the importance of self-knowledge at both the individual and collective level. Self-knowledge is important, they argue, as it impacts on relationships and decision making within organisations. The metaphor of the hoe or rudder is used to describe self-knowledge. The hoe steers the waka and helps prevent it from capsizing in winds and ocean swells. Self-knowledge also has relevance for an organisation's external relations, and in particular where partnerships form the basis of the relationship. Of the three waypoints, this waypoint in particular aligns with a postdevelopment idea, that of ontology, as it calls for an understanding of who we are and where we start from. What Spiller et al. add is the impact that ontological reflection can have within an organisation in terms of relationships and decision making. What I add to the discussion are insights from an INGO setting. Waypoint 3 is particularly relevant as staff at Oxfam NZ have multiple relationships with others, which includes local partners in other countries, multilateral organisations, the national government and other INGOs.

The third waypoint I have used for my analysis is Spiller et al's Waypoint 5 (Exploring and Discovering Destinations). This waypoint discusses the importance of having an exploring and discovering mindset, that is, being open to possibilities, potential and new realities rather than being fixed on an end point or destination. It also means a process of breaking up or pulling apart in order to shed light on new ways of being and doing. In a similar way to postdevelopment it is concerned with questioning and critiquing in order to seek out alternatives. The key point is not to focus on where change within an organisation will bring us but how to navigate and respond to change. The answer for

Spiller et al. (2015, p. 145) is not through change management (objectifying, reinforcing, institutionalising, thinking, planning and enforcing) but rather through 'learning and responding through day-to-day, moment by moment response-ability'. With an exploring and discovering mindset applied what remains fixed or static are the subjects of the exploration.

The waypoints work in conjunction with one another. A discussion on values is intrinsically linked to a discussion on identity. As I explore in this thesis, one of the ways staff at Oxfam NZ are working to change their development practice is through a focus on identity and values. INGOs have long used values to distinguish their identity as organisations from the state and market (Jakimow, 2010; Mowles, 2008). My discussion on the use of values by staff in Oxfam NZ uses and further explores Spiller et al. 's (2015, pp. 56–57) point out that they are an interlocking system that connects values with each other and to context. There is both the value of responding to context and the importance of values emerging from the context and place. I look at how values are connected to local context and how they have influenced Oxfam NZ's journey of transformation. In this regard Spiller et al.'s framework provides a useful tool to analyse the journey that staff at Oxfam NZ are undertaking to understand their identity and to develop a new set of values.

Waypoint 5 (Exploring and Discovering Destinations) is particularly pertinent for Oxfam NZ. Their journey of transformation did not have a prescribed destination or envisioned future state of what their development practices should be.

> For the wayfinder the 'destination' is not a scenario, vision, forecast or future state. It is a living conviction that requires the release of potential in the moment — and this is the place where the wayfinder leader works: in the place of potential, the place between what is known and what is yet to be. (Spiller et al., 2015, p. 163)

As I will argue in this thesis, their journey was one of gaining insights, opening up new channels of possibilities and having the potential to deal with the challenges facing the organisation and the development sector in the modern world. This is what becoming an ocean-going waka was about.

Oxfam NZ as a research partner

My initial relationship with the leadership team at Oxfam NZ was established through Professor Roche. In 2015, one year prior to the commencement of my doctoral

candidature, Professor Roche was invited by the Oxfam NZ leadership team to participate in two workshops to explore possible future directions for the organisation, including social enterprise as an income stream. Following these workshops, a member of the leadership team expressed an interest to collaborate further with Professor Roche and the Institute for Human Security and Social Change. It was from this request that my relationship with the organisation began. Members of the leadership team were seeking individuals outside the organisation to contribute to their thinking about the role and value of Oxfam NZ in light of the global organisational restructure that was occurring within the Oxfam Confederation. The Oxfam Confederation, through the 'Oxfam 2020' project, changed its governance structure, in part by establishing regional offices throughout the Oxfam Confederation. As will be outlined in Chapter Two, the goal of 'Oxfam 2020' was that the management of programmes shift from Oxfam offices located in the Global North to regional offices in the Global South by 2020. In the Pacific region the Oxfam in the Pacific office was established with the goal that the management of programmes and partnerships across Oxfam Pacific offices would transition from Oxfam NZ and Oxfam Australia to Oxfam in the Pacific.

Professor Roche suggested that a doctoral candidate could be embedded in Oxfam NZ in order to undertake research and assist in thinking through what this global restructure might mean for the organisation. I contacted a member of the leadership team and we found that our questions of inquiry about how INGOs could change their development practices aligned. Further, the approach that I wanted to take was to both observe and be an active participant in the change process being undertaken by the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ. We agreed that an action research type model would be the most appropriate approach and I began my fieldwork six months into starting my doctorate. A detailed outline of my approach is found in Chapter Three. My research questions were open-ended and it was understood that the leadership team, staff and I were on an exploratory path together to discover how and in what ways development practices at Oxfam NZ could change.

As an action researcher working alongside and within Oxfam NZ I was involved in the leadership team and staff attempts to transform their development practices. As such, this allowed me to obtain a deeper understanding of how the leadership team and staff undertook and experienced this process, and provided opportunities for me to both use my scholarship and contribute to the process. As noted by Greenwood and Levin (2007), and as I experienced, the dialogue between an action researcher and local actors can allow for the creation of new ways of looking at problems and generating knowledge. The

opportunity of being an action researcher also allowed me to look at the question of how an action researcher can make a contribution to an organisational transformation process and what insights might be learnt from such participation.

Research questions

Using the example of Oxfam NZ, this thesis explores what it could take for a development organisation to change. I was interested in exploring: How can INGOs transform themselves to engage well with the challenges in a contemporary context of change and uncertainty? How do INGOs bring this about?

In order to offer some answers to these questions, this thesis examines the following specific questions:

- How did the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ attempt to transform their development practices?
- What influenced this transformation journey?
- What new narratives and insights about development practices emerged?
- What new insights about the process of transformation emerged?

Thesis overview

This thesis comprises nine chapters. Throughout the chapters I draw on my fieldwork notes which are based on my observations and informal conversations, engagement in organisational projects, formal interviews, workshop data, and review of internal organisational documents. Any excerpts from transcribed interviews are in italics to distinguish them from other quotations. I use a combination of quotes from formal interviews and informal conversations as well as fieldnotes. Apart from chapters one and nine, the Introduction and Conclusion, each chapter begins with an interlude. The intent of the interludes is to take the reader into the everyday organisational life of Oxfam NZ, provide context for each chapter and also provide an opportunity for me to reflect on my positionality within the research.

In this Introduction I have outlined the background to my research including how Oxfam NZ came to be a research partner. I also outline my methodology including the scholarly and theoretical underpinnings of the thesis. Further, I describe four ideas of postdevelopment scholarship and the Wayfinding Leadership Framework, both of which are integral to my analysis of Oxfam NZ's journey of transformation.

Chapter Two is a descriptive chapter of Aotearoa New Zealand, the aid and development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand, Oxfam NZ and the Oxfam Confederation. I include this chapter in order to provide a broad overview of the context in which the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ operated and outline an important element of what drove their journey of transformation. This chapter acts to support the analysis in the following chapters which explore in empirical and theoretical detail specific examples of attempts by the leadership team and staff to transform their development practices. The discussion in this background chapter will be referred to where relevant in the analysis chapters so that the perspectives of the leadership team and staff, and the context in which Oxfam NZ operated at the time of my fieldwork can be fully appreciated.

Chapter Three outlines my methodological approach. This encompassed working in an organisation as an action researcher and how this was intended to not only generate practical outcomes for the organisation but also provided an opportunity to gather data and analytical material for this thesis. I therefore dedicate a chapter to discuss this process. I provide background information on both action research and ethnography. I outline the tools of my approach, describe in further detail how the research partnership with Oxfam NZ was negotiated and offer reflections on enacting my approach.

In Chapter Four I discuss Oxfam NZ's three organisational values of 'be connected/manaakitanga', 'show courage/kaha' and 'seek justice/tika'. I argue that these values influenced and were a strength of Oxfam NZ's journey of transformation and were grounded in 'place' (Underhill-Sem, 2002). I explain how the values were embedded in the organisation through the everyday practices of the leadership team and staff and were the focal point of staff performance reviews and the staff recognition and award scheme. I draw on Escobar's discussion of an 'ontological turn' and Spiller et al. 's (2015) Waypoint 2 (Implementing Values) to explore the values, the context in which they were developed and implemented, and how this formed part of the transformation journey. These theories also enabled me to understand the challenges that the leadership team and staff faced in embedding the values within the organisation and how the values supported the exploration of new narratives about Oxfam NZ's development practices. The chapter also includes a discussion of how the values were used to support an attempt to diversify Oxfam NZ's income base. This was done in an effort to provide for greater financial independence. It also helped create a new narrative related to the concept of social enterprise and how this could form a part of Oxfam NZ's development practices.

Chapter Five focuses on the value of 'be connected/manaakitanga' and the efforts of the leadership team and staff to enact this value by engaging with te ao Māori (the Māori worldview) and understanding Oxfam NZ's identity as an Aotearoa New Zealand organisation. This engagement with te ao Māori also included a commitment to te Tiriti and taking steps to implement te Tiriti in Oxfam NZ. I analyse these practices thinking with the postdevelopment ideas of ontology and plurality. I also discuss how the actions and practices which engaged with te ao Māori, and which included all staff, reinforced the link between the individual and the collective. I draw on Spiller et al. 's (2015) Waypoint 3 (Human Dynamics) to explore this idea. The chapter extends and supports the discussion in Chapter Four about how the leadership team and staff attempted to ground their development practices in 'place' and how they were taking an 'ontological turn' (Escobar, 2018; Underhill-Sem, 2002). I argue that engaging with te ao Māori created a new narrative related to 'place' and identity.

Chapter Six examines the efforts of the Partnerships Directorate within Oxfam NZ to develop and reframe how the Directorate staff work with partners and other stakeholders, and to transition away from traditional project management practices. I explore the development of the Oxfam NZ Partnerships Strategy which proposed these changes. I argue that the Strategy was significant to the transformation journey and also reinforced the importance and enactment of the Oxfam NZ value 'be connected/manaakitanga'. I use the work of Eyben (2006; 2010) to analyse and discuss the relational approach that was proposed in the Strategy. I also discuss the complex and interdependent nature of partnership building and what factors were deemed important to enable the establishment of strong, respective and inclusive partnerships. I explore the challenges that the staff within the Partnerships Directorate faced in having their strategy accepted within Oxfam NZ and in its implementation. In particular I discuss the role of power and how it is linked to the postdevelopment idea of autonomy. I argue that the Strategy provided a new values-based and relational approach and narrative to guide the organisation's attempts to transform its development practices.

Chapter Seven discusses the efforts of the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate in the advocacy coalition 'Back the Plan: Back to Zero'. Oxfam NZ co-led this advocacy coalition which brought together 14 INGOs from the Aotearoa New Zealand international aid and development sector. The advocacy coalition campaigned on the introduction of domestic legislation on climate change in Aotearoa New Zealand which occurred during the lead up to the national election in 2017. I provide context for my discussion using the scholarship of de Waal (2015) and draw on the postdevelopment idea of solidarity to

explore the formation and operation of the advocacy coalition and the challenges it faced. The chapter focuses on how collective action and solidarity can create power and strength and how this can be nuanced and utilised. Participation and leadership of the advocacy coalition introduced a new dimension to the development practices of Oxfam NZ and, building on the discussion in Chapter Six, is another example of how the leadership team and staff attempted to transform their development practices. Further, through their involvement in the advocacy coalition, staff from the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate demonstrated an enactment of the Oxfam NZ values of 'be connected/manaakitanga' and 'seek justice/tika'.

Chapter Eight examines Oxfam NZ's internal and external response to media reports of historical incidents of sexual misconduct and abuse by Oxfam Great Britain (Oxfam GB) staff in Haiti. Media attention on these cases occurred during my fieldwork and had a significant impact on the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ and the Oxfam Confederation as a whole. I argue that the response was another example of the enactment of the Oxfam NZ values. Further, developing a response involved navigating the political and moral dimensions of the incident. In this sense it reflected a process of ethical negotiation (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Gibson-Graham et al., 2021). The response was also characteristic of the feminist principle of care and reflexivity (Tronto, 1993). I suggest that the process they went through in responding to the incident became an important part of their transformation journey as it showed how they had the potential to respond to a crisis. I discuss how the response generated a new narrative of 'care' and new insights into transforming development practices.

Finally in my conclusion in Chapter Nine I outline the findings associated with each chapter in the thesis and the contribution that these make to answering my research questions: Using Oxfam NZ as a case study, how did the leadership team and staff attempt to transform their development practices; what influenced this transformation journey; what new narratives and insights about development practices emerge; and what new insights about the process of transformation emerged? The chapter concludes with an outline of overall insights and what learning can be drawn from my analysis of Oxfam NZ's experience in terms of how INGOs can transform themselves to engage well with the challenges in a contemporary context of change and uncertainty.

Summary

In this chapter I have outlined a background to the core question that underscores this thesis, that is, using Oxfam NZ as an example, how can INGOs transform themselves to

engage well with the challenges in a contemporary context of change and uncertainty? I have noted that NGOs are facing a number of challenges and critiques. I explained the genesis of my interest in this problem and how I came to work with Oxfam NZ as a research partner. I used action research and appreciative inquiry to guide my research approach. I was interested in exploring instances of the positive and the possible and therefore focused on the strengths of the leadership team and staff in their journey of transformation.

I outlined the two major theoretical frameworks that I will use in the analysis chapters of the thesis; postdevelopment and the Wayfinding Leadership Framework. I put forward the proposal that there are four postdevelopment ideas which are relevant to the analysis – autonomy, solidarity, plurality and ontology. I explained what each of these mean and how these ideas could be used to understand the steps the organisation was taking to achieve change and shape new practices. In terms of the Wayfinding Leadership Framework I have used Waypoint 2 (Implementing Values), 3 (Human Dynamics) and Waypoint 5 (Exploring and Discovering Destinations) to explore and understand the overall journey itself and the way change was emerging. Finally, I provided an outline of my research questions and an overview of what each chapter will address.

Chapter Two
Oxfam NZ and Aotearoa New Zealand aid and development

Introduction

This chapter provides background and presents relevant knowledge and history about Aotearoa New Zealand, Aotearoa New Zealand's aid and development sector, and gives a description of Oxfam NZ. This is in order to provide context for my discussion and to describe the environment in which the leadership team and staff operated. The majority of the information used to describe Oxfam NZ and the Oxfam Confederation is based on descriptions provided by the leadership team and staff as well as Oxfam NZ publications, plans and reports.

Organisational theorists place an importance on the external and national environments in which organisations operate as they can influence organisational culture, purpose and change processes (Hatch, 1997). Organisations can also replicate elements and the power inequalities which are inherent in their social, cultural and political context (Goetz, 1997). As such, it was important for me to understand the wider dynamics of the society and the nation in which the leadership team and staff operated in order to better understand the transformation journey that was taking place within the organisation during my fieldwork time. Oxfam NZ was known as an active organisation in the political and social sphere in Aotearoa New Zealand as the leadership team and staff worked to influence national aid and development policy, other INGOs based in Aotearoa New Zealand, and the general public. An overview of the dynamics of the wider sector in which the leadership team and staff operated in and the interdependence between Oxfam NZ, Oxfam International and the Oxfam Confederation is also provided to explain some of the structural and governance challenges which played a part in their attempts to transform their development practices.

1. The Aotearoa New Zealand context

Aotearoa New Zealand is located in the southwestern part of the Pacific. In September 2018 the estimated resident population was recorded at 4.9 million. Geographically the country comprises two main land masses, the North Island (te Ika-a-Māui) and the South Island (te Waipounamu), in addition to about 600 smaller islands. Polynesians migrated to both islands in the 13th century, developing their own distinctive Māori culture. European settlement and colonisation occurred in the 19th century, some 600 years later. As a result of colonisation Māori became a numerical minority in New Zealand. The

2018 Census revealed that the Māori population represented 16.5% of the total population, Pacific Islanders 8.1% and 70.2% identified with European ethnicity. The balance of the population included people of Asian, Middle Eastern, African and Latin American ethnicity (New Zealand Government Stats NZ/Tatauranga Aotearoa, 2018). Having been established in Aotearoa New Zealand for hundreds of years, Māori see themselves as indigenous people, and as such, have a very active, political and social role in Aotearoa New Zealand (Tennant et al., 2008).

The Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti O Waitangi) (herein referred to as te Tiriti) is considered the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand. I outline a brief background to te Tiriti in the next section. In addition, Aotearoa New Zealand is a constitutional monarchy with the British monarch as the head of state. Aotearoa New Zealand has a Bill of Rights Act (1990) and a Human Rights Act (1993). Aotearoa New Zealand was the first independent nation in the world to declare universal suffrage. This occurred in 1893.

Being an island nation and partly due to its location, the economy of Aotearoa New Zealand is highly globalised and depends on international trade, mainly with Australia, the European Union, the United States, China, South Korea, Japan and Canada. Aotearoa New Zealand has a diverse market economy with three predominant industries including services, production of goods and primary. Agricultural, pastoral, forestry and horticultural products dominate Aotearoa New Zealand's exports.[8] According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019), Aotearoa New Zealand's stable economic growth, an average of 2.1% since March 2010, was driven by strong tourism demand from Asia and increases in dairy exports. Despite this economic outlook, Aotearoa New Zealand experiences higher rates of suicide, homelessness, family violence and child poverty as compared to other similar OECD countries. Income distribution is more unequal than the OECD (2019) average. Education, health and housing outcomes vary strongly by socio-economic background and ethnicity. To address some of these concerns and broaden the range of indicators on which success is measured, the Government introduced a Wellbeing Budget in 2019 (New Zealand Government Treasury/Te Tai Ōhanga, 2019). This budget aimed to provide support for mental wellbeing; reduce child poverty; lift Māori and Pacific Islander incomes, skills and opportunities; support digital innovation; and transition to a sustainable and low emissions economy. The COVID-19 global health pandemic has also had significant

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[8] For more detailed and up to date information on Aotearoa New Zealand's economy see New Zealand Government Stats NZ/Tatauranga Aotearoa:
https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/which-industries-contributed-to-new-zealands-gdp

impacts on the economy with a record contraction in the June quarter of 2020 (New Zealand Government Treasury/Te Tai Ōhanga, 2020).

Since the 1970s, Aotearoa New Zealand has attempted to identify itself as being more of a Pacific nation. As Rolfe (2001), outlines successive administrations made an explicit point of reinforcing the concept of Aotearoa New Zealand as a Pacific nation. There are a number of factors which have influenced this shift including its location, island geography, and constitutional obligations to a number of territories and states. As noted above 8.1% of the population identify themselves as having Pacific Island ethnicity. When added to the Māori population, over a quarter of the population have strong historical connections with the Polynesian region of the Pacific (Laban in Thomsen et al., 2018).

Te Tiriti

Following the arrival of European settlers in the 19th century, there was trade, land transactions and also conflict between the new arrivals and the traditional Māori inhabitants. By the 1830s growing lawlessness among the Europeans and theft of Māori land increased the level of conflict. Fears of a French annexation of parts of the country also arose. These concerns caused some Māori chiefs to petition the British King to provide Māori with protection from the settlers and to allow for a state of peaceful settlement (New Zealand Government Ministry for Culture and Heritage/Manatū Taonga, 2017a, 2017b). This culminated in the development of te Tiriti which was signed on February 6, 1840 by representatives of the British Crown and about 540 Māori rangatira (chiefs). Te Tiriti is a broad statement of principles, which are outlined in three articles with three specific intentions — to make a political compact, to found a nation state, and to establish a government in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Te Tiriti has both an English and Māori version. There are important differences between the two versions. For example, te Tiriti in Māori translates the word sovereignty as kāwanatanga (government, governorship). A state of governance and a formal institution of government are not the same and as a result, different understandings and interpretations of te Tiriti have been the subject of widespread debate in Aotearoa New Zealand since its signing.

Due to these different interpretations of te Tiriti and protests from Māori that te Tiriti had not been honoured by the Crown, in 1975 the Waitangi Tribunal (Te Rōpū Whakamana i te Tiriti O Waitangi) was established. The Waitangi Tribunal considered claims by Māori against the Crown regarding perceived breaches of the principles of te Tiriti. The Waitangi Tribunal holds the exclusive right to interpret and determine the

meaning of te Tiriti. More than 2000 claims have been made with the Waitangi Tribunal and in 2010 legislation was passed which provided for settlements which had a total value of approximately $950 million in New Zealand dollars.[9]

It is important to note that te Tiriti is not considered part of domestic law in Aotearoa New Zealand and therefore is not enforceable in its own right. However, Aotearoa New Zealand's constitution states that the principles contained in te Tiriti must be incorporated into public policy. Understanding and knowledge of te Tiriti has also grown and developed amongst the non-Māori population due to longstanding education programmes (Huygens, 2011). Te Tiriti was in effect an agreement to work in partnership and signifies the coming together of two very different cultures, Māori and British. These sentiments are captured in the following statement which is on display at te Tiriti o Waitangi Museum. The statements emphasise the need for all to work together to grow and build unity and peace, and to learn from mistakes.
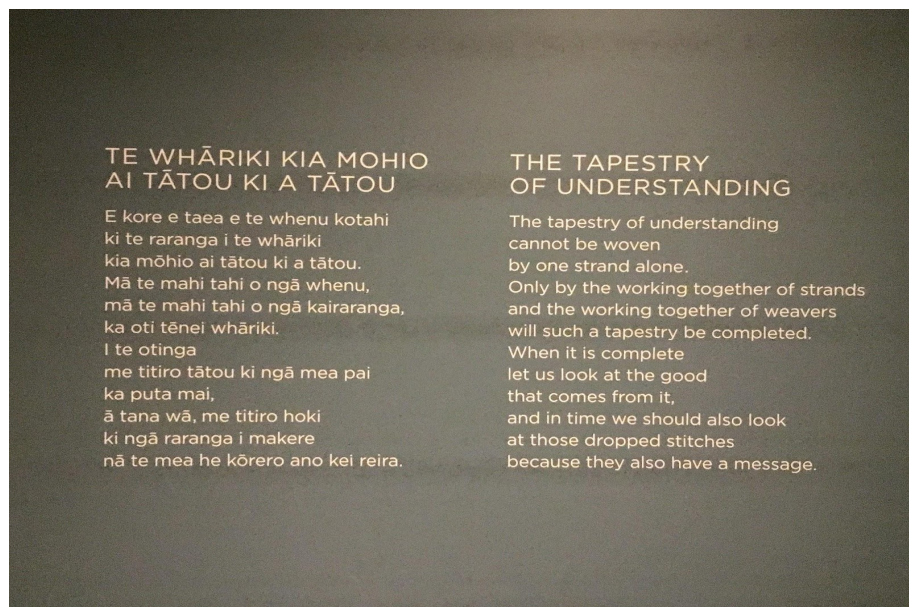
Image 1: Te Whāriki Kia Mohio ai Tātou kia Tātou (The Tapestry of Understanding)
Source: Fieldnotes, January 2019

Te ao Māori and decolonisation

As referenced in the Tapestry of Understanding and argued in te Tiriti, there was, and continues to be, a need for Māori and non-Māori to work together in unity and bring about the integration of their different cultures. Te Tiriti emphasises the importance of a

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[9] New Zealand Government Ministry for Culture and Heritage/Manatū Taonga, 2017b; New Zealand Government Ministry of Justice/Tāhū o te Ture, 2021. For more detailed accounts of te Tiriti o Waitangi see Belgrave et al., 2005; Hayward, 2004; Kawharu, 1989; New Zealand Government Ministry of Justice/Tāhū o te Ture, 1989; Moon, 2002; and Orange, 2004.

Māori worldview and an integration of Māori language, approaches, values, customs and ideas into all aspects of contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand life (Sims et al., 2018, p. 8). In this regard, engaging with te ao Māori is a very important political and cultural movement and a key part of decolonisation within Aotearoa New Zealand.

Mercier (2020, pp. 41–42) defines decolonisation as the restoration of the house that was colonised. She argues a house restoration is not easy to do. Not everyone has the same ideas about how it is achieved, the methods that suit one area may not apply in another, and not all jobs can be done at once and with the same tools. For decolonisation she argues that there are many different ways and means of bringing this about, and it requires significant levels of thinking, planning and action. There is a need to decolonise the prominent thought, knowledge, methods, pedagogies and institutions, and to rebuild these on an integrated and shared basis where both Māori and non-Māori history, language, culture and knowledge is respected and recognised. Mercier further argues that this process also needs to occur at many levels — in minds, institutions and systems.

Pōkā Laenui's schema of decolonisation (2000) is a helpful tool in understanding how decolonisation can occur. His schema has five stages: rediscovery and recovery; mourning; dreaming; commitment; action. What has, and is currently occurring in Aotearoa New Zealand, I suggest, is consistent with Laenui's schema. For example, even before the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in the 1970s, Māori culture, art and literature began to appear as part of a broader social movement for a Māori collective identity and autonomy (Batten, 1989, p. 227). This was the beginning of the first stage of rediscovery and recovery. Post the establishment of the Tribunal, there followed a period which was marked by a lament for the loss of Māori culture and language, a strong desire to see it revived, and then followed a period of strong protest, political activism and resistance, all directed at reaffirming Māori identity and autonomy (see Sherman, 2006 for an overview). By the 1980s a cultural resurgence was evident. This was recognised and supported by government, and in 1987 the Māori Language Act passed into legislation. This Act was updated in 2016 to further revitalisatise the language.

During my fieldwork I observed that Māori language, customs and traditions were visible in everyday conversations and life in Aotearoa New Zealand. In referencing the name of the country it is customary to use both the Māori name, Aotearoa, and the English name, New Zealand, and I have adopted this in this thesis. There are two Māori television channels which broadcast solely in te Reo Māori (Māori language).[10] At any public event I

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[10] See the New Zealand Government Ministry of Māori development/Te Puni Kōkiri's (2021) history of te Reo Māori for a more comprehensive account: https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/whakamahia/te-reo-maori

attended during my fieldwork I observed both Māori and non-Māori introduce themselves and greet the audience in te Reo Māori. Other prominent indications of this revival are that the national anthem of Aotearoa New Zealand is sung in both Māori and English and the national rugby team, the All Blacks, are known worldwide for the performance of the haka (posture dance) before matches.

Liu (2005) argues that te Tiriti establishes biculturalism as one of the dominant narratives of Aotearoa New Zealand's national identity. The main actors in the story are Māori and Pākeha[11] and the nation emerged out of a partnership between the two. As such, biculturalism is a significant part of Aotearoa New Zealand's national identity. Two important aspects of this biculturalism, which Liu highlights, are that it places a focus on culture rather than economics in Aotearoa New Zealand society, and on the group or the collective, rather than the individual.

The advancement towards a society which engages strongly with te ao Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand however, has not meant that Māori no longer face high levels of discrimination. Māori remain overrepresented in national statistics regarding poor health, education and unemployment (New Zealand Government Ministry of Health/Manatū Hauora and University of Otago, 2006). Research from 2015 (Marriott and Sim, 2015) which looked at indicators including health, knowledge and skills, employment, standards of living, cultural identity, and social connectedness suggested that there are still significant inequality gaps between the non-Māori population and Māori and Pacific people. This suggests that decolonisation has a significant way to go, particularly in terms of bridging these gaps. Liu (2005) suggests that there is a disparity between external perceptions of the success of Aotearoa New Zealand's progress towards creating a strong engagement with te ao Māori and having te Tiriti, and the internal actualities of this process.

As noted above, there are many other cultures which are now represented in the wider Aotearoa New Zealand society and multicultural practices and policies are becoming part of the bicultural story (see Hill, 2010). In this sense, rebuilding the house, as outlined in Mercier's decolonisation analogy, is a journey for Māori and all non-Māori people within Aotearoa New Zealand, and not just Māori and Pākeha.

The importance of biculturalism and decolonisation to the context of my research cannot be overstated. This is because Aotearoa New Zealand, since the signing of te Tiriti, has been historically, culturally, politically and socially linked to an agreement on the need for biculturalism and strong engagement with te ao Māori. Importantly, the influence of

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[11] New Zealander of European descent.

this movement continues and impacts everyday life in Aotearoa New Zealand. Both concepts are widely debated in scholarly and public forums and spaces, and there is a constant and negotiated understanding of what a strong engagement with te ao Māori and decolonisation means for Aotearoa New Zealand. I take up these issues more fully in Chapter Five where I discuss my observations and analysis of their impact on the leadership team and staff within Oxfam NZ.

2. Aid and development in Aotearoa New Zealand

Aotearoa New Zealand's aid programmes had, at the time of my fieldwork for this thesis, a thematic focus on sustainable economic development and a geographic focus on the region of the Pacific. The Official Development Assistance (ODA) expenditure in 2016 was $641 million in New Zealand dollars (New Zealand Government Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade/Manatū Aorere, 2021). Aotearoa New Zealand was the second biggest donor to the Pacific region behind Australia (2016 data from the Lowy Institute, Pacific Aid Map). Aid expenditure in Aotearoa New Zealand was 0.25% of Gross National Income in 2016 and below the OECD average. The Development Assistance Committee of the OECD recommends a level of 0.7%.

Pre and post the turn of the century the Aotearoa New Zealand aid and development sector underwent numerous changes, and in particular, since 2000, these changes have been quite significant. For example, in 2002, the Aotearoa New Zealand aid program was detached from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) was created. In this change the then Labour government's aim was for its aid and development funding to be focused on the alleviation of poverty and the pursuit of human rights. This aligned with the intentions of the Millenium Development Goals of the United Nations and the partnership approach outlined by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (Banks et al., 2012). In 2005, the government increased its funding for aid and development by twenty-three percent and this had significant impacts on INGOs and their operations. With more funding available, this period of time saw an increased role and higher levels of funding for INGOs in the sector, and an alignment of both government and INGO approaches to aid and development. However, as McGregor et al. (2013) argue, it also led to a dependency of INGOs on government funding and a depoliticisation of the sector.

Following the election of a centre-right National-led government in 2008, the landscape of the Aotearoa New Zealand aid and development sector changed dramatically. As outlined by Mawdsley et al. (2018) and Challies et al. (2011), three major changes

occurred. These included: the disestablishment of the semi-independent NZAID; the aid programme being subsumed into MFAT; and the previous focus on eliminating poverty being downgraded and incorporated into the broader mission of sustainable economic development. There was also a significant change in terms of what types of organisations NZAID partnered with, and how they engaged. Mawdsley et. al. (2018, p. 33-34) suggest that the relationship between government and civil society associated with aid and development was eroded through funding delays and cuts, little communication about key decisions, and they suggest there was an ideological shift towards a much stronger tying together of Aotearoa New Zealand's aid, trade, foreign policy and security issues. At the same time funding for aid and development steadily decreased between 2009–2017. Throughout this period INGOs struggled to survive, both financially and operationally, and had difficulties in pursuing their own independent aims and existing partnerships. McGregor et al. (2013) argue that the changes led to uncertainty and insecurity in the sector, competitive behaviour amongst INGOs, and a greater sense of political awareness and the politics of INGO-government relationships (see Webster, 2015 and Spratt, 2017 for further discussion).

In 2017 there was another change in government and this brought about a further shift in the government's aid and development policy. The new government was a Labour-led coalition with the New Zealand First Party and the Green Party, and the new Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade was Winston Peters, who was also the Deputy Prime Minister. In his 'Shifting the dial', Eyes Wide Open, Pacific Reset speech, he highlighted Aotearoa New Zealand's national identity and its place as a Pacific island nation (Peters, 2018). This new vision suggested a greater role for Aotearoa New Zealand in the Pacific region and this was reflected in a reframing of aid and foreign policies by the new government. The Pacific has historically featured as a primary recipient of Aotearoa New Zealand aid and development government funding and the regional imperatives have influenced government aid and development policy.

In May 2018 the Labour-led coalition government announced an increase in the ODA to $803 million in New Zealand dollars and a primary focus on providing aid and development in the Pacific. Further, by 2019 the government planned to direct close to 60% of aid expenditure to the Pacific and by 2021 this was 65% (MFAT, 2021). In the Strategic Plan of the New Zealand Aid Programme 2015–19, Aotearoa New Zealand was described as a Pacific Island country with a large Pacific community and a Pacific identity (MFAT, 2015). Samoa and Tonga were specifically mentioned in the Strategic Plan document as countries with which Aotearoa New Zealand had strong and enduring

relationships. Historically, Aotearoa New Zealand's presence in the Pacific was one associated with colonisation (their colonies being Samoa until 1962, Cook Islands until 1965, Nauru until 1968 and Niue until 1974) and it continues to have constitutional bonds with the countries of Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau (Banivanua Mar, 2016). Its colonial presence has not altogether been a smooth one, and there have been episodes of violence and conflict, most notably in Samoa. Aotearoa New Zealand ODA in the Pacific has also shifted focus from that of supporting governments in the Pacific to deliver basic services and welfare towards instituting neoliberal reform by the end of the 1990s (Banks et al., 2012).

The importance of and fluctuations in government aid funding to the INGO sector in Aotearoa New Zealand is significant. At the time of my fieldwork, MFAT was the main institutional donor for Oxfam NZ. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the majority of INGOs operate under a business model where funding is derived from public donations and national government grants, the latter being dispersed by MFAT. Tennant et al. (2008) provide a history of the non-profit sector in Aotearoa New Zealand and discuss how the relationship with government has historically been one of close collaboration. The small aid community is a distinct characteristic of the aid and development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. They suggest this was historically a result of an absence of large scale philanthropic organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand, a centralised state, and the approachability of politicians in a small country.

The SDG framework is also important in the context of aid programmes for INGOs within Aotearoa New Zealand and also guides policy and strategic decisions for both MFAT and Oxfam NZ. MFAT coordinates the government's contributions and responses to the SDGs and provided the government's first Voluntary National Review on the SDGs to the United Nations in July 2019. Oxfam NZ contributed to the international development commitments component of this review. In addition, Oxfam NZ and other INGOs have worked to promote and raise the profile of the SDGs in the country.

Another relevant stakeholder in the aid and development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand is Council for International Development (CID), which is the umbrella organisation in Aotearoa New Zealand for international development organisations. CID is a forum to represent NGOs and INGOs in the sector and they provide training and support to their members. In 2010, MFAT ceased its core funding agreement with CID which significantly reduced staffing and the activities of the organisation (McGregor et al., 2013). Oxfam NZ

is a member of CID and during my fieldwork the Executive Director was a member of the CID Board. I discuss the relationship between Oxfam NZ and CID in Chapter Seven.

3. Description of Oxfam NZ

Established in 1991, Oxfam NZ is an INGO based in Aotearoa New Zealand. At the time of fieldwork, Oxfam NZ was one of the four largest INGOs in Aotearoa New Zealand, the other three being World Vision, TearFund and ChildFund. Oxfam NZ's mission is 'to fight poverty and injustice through partnerships with community and local organisations in developing countries' (Oxfam NZ, Strategic Plan 2013–2019, internal working document). In 2018, Oxfam NZ had 55 staff including a five-person executive leadership team. The organisation was divided into four different directorates: Advocacy and Campaigns, Engagement and Communications, Operations, and Partnerships. The Engagement and Communications Directorate had the most staff. The Oxfam NZ head office was in Auckland with an additional smaller office in Wellington. During my fieldwork two staff members were located in Wellington. Since 1991, the organisation has had three Executive Directors.

In 2016 Oxfam NZ underwent a major restructure to address growing financial difficulties and the organisation's own sustainability. As a result, the number of staff decreased. As will be discussed in Chapter Three, I began my fieldwork with the organisation at this challenging time.

Oxfam NZ is governed by a board of seven trustees. The Board is made up of both male and female members who come from a variety of professional backgrounds. During the time of my fieldwork, the board members included a diverse range of individuals in terms of ethnicity, including people of Māori and Pacific Island descent.[12]

● Approach to development practices

Oxfam NZ is a secular organisation which adopts a rights-based approach to development. Rights-based approaches to development were taken up by some INGOs in the 1990s following the United Nations Development Programme adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for the international development community. The UN Declaration of the Right to Development establishes a human person as the central subject of development. Rights-based approaches perceive an individual as a rights holder and the duty bearer of those rights as the nation state. Oxfam NZ seeks to

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[12] Information about each of the current board members can be found on the organisation's website: https://www.oxfam.org.nz/what-we-do/about/who-we-are/board/

support processes which allow the most vulnerable and marginalised in communities to realise, assert and claim their human rights. Its approach to development practices centres on the world as a complex system of power relations. Realisation of rights involves a positive transformation of those power relations (Oxfam NZ, Partnering for Impact, internal working document, February 15, 2019). The organisation also emphasises the need to ensure gender justice and the transformation of all relations of power that oppress, exploit and marginalise.

Oxfam NZ is a prominent INGO in Aotearoa New Zealand and has a high public profile because of the Oxfam global brand. It had close connections within government and actively works to influence government policy on aid and development. This work is undertaken by the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate within the organisation, which over time has built up a network of close contacts within government. It views such work as an important means through which to achieve their mission of ending poverty and inequality. The organisation's implicit political alignments favour governments which have a greater emphasis on the achievement of social justice and environmental objectives rather than broad economic growth outcomes. The leadership team at Oxfam NZ has also been a strong advocate for INGOs to work together and form coalitions which have a single voice on particular issues. For example, prior to the last national election in Aotearoa New Zealand members of the leadership team encouraged the establishment of, and led a coalition of INGOs to promote a change in government policy on climate change. This is discussed in Chapter Seven. Oxfam NZ is a strong advocate for self-determination and systems change. More recently it has investigated ways of generating funding outside that of traditional sources, that is, those provided by public fundraising and government, so as to provide it with greater financial independence and an increased ability to deliver on its strategic goals, which is discussed in Chapter Four.

- **Areas of work**

Staff at Oxfam NZ work across three broad areas — advocacy and campaigning, long-term development programmes, as well as humanitarian preparedness and emergencies. Each of these areas is of equal importance. The advocacy and campaigns work is an area of differentiation between Oxfam NZ and other INGOs as it involves both public campaigning and lobbying. Oxfam NZ aims to interconnect all three areas of work through a 'one programme approach' which recognised support to humanitarian preparedness, response and recovery work; long-term development initiatives focused on locally led transformative change; and advocacy to create systemic change (Oxfam NZ, Partnering for Impact, internal working document, February 15, 2019).

Oxfam NZ's development and humanitarian work primarily occurs in the geographic region of the Pacific (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Micronesia) although it is not confined to this region. During my fieldwork long-term development programmes also operated in Timor-Leste and humanitarian programmes in Bangladesh. The long-term development projects which were funded and supported at the time of fieldwork included gender justice and water projects in Papua New Guinea; agricultural projects in Timor-Leste; promoting active citizenship, disaster preparedness and organic farming in Tonga; and agricultural and education projects in Vanuatu. The campaigns that staff were focused on were issues of climate change and economic inequality. The humanitarian projects that the organisation worked on were Tropical Cyclone Gita in Tonga and the Rohingya Refugee Crisis in Bangladesh.

- **Funding and budget**

Oxfam NZ is structured as a Charitable Trust. As a registered charity Oxfam NZ is granted tax exemption in Aotearoa New Zealand. In 2018–2019 Oxfam NZ had an income of $9.38 million in New Zealand dollars. Twenty-four percent of this funding came from government contracts where Oxfam NZ undertook projects which were directly funded by government. Sixty-seven percent came from public fundraising. Both sources of funding are used to cover the organisation's administrative, fundraising, and advocacy and campaigning costs, in addition to the costs associated with the implementation of fixed-term projects and humanitarian responses which operate in countries outside of Aotearoa New Zealand. During the time of my fieldwork the leadership team considered that the existing business model was unsustainable and that it inhibited its attempts to achieve the organisation's mission. There were a number of elements which were underlying this sentiment. Firstly, funding from MFAT was linked to individual projects, and needed to be partially matched from public funding.[13] This proportion increased from 5% in 2009 to 25% during my fieldwork time. This increase meant that the majority of public funds which were raised through fundraising activities, and which were used for discretionary projects, now needed to be redirected to meet MFAT funding proportional requirements. There was little income left over to invest in new ideas or initiatives including attempts to change their business model. Secondly, the nature and reporting requirements of the MFAT funding also placed additional constraints on Oxfam NZ's ability to undertake advocacy and to introduce more flexible and adaptable ways of working. To try and overcome these issues, in 2017 the leadership team introduced a third funding stream into its business model and experimented with

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[13] See MFAT (2017) for more information on 'matched funding' requirements.

various for-profit ventures. In 2018–2019, 9% of its funding was derived from this alternative funding source. These matters are further discussed in Chapter Four and Chapter Six.

4. The Oxfam Confederation and 'Oxfam 2020'

Oxfam NZ is an independent member of the Oxfam Confederation. As of 2021, the Oxfam Confederation has 21 member organisations (Oxfam International, 2021). The Oxfam Confederation has an Oxfam International Secretariat (herein referred to as Oxfam International) which facilitates collaboration between the Oxfam Confederation members. The Oxfam International Secretariat is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya with advocacy offices in Addis Ababa, Brussels, Geneva, Moscow, New York, Oxford, and Washington. Members of the Oxfam Confederation work in over 90 countries worldwide. Oxfam NZ is considered a small to medium sized member in the Oxfam Confederation, both in terms of the number of staff and funding. Other members are much larger, for example Oxfam GB employs over 5000 staff and had annual income of over £400 million in British pounds in 2017/18 (Oxfam GB Annual Report, 2017/2018). Oxfam Australia (2018), another member active in the Pacific region, employs over 650 staff and had an annual income of $97.8 million in Australian dollars in 2018 — ten times more than that of Oxfam NZ.

Since 2016 the Oxfam Confederation has undergone a global organisational change process called 'Oxfam 2020'. 'Oxfam 2020' was designed to respond to the changing global landscape in which INGOs operate. The governing body Oxfam International recognised that if the Oxfam Confederation was to remain relevant it needed to respond to complex and interconnected social, political and environmental issues (Buckley and Ward, 2015). The ambitions of the 'Oxfam 2020' model were to (a) increase the Oxfam Confederation's global accountability, legitimacy and relevance and be based in the countries where they deliver development and humanitarian work; (b) strengthen their ability to influence change processes and improve programme quality; (c) increase their knowledge; (d) simplify and streamline ways of working; and (e) become more financially sustainable (Oxfam International, One Oxfam Model, internal working document, 2016).

Some of the animating ideas which underpinned the ambitions of 'Oxfam 2020' included moving away from service delivery and doing more to tackle the root causes of poverty, being smarter, more agile and taking more risks, playing more of a broker role, and building coalitions including through reaching out to 'unusual suspects', that is, stakeholders that the Oxfam Confederation did not work with previously (Cortada, 2017).

The 'Oxfam 2020' model intended to place the demand and ownership of programmes and campaigns in the Global South. As a result, Oxfam offices in the Pacific and Southeast Asia are now predominantly led and staffed by local people with strategic and operational plans that are reported to reflect the local context (Oxfam NZ, Partnering for Impact, internal working document, February 15, 2019).

In 2018, as part of the 'Oxfam 2020' process, Oxfam International also relocated its head office from Oxford in the United Kingdom (UK) to Nairobi, Kenya. Moving the global office to Kenya is seen by Oxfam International as a significant symbolic act and an attempt to break the traditional Global North and Global South binary which is a dominant narrative in the international development sector. Another large INGO, ActionAid, went through a similar process in the early 2000s with offices in the Global North being downsized and its head office relocated to South Africa (David et al., 2006).

The 'Oxfam 2020' model significantly challenged the traditional strategic and operational processes, and business model of the Oxfam Confederation. In the traditional model, resources and line management of programmes were directed from certain members in the Global North to offices in the Global South. For example, the Oxfam Vanuatu country office reported to staff within Oxfam NZ for any programmes that were funded by the New Zealand Government. In this sense the Oxfam Vanuatu office was an administrative office which administered the funds provided by other Oxfam members. A country office would have reported to several members in the Oxfam Confederation depending on the source of the support they received.

'Oxfam 2020' sought to achieve a number of objectives including (a) a greater role for regional offices in governance arrangements; (b) a simplification of funding and reporting arrangements; and (c) an eventual autonomy of regional offices to become independent members of the Oxfam Confederation in their own right. Progress towards achieving a clear definition of reporting and member relationships was still ongoing at the end of my fieldwork.

As part of implementing the 'Oxfam 2020' restructure, Oxfam in the Pacific was established as the regional office for the Pacific. The office was located in Suva, Fiji. Both Oxfam NZ and Oxfam Australia were involved in the establishment of the office and provide ongoing executive assistance, and access to advisors in specialist areas. At the time of fieldwork Oxfam NZ continued to support country offices in Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa through MFAT funded

programmes. In 2019 Oxfam NZ transitioned the management of the Oxfam Micronesia Polynesia office from Oxfam NZ to the Oxfam in the Pacific regional office. The goal was that Oxfam in the Pacific would become a member of the Oxfam Confederation by 2020. [14] This meant that Oxfam in the Pacific would be an independent organisation with its own legal status.

Given these changes, Oxfam NZ continues to be an important player in the Pacific region within the Oxfam Confederation. The interactions by staff with other Oxfam members and offices in the Pacific will be referred to throughout this thesis as they are part of the relationship structure that staff are trying to build and enhance as they progress through their journey to transform their development practices.

Summary

In this chapter I have provided background information on Aotearoa New Zealand and the importance of the historical and ongoing links of te Tiriti and te ao Māori to its identity. I also discussed aid and development in Aotearoa New Zealand, and provided an overview of the role and work of Oxfam NZ and its connections with the Oxfam Confederation. This information provides a setting and context for the thesis and the analysis contained therein about the leadership team and staff within Oxfam NZ's journey towards the transformation of their development practices. Importantly, much of which is discussed in the thesis is grounded in Aotearoa New Zealand's history and Māori culture, and particularly the ongoing efforts related to the implementation of te Tiriti.

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[14] At the time of submitting this thesis (November 2021) this had not occurred.

INTERLUDE:

Eden Terrace

The Tāmaki-makau-rau (Auckland) office of Oxfam New Zealand was located in the inner city suburb of Eden Terrace. It sat at the bottom of one of Auckland's 50 volcanoes and Auckland's highest natural point, Maungawhau (Mount Eden). Many tourists and locals climbed this mountain to look down at the 50 metre steep crater or get a 360 degree view of the city and its skyline. The area of Eden Terrace sat alongside a major crossroad of highways which intersected and overlapped below and separated the central business district from Maungawhau. The area was a mix of commercial buildings and apartment residences. Not many buildings, however, reached above two storeys.

As I approached the office I saw from afar three rectangular billboards of at least 10 metres in height and 1.5 metres wide. On one was a picture of a smiling, young Pacific Island girl. She was positioned between two other posters with the same dimensions. These two posters read: 'Working together to end poverty and injustice' and 'A hand up not a hand out'. The text was in bold and set against the distinct green colour that Oxfam is known for internationally. The very first day I started at the office was in Autumn and I remembered how the green of the posters contrasted with the deep red coloured leaves of a tree adjacent to the entrance of the office.

I climbed the two flights of stairs and entered the office through a glass door. If you arrived early there was often a carton of milk at the doorway. Large lettering on the wall was the first thing that I saw. It read 'Oxfam' in the distinct green once again. The reception area was furnished with two lounge chairs, a bookcase and a reception desk. Hanging on the wall on the right was a copy of te Tiriti. Light streamed through the windows. I saw smaller meeting rooms leading off to the left.

Behind a dividing wall lay an open plan office. The quiet and spaciousness of the entrance faded quickly away to a buzzing and busy open space. There was so much to look at on the walls. I felt like the office was filled quite literally with memorabilia as the walls were stacked with books, folders and papers, posters from campaigns, awards and certificates from fundraising events. There were signs of many Pacific Island nations. I saw a tourist-like plaque from Tonga and small flags from Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Samoa. On the walls were artworks, paintings mostly. I learned later on that they were from famous Aotearoa New Zealand artists and came to be there through a bequest from an Oxfam NZ supporter.

I found the office crammed and chaotic, but also lively and occupied by passionate people. The desks were arranged in semi-circular pods which were occupied by nine people clustered together. I used numerous desks during my time in the office. Mostly I sat beside a staff member from the Partnerships Directorate, other times I sat beside an external consultant renting desk space in the office.

Over the course of my fieldwork I became familiar with the sights and sounds of the office. From the beginning I was welcomed into the office by staff and over time I became part of the whānau (extended family). As an action researcher however, my sense was that one tended to wear many hats. I was reminded of Erving Goffman's sociological writings on the dramaturgical stage where he sees humans playing a series of roles, backstage and frontstage, in our everyday lives. I perceived myself and was perceived by staff as an embedded researcher, observer, doctoral student, fellow worker and team member. I was an insider but also an outsider with expertise and knowledge, and a medium staff could use to access external sources of knowledge and learning.

I shifted back and forth between all these roles throughout the duration of my fieldwork and part of the process of conducting my research in this way was learning to cope with these multifaceted roles. There was the additional challenge of trying to maintain my external perspective on the organisation while being an insider, and to act as a 'critical friend', that is, one who contributes to and supports the journey that the leadership team and staff were on. While not all staff had a full understanding of my role and purpose within the organisation, I knew from experience that insights would only come with the development of relationships and the trust of staff. I quickly saw how working alongside and with staff, and being present for everyday activities in the organisation, allowed me to engage in a range of conversations and to see the ebb and flow of organisational life within Oxfam NZ and with its external partners.

Chapter Three
Methodological approach

Introduction

This chapter is divided into four parts. In part one I discuss the two sets of literature which informed my methodological approach — action research and ethnography. In part two I outline the methods I used to collect my data. Part three provides further detail on how I negotiated a research partnership with Oxfam NZ. And in part four I reflect on my positionality as an action researcher within Oxfam NZ, and provide insights on some of the strengths and limitations of my approach to conducting research in this manner.

My methodological approach to my research was not fully predetermined. There was an iterative learning and action process which occurred throughout my fieldwork while on site at the Auckland office over a period of 20 months. I engaged with the leadership team and staff during this time and worked closely alongside the Partnerships Directorate and the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate. The three methodological aims of my research were to gain greater insights into the efforts by the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ to transform their development practices, to participate in that process, and to provide feedback on my observations and experience.

1. My methodological approach

Numerous development scholars have studied development professionals (Eyben, 2014; Hilhorst, 2003; McKinnon, 2011; Mosse, 2005, 2011, 2013; Rottenburg, 2009). There are also excellent ethnographies on NGOs and INGOs (Hilhorst, 2003; Hopgood, 2006). What is clear from these bodies of research is that a researcher who is also a temporary insider can bring new insights and perspectives to the debate about development practices. By placing myself inside an INGO and being able to provide direct feedback to my coworkers I adopted Mosse's (as cited in Olivier de Sardan, 2008) contention that feedback procedures are the best practical contribution that development research can make to development action. Feedback or reciprocity is an important feature of both action research and ethnography.

Action research

Action research is a methodology more than a method, an alternative system of knowledge production as compared to the positivist research tradition (Brydon-Miller et

al., 2003; Rice and Ezzy, 1999). Broadly speaking, action research focuses on action and research simultaneously, and aims to be a process which creates space for the researcher and participants to work together in cycles of action and reflection (Reason and McArdle, 2008). Participants can contribute to the research and can also lead, own and direct the research process. The action researcher is more of a supporter or facilitator of these processes rather than a leader or director.

Common features of action research, as adapted from Gray (2014, p. 329), include:

- Participants are either researchers themselves or have a democratic partnership with a researcher;
- Research is viewed as a means of bringing about, supporting or providing feedback on an action or change;
- The direct experiences of the participants forms the research data which is then used to bring about or adapt change as appropriate.

There is no clear definition or unified approach to describe what action research is and the term is used by many authors to describe a variety of research approaches (Burns et al., 2012). For example, the term participatory action research (PAR) is research that is undertaken with people who have less power and control and where the researcher is most likely from a different cultural context and has more privilege, education and access to resources than the participants (Rice and Ezzy, 1999, p. 173). Paolo Freire (1972) has also made a significant contribution to PAR and argued for an ongoing cycle of action and critical reflection in general education practices.

Action research on the other hand has been shaped by the work of Kurt Lewin (1946). He argued for action as a basis for learning and knowing (Rice and Ezzy, 1999, p. 176). This type of research methodology has mostly been applied in the Global North in the areas of education and organisational management research. Action research is more often undertaken with people who have considerable power and control and where the researcher is most likely to be from a similar cultural background as the participants. I shared a cultural context with most of the staff at Oxfam NZ. Although the staff group at the time of my fieldwork was diverse, with people from both the Global North and South, the majority had Global North backgrounds, including those from the leadership team. Parallels can also be drawn between action research and the anthropological concept of 'studying up' coined by Nader (1972) as it is an approach which looks specifically at decision makers and their ability to affect change.

Cameron et al. (2014) further refine Lewin's concept of action research as an approach which works on a topic of a shared concern between researchers and participants. The aim is to discover emergent solutions and designs together. This approach is also applicable for my research as I had a shared interest together with the leadership team and staff in terms of learning and developing alternative development practices at Oxfam NZ.

Burns et al. (2012) provide a detailed overview of how Lewin's action research concept has been applied in the context of international development and social change. O'Keefe et al. (2014) provide one such example, applying action research in the context of organisations and programs which work on more transformational attempts to promote policy reform though politically informed initiatives. O'Keefe et al. 's action research approach (2014, p. 5) is based on constructive, critical engagement with development practitioners and the coalitions they support. Some of the benefits of such a methodological approach enabled a clearer understanding of the importance and subtleties of local context, more critical analyses of decision making and coalition-building processes, and a greater teasing out of the importance of politics for development outcomes at all levels.

The approach I have taken in this research, that of an action researcher, is based on the work of Lewin and the subsequent refinement of his approach proposed by other scholars. A shared culture and a shared research interest were both important aspects of this research project. Where I did have differences with the participants was related to my age and experience working for INGOs. I was younger than the leadership team and had less experience. I discuss these differences further below in section four.

Taking an action research approach allowed me to contribute to the development of new narratives and possibilities for Oxfam NZ in relation to its development practices. Without this component of my research I would have only been an observer of their practice. I did this through getting involved with ongoing projects in the organisation. These are outlined below. I also contributed by providing feedback on my observations and analysis in everyday organisational activities such as informal conversations and organised meetings. The thesis itself will also be used as a form of feedback, albeit a formal one. Following the completion of my research and thesis, I will write an executive summary for the leadership team. I have already presented my preliminary findings to the Oxfam NZ Board and the wider staff group.

Ethnography

The second element of my methodological approach was ethnography. Ethnography is a form of social research which attempts to focus on understanding human cultures and social contexts from the perspective of a specific individual social and cultural group (Harman and Harklau, 2013). A 'cultural group' can exist in a number of settings, from small towns and villages to hospital wards and organisations. Ethnography is characteristic of the researcher being immersed in another culture, often living in the community and learning the language. Descriptions and explanations of events take priority in ethnographic research. The purpose of contemporary ethnography is often to not only understand human culture and behaviour but through this understanding, discover human needs and find ways for those needs to be met (Rice and Ezzy, 1999, p. 154). In this sense, ethnography, like action research, seeks to contribute to or provide feedback to the 'cultural group'. Ethnographic accounts are often used to initiate further research, for example, to develop questionnaires or to identify research themes.

Ethnographic research is very much about participant observation. As Emerson et al. (1995, p. 1) state, the researcher, 'participates in the daily routines of the setting, develops ongoing relationships with the people in it, and observes all the while what is going on'. The researcher combines participating and observing and writes field notes about those experiences in a regular and systematic way. My position within Oxfam NZ as an action researcher meant that I could conduct participant observation on an everyday basis and the data and learning I gained through this process was critical to my analysis and understanding of the journey to transform development practices at Oxfam NZ.

Other ways in which I used an ethnographic approach in this thesis include the use of 'thick description' which is visible in the interludes which are a precursor to each chapter. 'Thick description' is used often in ethnography to set the scene and provide insights for the reader. I use 'thick description' in order to convey a sense of my own personal experiences as an action researcher within Oxfam NZ and to provide a vignette of organisational life at Oxfam NZ.

My focus on organisational culture is also typical of an ethnographic approach. So too is looking for ways in which the needs of the organisation could be assisted by research and a critical insider/outsider perspective. An ethnographic approach allowed me to develop relationships of trust with staff. These relationships were critical in order to access people, documents and to be invited into the everyday organisational life of Oxfam NZ.

Bringing action research and ethnography together allowed me to both observe, participate in and describe the journey to transform development practices at Oxfam NZ, and to collaborate and feed back my insights and observations. By working in this way I was not only able to provide useful research for the organisation and build rapport with people across the organisation, but also gain unique practice-based insights into everyday organisational processes. This kind of research approach has an element of what Argyris and Schon (as cited in Burns et al., 2012, p. 6) refer to as 'double loop learning'. Not only was I able to contribute to the journey but I also was able to gain significant learnings about organisational life and development practices. I was also able to provide staff with an outsider's insight into their behaviours and responses to specific issues, responses which they themselves assumed to be everyday practice but some of which, from my perspective, were noteworthy. 'Double loop learning' goes beyond thinking through a problem and finding a solution. It challenges and explores the questions, frames and norms which underlie action. The knowledge produced in an action research process 'doubles' in the sense that it can be used to assist the research target but it can also be used by the action researcher to further academic theory.

2. Data collection

Action research and qualitative methods feature predominantly in research about processes of organisational change (Sankaran and Ranjan, 2010; Burns, 2007; Somekh, 2006; Parkin, 2009). I used primarily qualitative methods in my methodological approach including participation in everyday workplace activities, observation of staff behaviours and practices, semi-structured interviews, document analysis and thick description. I was also directly involved and contributed to two major projects undertaken by the Partnerships Directorate and the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate. Both of these projects formed key parts of the learning and direction of the transformation journey and are discussed fully in Chapters Six and Seven. All of these methods are used in either action research or ethnography and in this case they allowed me to explore my research questions and to fulfill my three methodological aims of gaining insight, participating and providing feedback.

The application of these methods was concurrent, continuous and often overlapped. The process followed a nonlinear path as is often the case with action research and there was recognition that knowledge could be generated in a variety of ways (Burns et al., 2012). Using all these methods allowed for the creation of intersecting feedback loops as described by O'Keefe et al. (2014, p. 6). There were no neat, self-contained spirals of learning, rather knowledge and learning were acquired in multiple and parallel ways and

in different timeframes (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2007, p. 277). The following outlines my four main data collection methods.

- **Document analysis**

I used a number of Oxfam NZ organisational documents to inform my analysis throughout this thesis. These have included internal Oxfam NZ and Oxfam International strategic policy documents; Oxfam NZ, Oxfam in the Pacific and Oxfam International internal newsletters; and Oxfam NZ meeting and workshop notes, emails, and internal social media feeds. I viewed these documents as data from the field and together with my interview transcripts and my fieldnotes, these form the basis on which my analysis was built. I used the documents in different ways and to assist my analysis, and together with my in-house placement to understand how the leadership team and staff worked. I quote from some of the documents and also analyse the discourse of specific strategy documents.

- **Semi-structured interviews**

I interviewed a range of individuals, both internal and external to Oxfam NZ. The majority of formal interviews were with the leadership team and staff from Oxfam NZ. However, I also interviewed other Oxfam staff from the Pacific regional office, Pacific country offices, the Australian office and the Oxfam International office. In addition I interviewed staff from MFAT and other Aotearoa NZ INGOs. The total number of formal interviews with individual practitioners was 22. The length of each of these interviews was between 60–90 minutes.

The formal interviews which I undertook had a twofold purpose. They either served to dig deeper on a specific topic in relation to the two action research projects I was involved in or capture more general reflections of the journey of transformation at Oxfam NZ. Formal interviews used an evolving set of questions and some were recorded (see Appendix). Notes were taken for any non-recorded interviews. Stringer (2014, p. 69) notes the benefits of undertaking semi-structured interviews and how they allow participants (both the interviewer and the interviewee) to describe situations in their own terms and to be reflective and exploratory of their own experiences.

In addition, using ethnographic methods, I conducted numerous and lengthy informal interviews with both the same and multiple staff members over the course of my fieldwork. Many insights came from spontaneous conversations with individuals or a

group of individual staff members. In some cases these conversations became akin to a formal interview although there were no predetermined questions or formal planning. Notes from these conversations were recorded in my fieldnotes and are referenced as informal conversations in my analysis.

- **Participation and observation of participants**

I worked in-house and alongside staff at the Auckland office of Oxfam NZ for 20 months. I also travelled to the Wellington office to spend time with the Advocacy and Campaigns Director. This continuous and prolonged amount of time which I spent being part of Oxfam NZ allowed me to become immersed in the organisation, develop longstanding and trusted relationships with staff and time to understand everyday organisational practices and dynamics. I would not have had these opportunities had I spent only short periods of time in the organisation or only interviewed staff on a periodic basis. I believe that I achieved a large measure of acceptance in the organisation, demonstrated by invitations to participate in meetings, workshops, staff training days and celebrations, and was able to contribute to the work of and work alongside staff. I co-facilitated workshops together with individual staff members and I shadowed key staff members at conferences and several external events with other INGOs and civil society organisations.

Throughout my time within Oxfam NZ I took many and meticulous notes of all of my conversations, interviews and observations and in particular noted my own personal experiences and perceptions of what I had learnt. These documents, which amounted to over 100 pages of data and reflections, formed the cornerstone of my analysis and are referred to throughout the thesis. They were stored in a secure cloud-based software programme.

I coded the data contained in each of the documents in a two-stage process so as to elicit recurring themes and highlighted important information that had significant relevance to my research questions. In the first stage I manually worked with printed documents and noted first impressions. I constantly compared individual interview transcripts, fieldnotes, different events and ideas. In the second stage I worked towards developing more conceptual codes from my first impressions that were more abstract. This process is similar to thematic analysis (Esterberg, 2002). I conducted follow-up interviews to further explore and understand themes I had identified and which required clarification. This also helped verify my understanding of what I had observed and documented.

I became fluent in the Oxfam NZ organisational language and the broader Oxfam lexicon. While the working language was English there were numerous acronyms used in everyday practice which I became adept with. There was also specific Aotearoa New Zealand colloquial language and references as well as te Reo Māori and references which I learnt and which assisted my understanding of the culture of the organisation. While it was difficult at the start to grasp all of these language variants, by the end of my fieldwork I had become quite proficient.

Spending time in the country that Oxfam NZ is based in also allowed me to unpack the meaning and patterns behind the culture of the organisation (see Chapter Four) and to understand the relationships with internal and external partners (see Chapter Six). Having trust, rapport and an understanding of the local setting outside of the organisation helped me to better understand the behaviour of the leadership team and staff in the organisation.

- **Action research projects**

I was involved in two action research projects undertaken by Oxfam NZ during my time there, and these provided important information, learning opportunities and data on which I was able to formulate and write this thesis. The first project was a scoping piece of the research which contributed to the development of the Oxfam NZ Partnerships Strategy. Together with the Oxfam NZ Partnerships Director I designed a set of questions about partnerships to be used in semi-structured interviews I conducted with staff from Oxfam NZ, Oxfam in the Pacific, Oxfam Australia and Oxfam country offices in the Pacific Islands. We were interested to understand how Oxfam staff thought about and worked in partnerships across the Oxfam network, internally in the Oxfam NZ Auckland head office and externally in the international development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. This piece of research forms the basis of Chapter Six. I wrote a summary of the findings of the interviews (14 in total) and provided this report to all interviewed participants. The Partnerships Director then used this report to develop the Oxfam NZ Partnerships Strategy.

The second action research project was an evaluation of an Oxfam NZ co-led advocacy coalition — *Back the Plan: Back to Zero*. The evaluation assessed the operation of the advocacy coalition, the impact of the campaign and how successful the coalition was in meeting the campaign's objectives. I collaborated with the Oxfam NZ Advocacy and Campaigns Director to design the evaluation survey, conduct the research and write up the findings. We targeted the members of the advocacy coalition working group and had

a total of nine (out of 14) respondents to the survey. Our report was submitted to CID Board Members. Our main objective with this piece of research was to provide an opportunity for the CID Board to reflect on the successes, challenges and key learning outcomes of the advocacy coalition in terms of the capacity of the sector to influence national government policy in Aotearoa New Zealand. This evaluation is outlined and discussed in Chapter Seven.

Both action research projects were examples of feedback loops where co-created knowledge was provided back to Oxfam NZ. The findings from these two projects were also examples of double loop learning where the results were not only useful and informative for the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ but also provided insights for the writing of this thesis and its contribution to the literature on development practices.

3. Negotiating a research partnership

The opportunity to pursue action research with Oxfam NZ was the outcome of a number of interconnecting factors. As outlined in Chapter One, my principal supervisor for this research project had already collaborated with staff at Oxfam NZ on the topic of transformation within Oxfam NZ. This previous collaboration highlighted that there were key individual staff at Oxfam NZ, in particular those from the leadership team, who were actively challenging their organisation's development practices and looking to connect with others outside of the organisation. There were also a number of initiatives taking place within Oxfam NZ which coincided directly with the period of my doctoral candidature, in particular the 'Oxfam 2020' process and the trial of commercial funding ventures, which will be discussed further in the thesis. In addition the leadership team was open to allow a researcher to work in-house and observe organisational and development practices. It was seen that this could provide benefit to both parties and in particular demonstrated that staff at Oxfam NZ displayed a readiness to collaborate and a commitment to changing their development practices.

In order to support our work together I negotiated a collaboration agreement. I was influenced by the work of the Partnerships Brokers Association and consulted a Partnerships Broker at the Institute for Human Security and Social Change before undertaking the negotiation.[15] I looked into other research partnership agreements that the Institute for Human Security and Social Change had been involved in to understand what aspects of such agreements were important. The advice that I received was to focus

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[15] More information on the Partnerships Brokers Association can be found here: https://www.partnershipbrokers.org/

on establishing some guiding principles for the collaboration, discuss who and what kind of contributions could and would be made, and outline the objectives and the risks. A key point was to discuss these aspects not only with reference to the individual stakeholders but to also discuss what our shared ambitions and risks were.

Over the first six months of my doctoral candidature, before I undertook my fieldwork at Oxfam NZ, these discussions took place. I organised several meetings between myself, the Director of the Partnerships Directorate at Oxfam NZ and my principal supervisor to discuss how we would work together in terms of principles, contributions, ambitions and risks. This required reflective and honest conversations. Some key questions that came up as part of the negotiation process included the following. Do we (Oxfam NZ and I) have the capacity to follow through in a resource constrained environment? Who owns the intellectual property of the work we produce together? Who and how do we manage the collaboration, particularly if it is long-term? Should the action researcher have access to internal organisational systems? A collaboration agreement was produced at the conclusion of our negotiations as a means to capture our discussions and document the process. I found that the collaboration agreement assisted me in following an action research approach in a number of ways and developed initial levels of trust and understanding.

Periodic 'partnership health checks' and reviews between myself, key staff from Oxfam NZ and my principal supervisor took place during and after my fieldwork time and I updated the collaboration agreement accordingly. I did this to maintain and strengthen the relationship with Oxfam NZ, to ensure that expectations and plans were being met and to refine ways of working in light of what both parties were learning. The collaboration agreement was complemented with signed participant consent forms from individual research participants whom I formally interviewed.

As an additional reference source to develop the collaboration agreement I used a guide produced by Winterford (2017) which related to research partnerships and collaborations between academics and INGOs in the Australian context. The purpose of research partnerships, as outlined in the guide, is to influence policy and practice within the international development sector. In the guide research partnerships are placed along a continuum of practice from transactional relationships to transformational collaborations. I used the continuum to describe my own research partnership with Oxfam NZ. My collaboration agreement exemplified some of the characteristics which are

associated with a transformational collaboration. I mention these characteristics as they align with an action research approach. These are as follows:

- The research design was co-developed by myself, my principal supervisor and staff from Oxfam NZ;
- The research design evolved over the course of my fieldwork and was shaped by context and unexpected events. For example, the 2017 Aotearoa New Zealand national election was a key event which changed the political landscape within Aotearoa New Zealand and opened up opportunities for the leadership team and staff to influence the policies of its institutional donor;
- My collaboration with Oxfam NZ met multiple and shared objectives and goals through the action research projects;
- Complementary resources were brought together. For example, I provided funding to support my role as an action researcher and staff provided access to participants in the aid and development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand and the Oxfam network. My research work was financed by La Trobe University. I did not receive any direct financial support from Oxfam NZ, but was provided with office space and equipment;
- Oxfam NZ and I committed to work together for the duration of my doctoral candidature;
- Key decisions about the research were made together and in consultation. For example, the presentation of research findings at academic and sector conferences was agreed to by both parties.

4. Reflections on my approach

There were inherent challenges and opportunities presented by my methodological approach. Both action research and ethnographic approaches to research require reflexivity on the part of the researcher as both methodologies place emphasis on the role of the researcher and the dualism that exists between researcher and subject (Reason and McArdle, 2008). Reflexivity is a practice of developing an understanding of how our positions shape the research topics we choose and the methods used to study the social world (Esterberg, 2002, p. 12). Sridhar (2008) discusses several accounts of anthropologists managing the insider/outsider fluidity of working both within and on organisations. Hilhorst (2003) also provides a detailed account of her experiences of working both within and on an NGO in the Philippines. Both Sridhar's and Hilhorst's accounts of the politics associated with this style of research assisted me to formulate and express my own reflections on my experience as an action researcher.

My reflexivity also allowed me to be cognisant of postcolonial critiques about positionality in my research and fieldwork at Oxfam NZ (Burney, 2012; Schöneberg, 2019; Smith, 2012). I was conscious about contesting and detaching my Global North perspective, and particularly my values, attitudes, subjectivity, knowledge, language and power so as to diffuse any sense of superiority my position and background could have inferred.

Power and its influences

Power, or the perception of power, can be an important influence in relationships. Burns et al. (2012) state that there is a need for action researchers to be aware of the impacts of power on relationships in order to generate successful solutions and outcomes. Further, the authors argue that an action researcher cannot be neutral and must be aware of the impact they have on what happens in the shared social space.

I acknowledge that there were aspects of my background which may have influenced or brought an element of bias to my interpretations of the data I collected and my engagement with my research participants. These include being a tertiary educated individual and a member of a recognised academic institution, caucasian, and female. Such a background can often bring with it perceptions of expertise, power, status and privilege (Burney, 2012; Smith, 2012). In addition, I have been raised in a colonial settler state, Australia, which has influenced and coloured my experiences of and perspectives of decolonisation. Although often compared, the histories and processes of decolonisation in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand are markedly different.

Action research strives to achieve a balance in the power relationship that exists between the researcher and the participants who are the subject of the research (Rice and Ezzy, 1999, p. 186). I attempted to achieve such a balance while working alongside and with staff at Oxfam NZ and particularly on the two action research projects that I was involved in. In these projects a shared decision-making process was used and this extended to the work on designing the interview questions for the Partnerships Strategy and evaluation survey for the advocacy coalition.

Part of my power in the research partnership and as an action researcher was based on a perception of my academic knowledge. I found that this knowledge was sometimes generally preferred over staff knowledge and valued by staff at Oxfam NZ. As an experienced researcher I also had power in terms of how I could analyse and represent the data and observations that I had collected (Kapoor, 2004, p. 637; Patton, 2002, p.

495). My connection to my principal supervisor also afforded me authority and legitimacy as he had both academic knowledge of and practical experience in the international development sector which was recognised and valued by staff. These three factors, my perceived individual power, my academic associations, and my externality, provided me with opportunities to work with the leadership team and staff. I found that as my relationships with individual staff developed, particularly with those from the leadership team, I had opportunities to influence and access decision makers and organisational knowledge. I was aware of the risk of what my association with the leadership team might mean for my relationships with the wider staff body and in particular more junior staff. However, I tried to address this by engaging with these staff through informal day-to-day interactions and through assistance with project work.

Throughout my fieldwork I found that my knowledge, perspectives and worldviews were challenged both conceptually and through my experience working alongside staff at Oxfam NZ. By observing the development practices of the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ, I was exposed to and learnt about te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge). This included a visit to a marae (courtyard in front of the wharenui (meeting house)). As referenced in Chapter One, my observations from my fieldwork led me to engage in two 'post' conceptual frameworks for my analysis: postdevelopment ideas and the postcolonial discourse of wayfinding. These frameworks allowed me a greater understanding of the cultural and decolonial context in which my fieldwork was undertaken and how it was different from the one that I had been raised in.

My age (mid-30s at the time of fieldwork) and being an early stage career researcher both helped and hindered me. These factors helped in the sense that I was open to learning from everyone and I conducted lengthy and often repeated conversations with the leadership team and staff on a wide variety of topics. I sought, and was enthusiastic to understand, all the different ways that the leadership team and staff were attempting to transform their development practices. I wanted to find out about changes that were obvious but equally changes that were not so obvious. How did these new practices come about? Did they evolve from hidden strengths and a willingness by the leadership team for staff to have open and frank discussions about development practices? Equally, and with so much uncertainty in the internal and external environment, I also perceived that staff sometimes sought confirmation, and authority from me in terms of their suggestions and actions. This often proved to be problematic for me, for while I could provide conceptual evidence and secondary examples of attempts to change development practices, I had limited practical experience in directly influencing such changes.

The leadership team and staff held power in terms of their experience working in and local knowledge of their organisational practices, the Oxfam network and the international development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. I valued this practice-based knowledge and experience and the learnings I was able to gain from it. This I was able to partner with my own academic scholarship and the writings of other scholars in the field of development studies.

For much of my fieldwork time I worked with staff in two of the four directorates within the organisation. I had a particular connection with the Partnerships Directorate as one staff member from this area was my main contact point from the outset of my research. I shared concerns and interests with individual staff from this directorate and there was an openness and willingness by the staff to invite me to work with them and collaborate with me. Individual staff in this directorate gave me access to organisational knowledge but also enacted their power by requiring me to maintain confidentiality with respect to some matters. Individual staff also had the power to decide what knowledge they would divulge to me and how they would use the feedback that I provided.

My collaboration with Oxfam NZ was not contractual in a financial sense. Research outcomes were not tied to funding. Having a collaborative agreement rather than a contract contributed to a balancing of the power associated with each partner.

One of the biggest challenges I faced as an action researcher was not being able to fully control the timeframe for the research or the research process (Winterford, 2017, p. 10). As an action researcher I was required to be responsive and reactive to the everyday reality of activities and events and build and adapt the research in iterative cycles rather than have a fixed idea and static plan of what the research would entail. Maintaining my research direction was often difficult. However, the time constraints placed on me by university deadlines and my supervisor assisted me in managing this issue.

Time and gaining trust

The length of time (20 months) which I spent at Oxfam NZ had a key influence on my research process. Drawing from ethnography, this time gave me a good opportunity to try to understand the local, national and international context of the organisation. Oxfam NZ can be deemed small in terms of the number of staff (55) and financial resources. It is part of the Oxfam Confederation and is a key actor in the aid and development sector within Aotearoa New Zealand. I had limited specific knowledge of each of these domains

before commencing my research and therefore also used this time to expand my knowledge in these areas.

Rice and Ezzy (1999, p. 159) state that the longer the fieldwork period, the more likely it is that the researcher can build trust and will learn about sensitive information that is not possible to acquire in a shorter period. Over time staff did share with me organisationally sensitive information and I made a conscious effort to remain diligent and transparent about what information I would include in the thesis. Making deliberations on these matters was an important aspect of my research so as to honour the trust that staff had placed in me.

Working within Oxfam NZ over a 20 month period also helped to allow the research process and data collection to evolve organically and for me to continuously reassess the nature of my research. I arrived at Oxfam NZ relatively early in my doctoral candidature (at the six month point) and this allowed more time to be spent on site with staff at Oxfam NZ and to maximise the amount of data and observations that I was able to collect and assemble. It also allowed for staff to shape the focus of the research, which was a part of my action research design.

The amount of time I had with the leadership team and staff was somewhat of a balancing act. I had more time to engage with them than they had with me. This was because staff were busy with everyday tasks. However, they did make a concerted effort to find time to engage with me and to undertake interviews. They also furthered my research by allowing me to accompany them to meetings and be involved in the everyday life of the organisation.

The length of time I spent at Oxfam NZ was also an important factor in my observation and understanding of Oxfam NZ as an organisation. I began my fieldwork during a critical time of restructure and redundancies, a period characterised by difficulty and discomfort. One staff member described this period in the following manner: '*It's tricky changing our pace, size, and core activities to become a white water waka whilst in the middle of the rapids!*' (fieldnotes, July 2017). Fortunately, my prolonged time at Oxfam NZ provided enough time for the impact of the restructure to settle and for me to observe the efforts of the leadership team and staff to make the organisation more sustainable and develop ways to transform their development practices.

I had a number of breaks away from the organisation during my fieldwork. I planned these so as to balance the time that I spent in the office and time working on my research. This provided an opportunity to gain a helicopter view and external perspective, not only of Oxfam NZ, the development practices of staff and organisational politics, but also of my overall research plan. My supervisors were a critical part of this process as were those I spoke with who were external to Oxfam NZ but had some connection to or knowledge of the organisation. This assisted me with maintaining perspective over the course of the research.

Access to staff and their knowledge in the organisation was negotiated and renegotiated, as is often the case with ethnographic research methods (Sridhar, 2008). One action that I prioritised in order to establish and maintain access to staff and their knowledge was to build strong and respectful relationships. To serve this intention I tried to make myself available to attend events, meetings and social gatherings which at first glance might not have been seen as relevant to the research project; I shared my personal experiences as a professional with staff; I attempted to pose questions rather than make judgements; I listened more than I talked; I looked for opportunities for collaboration; and I supported individual staff with their transformation initiatives. This approach, I felt, helped to build close working relationships and a level of trust between myself and staff and, as a consequence, learning opportunities for me.

I also built trust by trying to make contributions to everyday life in the organisation. Mosse (2015) notes that it is difficult to sustain long-term research without a practical contribution. For example, in addition to the action research projects, in which I directly contributed to work that was already ongoing or planned in the organisation, I took meeting notes, gave research advice on individual projects, and gave both written and oral feedback on draft documents. In all of this I looked for opportunities where data and information could be gathered for my research project.

Trust was also dependent on how individual staff perceived me in the organisation. My role within the organisation was somewhat undefined, which was unusual in an organisation used to defining categories of what an employee, volunteer or consultant meant. The fact that I was not being paid by Oxfam NZ was also an anomaly. I observed, however, that over time and working with staff I was able to build up a professional relationship and gain a level of trust.

Rice and Ezzy (1999) note that social science research, which aims to understand, interpret and explain the complex emotional, political and technical elements of society and individuals, is difficult. I assumed that staff would be honest in their responses in interview questions and in my general conversations with them, but also considered the fact that staff may have felt that participating in the research could threaten their job security. I was cognisant of the fact that the organisation had been through a restructure and a number of staff had lost their positions. What helped in this regard, however, was the support of the leadership team for my research, and this contributed, I felt, to enabling a level of trust to be developed between myself and the wider staff body.

Being a critical friend

O'Keefe et al. (2014) discuss the concept of being a 'critical friend'. They argue that this involves the action researcher asking professionals to be reflective and think critically about their established ways of working. Putting the 'critical friend' concept into practice within Oxfam NZ was a learning process for me. I needed time to build trust and to establish myself as a credible action researcher and I viewed this as a continuous and evolving development. I had relatively little working experience in INGOs compared to the senior staff and leadership team and therefore there was an element of risk associated with their decision to allow me to work within the organisation and have access to staff and organisational information. What helped in this regard was my willingness to be part of the organisation and make a contribution wherever I could do so and the fact that other than gathering information for my research project, I was seen as having no particular organisational agenda. In my view, the 'critical friend' role requires both technical and interpersonal skills and a high level of emotional intelligence in order to understand the context of the research setting, the individuals acting in that setting, and to create space to collaborate and reflect together.

It was important for me as an action researcher to remind myself that I was not at Oxfam NZ as a solver of problems nor did I consider myself in a position to do so (Chisholm and Elden, 1993; Goduscheit et al., 2008). Mosse (2015) refers to this as slipping into a means-end rationale. I had to continually remind myself that my primary role was to observe, collect information and where appropriate, facilitate action, rather than to position myself as an expert (Gray, 2014, p. 338).

Not all staff think the same nor do they agree on how development should be practiced but there is generally a clear commitment to uplift the lives and circumstances of those

who are denied their human rights. Both Murray Li (2007) and Kowal (2015) discuss this in their work as a 'will to improve' or 'to help without harm' respectively.

As an academic and an individual who has also worked on the ground in the international aid and development sector, I have a mutual interest in the area of development studies and practice. In this sense the use of the term 'friend' is deliberate. I consider myself part of the sector and viewed the offer to work in and be part of an INGO as a great opportunity and to enhance my journey as a development academic and practitioner. Conducting this research has challenged some of my own underlying assumptions about INGOs. For example, the term INGOs is often used as a catch-all phrase for a diverse set of organisations which are unique in setup, scope and ambitions. In this thesis my aim was to focus on Oxfam NZ and its particular context and circumstances rather than making broad claims about INGOs.

Summary

In this chapter I have outlined the circumstances about how I came to be an action researcher within Oxfam NZ, the perceived benefits that this presented for myself and Oxfam NZ, and the methodological approach I adopted for my research on the leadership team's and staff efforts and journey to transform their development practices. The approach was based on two separate, often interrelated and well documented and supported practices — action research and ethnography. The three methodological aims of my research were to gain greater insights into the efforts by the leadership team and staff to transform their development practices, to participate and contribute to the journey and to provide feedback on my observations and experiences.

I discussed the multilayered approach I used in my data collection process, including the use of documentation, semi-structured interviews, working with staff and observing their everyday practices, and my involvement in two internal projects directly associated with the rethinking and reframing of Oxfam NZ's development practices. I also provided some reflections on my methodological approach and the inherent challenges and opportunities that it presented being both an insider and outsider.

INTERLUDE:

Our values

Image 2: Oxfam NZ organisational values poster
Source: Fieldnotes, May 2018

I had returned to the Auckland office of Oxfam NZ after a few weeks' leave to find that the office layout had been rearranged and transformed. I had a 'wow' moment because the largest wall in the office had been dedicated to not only displaying the values but also the name of every person who had received an award for enacting the values. It was a huge dedication wall and I thought about how the importance of the values to the staff had grown over the short time that I had been there. A recognition and award scheme related to the values had been developed, a survey had been sent out to gauge whether staff felt that the organisation was living and enacting its values, and now this very visible statement was there for all to see.

While I was familiar with the values and the values posters which had been displayed throughout the office, the wall and its prominence made me think really hard about the values and their accompanying value statements.

Be connected/manaakitanga

We link up, between, across and most importantly, with.

We reach out respectfully and with authenticity.

We engage, we care, and we use knowledge drawn from diverse thinking.

Show courage/kaha

We choose courage over comfort.

We challenge ourselves and others.

We ask brave questions and make brave decisions.

Seek justice/tika

We recognise everyone's equal value and fight for their rights.

We promote what's right and fair.

We challenge those in power alongside those who feel they are powerless.

Importantly, and for the first time I began to understand how the language of the value statements was very personal. It was not typical of the language that I had often read in reports from other INGOs, which often reflected technocratic, bureaucratic and outcome-focused language when describing values. I thought about the use and repetition of the pronoun 'we' and the sense of the importance of the collective. These statements talked about common beliefs and choices. Verbs had been chosen carefully — be, show, seek, reach, engage, fight, care. These words were inspirational but they also had a sense of the aspirational.

The images on the wall and associated with the values, made me link the values with outcomes that would affect people's lives. This also indicated a link to the collective outside of the organisation. In fact I knew some of the people in the images and therefore the whole display became so much more personal to me.

What was also significant was that the wall also included elements of te ao Māori. It was not just an Oxfam display but it specifically identified and gave recognition to the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand.

I started to think back to other organisations that I had worked in and the role that values had played in these organisations. Nothing stood out in my mind as distinct as this. While values can be stated and agreed upon, it was evident to me that if they didn't

resonate with people in an organisation, connect to the surrounding cultural context, or were not enacted by staff and leaders, they were of no value at all.

Chapter Four
Organisational values

Introduction

In this chapter I introduce, analyse and present my observations of Oxfam NZ's three new organisational values and their enactment. These values, 'be connected/manaakitanga', 'show courage/kaha'and 'seek justice/tika',[16] were already in place when I arrived at Oxfam NZ; however, the process of using the values to guide and influence how the leadership team and staff undertook their everyday activities, development practices, and kaupapa intensified during my fieldwork. This work is still ongoing so what I provide in this chapter is what I observed had occurred during my fieldwork time.

For the discussion I draw on Escobar's postdevelopment concept of an 'ontological turn' and elaborate on how the values formed an essential part of Oxfam NZ's identity, an identity shaped by local context and environment. I also discuss how the values both emphasise and infer the importance of the concepts of the collective and engagement with te ao Māori.

I outline the relationship between Spiller et al. 's Waypoint 2 (Implementing Values) and the Oxfam NZ values. Waypoint 2 is about the importance of implementing values in organisations, particularly by leadership groups, and how values have the ability to orientate and create meaning and a strength of purpose in organisations. Spiller et al. also argue that values are a key to developing a strong, resilient and caring culture. I present an argument that over time the values developed by Oxfam NZ became a strength for the organisation and gave the leadership team and staff confidence to look for and propose alternative development practices. I discuss an attempt by the leadership team and staff to diversify their income stream by a new and innovative activity, and to incorporate their values into this activity. I also highlight how the values were celebrated by a recognition of staff who exemplified the values and I explore the role and importance of the leadership team in supporting, enabling and ensuring that the values were lived by the leadership team and staff, and how this in turn engendered leadership from amongst the staff.

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[16] These translations have come directly from Oxfam NZ. Official translations are listed in the glossary for the reader to see the slight differences. After my fieldwork the translation of connectedness was changed to manaaki and courage was changed to māia). For consistency in the thesis I use the original and direct translations from Oxfam NZ. However, the interpretation and evolving use of te Reo is an important part of the transformation process and engagement with te ao Māori.

The development of Oxfam NZ's values provided, I suggest, an impetus, opportunity and confidence in bringing about ongoing transformation. I further discuss the impact of the values in Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight where I analyse examples of how the leadership team and staff tried to transform and guide their development practices by linking these changes to the values. In Chapters Five and Six I concentrate on the issues of engaging with te ao Māori and the strategic approach of the Oxfam NZ Partnerships Directorate respectively, and demonstrate how these are linked to the value of 'be connected/manaakitanga'. In Chapter Seven I explore and discuss how the values of 'be connected/manaakitanga' and 'seek justice/tika' are evident in the advocacy work of staff from the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate. Finally in Chapter Eight I describe and analyse how staff and the leadership team framed their response to cases of sexual misconduct and abuse in the Oxfam Confederation and how this was linked primarily to the value of 'show courage/kaha'.

Values in organisations

There is a significant body of literature devoted to values and the role that they have in organisations. In the first part of this chapter I provide a short discussion about values, their meaning, their types, and how they may influence organisational practices, and in particular in INGOs. This discussion is not definitive but is provided to give some background and context for the major purpose of this chapter, that is, a discussion of Oxfam NZ's values and how imperative they were to the journey of transformation.

Values fall within the field of ethics or moral philosophy as they are concerned with what we ought to be and what we ought to do. To value something or an action is to place significance on it or to use it to guide and determine what is right to do. Research on values, in terms of large-scale value surveys, began in the 1970s. Rokeach (1973) conducted one such value survey, producing a commonly cited definition of a value:

> [A value is] an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end state of existence. Sets of values form value systems, defined as enduring organization[s] of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of importance. (p. 5)

This definition links values to a defined set of beliefs which endure over time and articulate a sense about what is good, right or desirable. For Rokeach, an individual may

hold a number of attitudes, but values are few in number. He also viewed values as constructs in the sense that they are made up of a rational or cognitive component, an emotional component and a behavioural component.

Values are often related to beliefs and are sometimes perceived as norms. However, there are important distinctions. While all three concepts reference a standard or guideline, values and beliefs are more abstract than norms and it is often the case that values and beliefs are closely linked and motivate behaviors. Norms relate to informal rules, standard practices or perceived expectations which determine specific behaviours or actions (Bicchieri, 2017). They are often embedded within an organisation's processes. Norms, however, can often be the way that values and beliefs are institutionalised within an organisation.

Schwartz (1992, 2006) provides ten broad categories of universal values which he argues transcend cultures and contexts. These categories are universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security, power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation and self-direction. It is not the case, Schwartz argues, that an individual holds either one set of values over another. These values are universal in that we all hold them.

Crompton (2010) and Crompton et al. (2015, p. 23) take the universal values of Schwartz and look at how they work in practice in the context of broader social change processes. They further categorise Schwartz's ten values into intrinsic and extrinsic values. Extrinsic values are those that centre on external approval or rewards. For example, values such as wealth, social status or authority. Intrinsic values are values that are inherently rewarding to pursue. For example, values such as creativity, connection to family and friends, or social justice. I would suggest that the Oxfam NZ values are intrinsic values rather than extrinsic in that they focus on behavioural actions and outcomes that are directed at achieving the greater good. Crompton et al. (2015) also argue that intrinsic values can be strong motivators for individuals to change their behaviour either by a focus on the values or even indirectly through an association with an intrinsic value.

Schwartz's social psychology theory of values is based on his values surveys which he undertook in 68 countries. He argues that values, as principles, act to shape thought, action, attitude, social norms and institutions. Values begin with the individual and flow on into the collective — institutions and broader society. Braithwaite and Blamey (1998, p. 2) also discuss values at the level of the collective. Values, they state, 'represent shared understandings that give meaning, order and integration to social living'.

Yet another scholar, Padaki (2000), discusses the role of values in organisations and specifically in INGOs. He argues that values are important for both organisational culture and for management. He notes that there is growing recognition of the importance of organisational values for organisational effectiveness. This is particularly relevant for INGOs which require clarity and conviction around their values to enable them to be effective in developing working partnerships with their stakeholders and with other organisations (Padaki, 1995; Padaki and Vaz, 2003).

Horton and Roche (2010) identify and discuss a number of issues associated with the formation and impact of INGO ethics and values. They argue that the many moral and ethical assumptions that form part of INGO values can be problematic for their operations and the application of those values. These concerns can relate to the specific kinds of activities they undertake; the selection of activities and areas of work; and the relationships between INGOs, their partners and communities they aim to assist, their contributors, the wider public and governments. There are also concerns which relate to individual and collective governance, structure and accountability.

One of the more important ethical dilemmas is in terms of managing the differences between INGO values and the values of the people they seek to assist, particularly to avoid the imposition of INGO values onto their partners. For example, INGOs can have a social agenda to challenge the power dynamics within communities which lead to enduring poverty and exploitation. However, such a goal may not necessarily be inclusive of the value systems that pervade in the partner community. Lenneberg (in Horton and Roche, 2010) discusses this dilemma at length. This can be problematic in that it can impact on the outcomes anticipated by the development and aid partnership. Another example is the negative effect that the pressure to demonstrate impact of development practices has on values. Isbister (in Horton and Roche, 2010) argues that this pressure has moved INGOs away from more participatory values and towards more outcome based values.

While most INGOs profess a set of values, research has found evidence that these values are often not seen to be part of INGO behaviours or systems, nor are staff always clear about what their organisation's core values are (Edwards and Sen, 2002; Fowler, 1998). Kelly (2010) argues that the effectiveness of INGOs depends on not only on their activities but on their identity and the consistency between their organisational values and how they operate. Newton (2019) refers to such values as 'banner values'. They are

stated in posters on the walls of organisations but for all intent and purposes they are mere statements and do not resonate with or motivate staff to enact the values. In this regard they become tokenistic and fail to be normalised and part of the organisation's everyday practices. Mowles (2008) argues that values in INGOs are generally in the realm of the ideal but there is often a disconnect between these ideals and organisational practices. He also argues that values can often be used as a rational instrument of management. Both of these approaches can leave little space for negotiation and interpretation of what values actually mean and turn them into a type of dogma.

Values can therefore have an active role in guiding an organisation and its activities or they can be passive or even cause dissonance. How values are framed and developed forms an important part of their acceptance within organisations and subsequent enactment by both staff and leadership groups. This in turn can determine the influence and impact that they have on the operations of an organisation.

In the case of Oxfam NZ I observed that their values became an active and living part of the organisation and that the leadership team encouraged discussion about their meaning and implementation. In what follows I outline how these values came to be, what type of values they were and how they were linked to the personal beliefs of the leadership team and staff. Importantly I also highlight how they were connected to 'place', a concept that encompasses the historical, cultural, social and political factors that give identity to people associated with an area and that give place meaning (Underhill-Sem, 2002).

Oxfam NZ's values

The interlude to this chapter introduced the three values of Oxfam NZ: 'be connected/manaakitanga', 'show courage/kaha' and 'seek justice/tika'.

I learnt from one member of the leadership team about how the values came to be. This had happened before I began my fieldwork and was the result of a series of workshops with staff which were led by Professor Niki Harré, a Professor of Psychology at the University of Auckland. The new values replaced eight value-based targeted statements which were linked to the Oxfam Confederation values of empowerment, accountability and inclusiveness.

It is important to acknowledge that the development of the new values took time and significant effort by the leadership team and staff. While it was partially driven by the

restructure in 2016 and the 'Oxfam 2020' process, it was also driven, I suggest, by the leadership team and staff attempting to understand Oxfam NZ's role and place in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is significant as it is reflective of Escobar's (2018) concept of taking an 'ontological turn' which I elaborate on below and again in Chapter Five. The process also coincided with a desire by leadership team and staff to be resonant with the movement to engage with te ao Māori within Aotearoa New Zealand, and to learn and embrace its insights and offerings. Again this is further discussed in Chapter Five.

The following provides a discussion of the values and what they meant for some individual staff. Notably, the action statements for each value attempted to motivate the enactment or living of that value. The new values focused attention on personal ownership of the values and the place of the personal in the collective. They were written in a style of self-affirmation and reinforce a sense of individual and collective empowerment.

Be connected/manaakitanga

This value had three predominant aspects — connection to te ao Māori, connection to 'place', and connection to each other within the collective. As the value statements convey, this value placed an importance on sharing common ground, of working alongside others and of being open to other kinds of knowledge. One staff member (fieldnotes, December 2017) described this value in the following way: '*It takes away the us and them and speaks to universality, rights and inequality'*. Another staff member (fieldnotes, December 2017) described their understanding of the value as: '*We are connecting everyone in New Zealand and the Pacific'*. The value statements were thus relational and extolled a sense of equality in relationships with individuals and other organisational partners.

Show courage/kaha

'Show courage/kaha' was about taking action. The value statements associated with this value provided inspiration for both individual staff members and the organisation as a whole to be positive and assertive about their operational and development practices, and also not to be afraid of discussing or confronting difficult questions or issues, or using alternative means of achieving outcomes. The leadership team described their staff as change makers, that is, people who take action on the issues they care about both in their communities and in their professional work (fieldnotes, December 2017). For example, the organisation was described as one which 'speaks out on the big issues that keep people poor, like inequality, discrimination against women and climate change' (Oxfam

NZ, internal communications document, 2016). One staff member (fieldnotes, December 2017) described 'show courage/kaha' as essential in order '*to stand up to oppressors, poverty, government and abusers*'. Another staff member (formal interview, March, 2019) expressed that to 'show courage/kaha' meant having '*courageous conversations... communicating all the work that we* [Oxfam NZ] *do to different audiences*'.

Seek justice/tika

In internal documents poverty was linked to injustice and represented as an injustice in and of itself. The 'seek justice/tika' value is therefore related to what the leadership team and staff aimed to achieve through their development practices. My field notes from December 2017 indicate that for many staff members, the value of 'seek justice/tika' was central to proposing a rights-based approach to development practices and one which was closely associated with fairness and equality. For example, this concept was highlighted by a staff member (fieldnotes, November 2018 and March 2019) who expressed to me how the value of justice was the reason she had applied to work for the organisation and even more so the reason to continue working for the organisation even during a period when Oxfam NZ was being critiqued by the media about cases of sexual misconduct and abuse (see Chapter Eight). Yet another staff member (formal interview, March 2019) also supported this view by saying that the 'seek justice/tika' value was central to the development practices of Oxfam NZ: '*Like osmosis, it is so evident. It is not something that is forced. It is part of practice. Everyone does it. I get a sense that it's been embedded*'.

The three value statements associated with 'seek justice/tika' had an emphasis on recognising everyone's rights and that Oxfam NZ would work to achieve those rights.[17] The value statements also encouraged staff to recognise the importance of power in relationships and how power could be used to create injustice and disharmony both within and outside the organisation. Further, a challenge for the organisation and staff to break down the power differentials that impact on relations and development problems was emphasised by one of the value statements.

The Oxfam NZ values were markedly different to the Oxfam Confederation values. As described in Chapter Two, Oxfam NZ is part of a global confederation of 20 different Oxfam organisations around the world. However, as is indicated in the table below the

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[17] The rights-based approach and human rights are critiqued by many scholars as western individualistic concepts which do not align with more collective understandings of wellbeing or epistemologies of the Global South (Broberg and Sano, 2018; de Sousa Santos and Sena Martins, 2021; Pollis and Schwab, 2006). As the development of the values occurred prior to my fieldwork time, I am unaware if this criticism was discussed by staff.

language of the three Oxfam NZ values is very different from that of the Oxfam Confederation values, which tend to be more aligned with traditional organisational values and an organisation which has no specific connection to any one place or nation state.

Table 1: Oxfam NZ and Oxfam Confederation values
Source: Fieldnotes, September 2019, *emphasis added*

	Oxfam NZ	Oxfam Confederation
Values	Be connected/manaakitanga Show courage/kaha Seek justice/tika	Empowerment Accountability Inclusiveness
Vision	Our vision is a just world without poverty. We want a world where people are valued and treated equally, enjoy their rights as full citizens, and can influence decisions affecting their lives	Our vision is a just world without poverty. We want a world where people are valued and treated equally, enjoy their rights as full citizens, and can influence decisions affecting their lives
Purpose	Our purpose is to help create lasting solutions to the injustice of poverty. We are part of a global movement for change, in the Pacific and across the world. We are empowering people, particularly women and girls, to create a future that is secure, just, sustainable and free from poverty	Our purpose is to help create lasting solutions to the injustice of poverty. We are part of a global movement for change, empowering people to create a future that is secure, just, and free from poverty.

While the vision for the organisations are the same, and the purpose statements similar, the significant differences are in terms of the values. I argue that Oxfam NZ's values reflect its reality and local context. According to Mowles (2015, p. 88), 'it is not so much that we "have" values; rather that values, as a heightened sense of identification with the collective, take us over'. As expressed to me by one member of the leadership team, Oxfam NZ, in establishing and developing their values, had learnt from and was inspired by the long-term and ongoing activism which had taken place in broader Aotearoa New Zealand society including actions from Māori, women, LGBTQI+ and environmentalists (fieldnotes, September 2018). This comment highlights the importance to this leadership team member of rights and justice seeking in Aotearoa New Zealand's historical and social fabric. Another member of the leadership team (formal interview, September 2018) also described this to me in the following way:

Culture and behaviour, if it is entrenched, does change an organisation. You can have all the policies you want but it is how people behave at the end of the day. And to reflect the culture that you are in that has very strong values [which I perceive as] justice, compassion and dignity, which the Māori culture does, I think it changes things, it has to be part of it. People think it is an add-on but in many ways it should be the leading driver.

These comments suggest that these members of the leadership team understood the power that culture and values can have in an organisation and that culture and values need to be grounded in their local context. Interestingly, this member of the leadership team mentioned dignity, which as discussed in Chapter One, forms part of what I propose the postdevelopment idea of the pluriverse encompasses. I observed that for the leadership team and staff this was a very important matter and was enacted by their choice to state their values in both Māori and English and to interchange both languages when referencing the values. I suggest that by stating and interchanging languages there was an attempt by the leadership team and staff to encourage and embrace te ao Māori and to help understand how 'place' could guide their development practices.

It is also notable that while Oxfam NZ is part of a global confederation its purpose statement emphasised that the organisation was located in the Pacific. It also highlighted the importance of empowering women and girls and the need to do so in a sustainable way. These three statements which are additional to those in the Oxfam Confederation purpose statement indicate that geography, gender and sustainability were significant to the development practices of Oxfam NZ and represented an extension and inherent aspect of its values.

The new values and ontology

Prior to the development of Oxfam NZ's new values, the organisation was guided by the Oxfam Confederation values of empowerment, accountability and inclusiveness. It also used the following eight statements which were detailed in its strategic plan to guide staff in their operational and development practices.

Oxfam NZ strives:
- for the highest standards of honesty and integrity;
- to be open, transparent and fully accountable to our donors, our supporters, our partners and those with whom we work;

- for credibility and trustworthiness, based on sound research, objective analysis and grassroots experience;
- for strong and equitable relations with partners and allies;
- for efficiency and effectiveness in all our work;
- for innovation, learning and a drive for continuous improvement;
- to 'practice what we preach' in terms of our internal policies and practices, including teamwork, accountability and sustainability;
- above all, with passionate commitment, to end poverty and injustice.

My observations were that the leadership team and staff had little connection with these eight statements and this was illustrated to me by one staff member who said the following: '*Nobody knew what they were and that they didn't speak from the heart*' (formal interview, May 2017). Further, they were written in an aspirational language which did not represent the present nor convey a sense of personal belief. A number of authors who discuss INGO practice note the same issue, that the current day professionalism of INGOs has lost a sense of the personal or the 'heart' in its move towards project management processes and transactional practices (Marcussen, 1996; Mowles, 2008, 2010; Ibister in Horton and Roche, 2010; Ossewaarde et al., 2008).

The shift from the eight statements which were not directly linked to any of the Oxfam Confederation values to those associated with each of the new Oxfam NZ values represents what Escobar would term as taking an 'ontological turn'. As outlined in Chapter One, Escobar (2018, p. 21) refers to ontology as connections between place and body, understanding our surroundings and context, how we live in a world (worlds) of our own making and how we need a sharper consciousness of how those worlds make us. I would argue that values are guides which reflect how we perceive our world and influence how we can live in that world.

An 'ontological turn' is part of Escobar's concept of 'ontological design' which he coined in his 2018 book *Designs for the Pluriverse*. Escobar argues that the current state of affairs in the world is very much a result of human design and a one-world ontology and therefore it is through design that change can be brought about. Design is a critical tenet in discussing and theorising about addressing and overcoming the concerns and issues faced by local and global communities in the contemporary world. Design offers a means to 'devise courses of action aimed at changing existing conditions' (Simon in Escobar, 2015, p. 33). In this sense design has the potential for transformation. Escobar also discusses the concept of 'autonomous design' which is also related to the concepts of

'ontological turn' and 'ontological design'. 'Autonomous design' is based on a community's understanding of its own realities and one that seeks to change norms from within: 'It might involve the defense of some practices, the transformation of others, and the veritable invention of new practice' (Escobar, 2018, p. 172).

In this book Escobar outlines the emergence of the field of critical design studies. For Escobar design should be inclusive. It should be 'participatory, socially orientated, situated, and open ended' and it should challenge the business-as-usual mode of being, producing and consuming (Escobar, 2018, p. 27). It is tied to decisions about the lives we live and the worlds in which we live them. Design can be sensitive to the environment and to human predicaments and can be a medium in the service of society. It is a relevant concept, he says, for many social and political spheres and a welcome space for disciplines such as anthropology and geography (Escobar 2018, p. 33).

Oxfam NZ's values are in themselves a 'design' in the sense of Escobar's 'ontological turn'. What the leadership team and staff attempted to do was to ground their organisational values in 'place', the collective, and engagement with te ao Māori. In this regard the values were independent and not simply derivatives of the Oxfam Confederation values. The values were imbued with the personal beliefs of the leadership team and staff, and were orientated towards achieving the betterment of the lives of others. Importantly, they were not definitive, but were the starting point of Oxfam NZ's journey of transformation and it is possible that with the passage of time and progress along this journey, they may change.

In contrast to the Oxfam Confederation values and statements, I would also suggest, the new values of Oxfam NZ and their associated statements were succinct, and simplified what was guiding and underpinning the behaviour of the leadership team and staff. They also attempted to reflect meaning — meaning that was more closely associated with personal beliefs and lived experiences, and a link to the collective and the local context. The importance of such personal connections to values are supported in research which analysed the link between individual or personal values and development practices (see Chambers, 1993, 2004; Chambers and Pettit, 2004; Edwards and Sen, 2002; Giri, 2002; Kaplan, 1996; Rahnema, 1997; Scott-Villiers, 2004; Uphoff, 1996; Vaux, 2001).

There was a deliberate decision to express the values in two languages and in this way they give recognition to elements of local political and cultural context, and experience. I further explore some of the ramifications of this decision in Chapter Five. Harcourt and

Nelson (as cited in Escobar, 2018) argue that anything that has attachment to place has ontological status, ie, it improves our understanding of who we are as individuals and as a collective group. By being grounded in 'place' the values provided an opportunity to discover a deeper understanding of the organisation's identity and I would argue, this strengthened its kaupapa. They also provided a means to link the personal and the professional and create a shared sense of responsibility for how the leadership team and staff undertook their development practices.

However, as discussed above, values can have and create dilemmas both in terms of how they are formed and how they are applied. Some of these issues, such as those concerning tokenism, funding activities, advocacy and political involvement, and the development of organisational strategies are taken up in my discussion in this and subsequent chapters. The extent of my fieldwork did not allow me to collect any extensive observations regarding the impact of applying the Oxfam NZ values in the context of working with communities in the Global South. This is a possible area of further substantial research.

Spiller et al. (2015) note that organisational values have the ability to orientate and create meaning and purpose in an organisation, in particular where there is uncertainty. They suggest that from a Māori perspective, values have the ability to create 'mauri ora' in both a person and a group. Mauri ora means 'to be awake to the potential of a situation and the potential in each other, and consciously manifest that potential' (Spiller et al., 2015, p. 22). Being awake to potential is a desirable capacity when seeking to transform, change and respond to challenges. Literature on organisations supports this viewpoint, that is, that organisational values can be a support to staff through periods of change. Values can act to guide organisations and anchor them, resulting in success and longevity (Collins and Porras, 1995; La Piana, 2010; Sullivan et al., 2001). Oxfam NZ's values have remained the same since they were developed in 2016.

I observed that there was a conscious awareness and action by the leadership team to have open conversations about what mattered to staff and to understand what motivated staff to carry out their responsibilities. In my fieldwork notes I noted this as 'lots of work on heart' (fieldnotes, February 2018). I wrote it down in this phrasing as I had heard many times, in the conversations that I had participated in, staff used the word 'heart' in connection to the organisation's values. Sometimes these conversations about the values were undertaken in formal and planned gatherings, such as the Whaiwhakaaro (reflect) in December 2017 (a biannual off-site day for the whole staff body to reflect on and consider operational, strategic and development practices). One of the activities for the

day was to gather feedback from staff about the values. Each value was written on a large poster which was stuck on the wall. Staff were asked by the Executive Director to write any feedback they had about the values on a post-it note and post it to the corresponding value. Most of the post-it notes had positive connotations although some were critical, noting the generality of the wording used in the values. This review process indicated that the leadership team did not see the values as fixed or static but dynamic and that they should be subject to periodic review by the whole staff group. As part of my fieldwork I took part in this exercise and my sense of the discussion was that there was not an overwhelming desire by the leadership team and staff to change the values and that they remained relevant for the organisation and the context in which it operated.

At other times, I observed that there were conversations about the values which were less formalised and sometimes there were impromptu discussions about the values in scheduled meetings within the Directorates and dedicated teams. For example, I participated in a meeting with the Supporter Acquisition team where this occurred. We were discussing how Oxfam NZ supported local partners in the Pacific and how this work aligned with the values. This discussion exemplifies what I observed during the course of fieldwork: that over time there developed a widespread consistency by the leadership team and staff in making reference to the values and to using them as a platform to guide strategic decisions about the development practices of the organisation.

One prominent way in which the leadership team attempted to use the values to create meaning and purpose within the organisation was through a recognition and award scheme. During my fieldwork, staff performance reviews began to be linked to the values and a recognition of staff who exemplified the values was instituted. Once a month in the Monday morning update meetings staff were presented with awards for displaying one or more of the values in their everyday practice. The awards ceremony was informally called the 'Oxfam Oscars'. There was even a trophy, a version of the Oscars statue that was presented to one staff member at the end of each month. The trophy had been made by someone in the organisation so it also had a very personal in-house sense. Nominations for recognition and award could be put forward by any staff member and it wasn't restricted to nominating someone from one's own directorate or team.

The awards were given out in front of the whole staff body and usually a member from the leadership team presented the awards, outlining the reasons for the nomination. Staff took part in the ceremony with a sense of seriousness and celebration. It clearly meant something to be recognised in this way, particularly in front of your colleagues. It was

notable that the focus was on the exemplification of one or more of the values rather than achieving success in the particular activity. The emphasis was on having the courage and the motivation to live the value or values.

At one ceremony an award was presented to a staff member from the Operations Directorate for enacting the value of 'show courage/kaha'. This staff member had wanted to introduce (and subsequently did introduce), a new process to streamline accounting services across the organisation. The project involved working across all four directorates within the organisation, breaking down some of the silos that existed, countering internal resistance and gaining general support and acceptance for the initiative. One member of the leadership team commented specifically on how the staff member had worked across the directorates, saying that he '*could never have imagined saying that one year ago*' (fieldnotes, September 2017). There were many more such examples which occurred during my fieldwork time and in general for each month, at least three staff members received an award and in certain cases some staff received multiple awards. Based on my observations, my sense was that during my fieldwork, the leadership team and staff respected the process and celebrated both the award and the associated recognition of the work done by their fellow colleagues. My observations contrast with what Mowles (2008) and Edwards and Sen (2002) suggest occured in their research within INGOs, which is that the use of values in INGOs can be tokenistic, symbolic or instruments of management. In the case of Oxfam NZ I consistently observed that staff were genuinely invested in the new set of values by engaging in the process, not narrowly linking them to outcomes or using them simply for self-promotion. Perhaps this is more likely to occur in smaller organisations where staff can have a greater sense of their role and contribution to the organisation's mission.

Spiller et al. (2015, p. 55), in Waypoint 2 (Implementing Values), discuss the importance of implementing values in organisations and argue that values can be key to developing a strong, resilient and caring culture. They use the metaphor of sailing a waka to demonstrate this. They describe values as being like the two hulls of the waka and it is the hulls that provide stability for the vessel. In this sense this can also be used as a metaphor as to how organisations can operate on the basis of their values. In the waka the hulls also provide the means through which changes in the exterior environment are sensed and any change in direction needs to be based on what information the wayfinders are sensing from the hull. In this regard a sense around values is used to make decisions and undertake subsequent actions. Spiller et al. (2015) argue that:

Lining up the hulls with the star path, luminaries, swell and wind is a metaphor for ensuring an organisation is similarly lined up. Values are not singular, abstract ideals that don't relate to each other. Rather they are an interlocking system that connects values with each other and to context. (p. 56)

Spiller et al. (2015, p. 57) also note that Māori values often have the suffix *tanga* which has an 'action' connotation associated with it and what makes a value relevant is the act of using it to guide action and behaviour. In this way they become enacted or 'lived' values. During my fieldwork my observations of the leadership team and staff suggested that they attempted to live their values. These observations were also affirmed by a survey undertaken by the organisation in 2019 in which 81% of the total staff felt that Oxfam NZ lived its values (Oxfam NZ, 2019).

This was also supported by interviews I undertook. For example one former staff member whom I interviewed described to me: '*Oxfam NZ was an organisation which lives its values*' (informal interview, March 2018). Another staff member indicated a similar point of view when talking about the value of justice/tika (formal interview, March 2019):

I see examples of Oxfam living our cultural values everyday. So in terms of our values as an organisation, we are always seeking justice, fairness, equality. In meetings there is a confidence I have going into an Oxfam meeting where everyone is going to have their voice heard, regardless of if a person is ready or not. There is a sense that everyone has a place and a purpose.

Another staff member remarked how the strength, openness and transparency of the culture at Oxfam NZ allowed him to question a human rights issue in the Oxfam Confederation code of conduct which also applied to Oxfam NZ (fieldnotes, February 2019). This staff member was able to approach the Executive Director directly about a statement in the code of conduct in relation to gender identity that he felt conflicted with his own personal values and the Oxfam NZ values. As a result of him raising this issue, the leadership team supported his initiative and the code of conduct wording at the Oxfam Confederation level changed. His initiative was recognised by the whole Oxfam NZ staff and he received an award which was presented at a Monday morning update meeting. The leadership team and staff all acknowledged that this staff member had displayed all three of Oxfam NZ's values.

These conversations and the above example indicate that Oxfam NZ's values had an important influence on the culture within the organisation and provided a basis on which Spiller et al. 's concept of strength, resilience and care could grow. Further, the recognition and award scheme helped foster this and helped create an environment where the values were encouraged to become part of everyday organisational life at Oxfam NZ. The recognition and award scheme, I argue, attempted to develop an individual and collective cognisance of the values and an individual and collective motivation to enact the values. In Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight I build upon the arguments outlined above and demonstrate how the values were intrinsically linked to the efforts of the leadership team and staff to progress towards transforming their development practices.

Values and operational realities

It is important to point out however, that whilst my discussion, analysis and observations so far of the Oxfam NZ values indicate that there was general agreement about the values and that they influenced behaviors and operational activities, conversations around the values and their place in guiding behaviours and actions were not devoid of argument. In fact the leadership team and staff did struggle with trying to balance the three values with managing power relationships and operational imperatives such as financial sustainability. These issues are explored in Chapter Six where I focus on the difficulties encountered by the Partnerships Directorate in reconciling measuring outcomes not only based on contractual compliance but also on how their activities enacted the values.

O'Leary's (2006) research shows that at certain times and in certain contexts within NGOs, transactional issues such as contractual compliance, financial stability and organisational reputation may take priority over more intrinsic values. In an in-depth study of values in development practices in Cambodia, she found that values such as solidarity and equity in NGOs are often at odds with an environment where large power differences exist. This leads, she argues, to inconsistencies between the stated values and the practice of NGOs. As indicated above, and as has been addressed by Mowles, the disconnect between INGO values and practices is common, difficult to manage, and can create dissonance between management and staff. This gap between values and practice is linked to a broader critique levelled at INGOs — that their true impact, relevance and identity remains unclear (see also Edwards, 1999; Edwards and Sen, 2002; James, 2002). Stacey and Griffin (2008) also follow a similar line of argument. They argue that in organisational life, values, conflict and compromise form a circular relationship.

An example of this circular relationship occurred when the leadership team decided to try to explore new revenue raising activities. As outlined in Chapter Two, Oxfam NZ underwent a restructure in 2016, which was mostly driven by financial sustainability concerns. As a result of this financial reality, and the conditional and declining nature of traditional funding, the leadership team began thinking about ways to diversify the organisation's revenue through alternative streams of income including exploring undertaking a profit-making venture.

A trial of one of these ventures occurred during my fieldwork in 2017. Staff from the Supporter Acquisition team started to undertake telefundraising services for Oxfam Australia, Oxfam Canada and two other INGOs in Aotearoa New Zealand, Amnesty International and Greenpeace. This activity increased the organisation's annual revenue by approximately 10% (Oxfam NZ, 2019). According to the leadership team, this commercial activity was pursued not only to increase the financial sustainability of the organisation but also to decrease its dependency on restricted and traditional sources of funds, for example, those it received from its institutional donor, MFAT (informal conversation, fieldnotes, September 2017). It was also part of enabling the leadership team and staff to overcome and manage some of the challenges that it faced in terms of the restructure of Oxfam NZ, the 'Oxfam 2020' process, and the uncertainties around funding associated with changing government aid policy.

I observed that there was some uncertainty amongst the staff about how such a commercial activity aligned with the belief that the organisation was a charity and by association, how it could sit with a set of values which were intrinsic and supported activities and outcomes which were altruistic in nature (Schwartz, 2006). Commercial activities by definition therefore would appear to fall outside this framework and this created discussion amongst staff relating to what the organisation was really about. This was further exacerbated by the fact that the activity required setting up organisational mechanisms to support the project and to allocate scarce resources which could have been used for other more traditional priorities. The reconciliation of charity and profit was a difficult hurdle to overcome as it represented a radical departure from the norm in terms of how the organisation derived income. It required a significant cultural shift by the leadership team, staff and the Board to accept the notion of the organisation 'making a profit' from this activity (fieldnotes, November 2018). One potential reason for this difficulty could be that the notion of making a profit is underpinned by the value of wealth which is an extrinsic value according to the framework set out by Schwarz (2006). What is also important too, as outlined by Crompton et al. (2015), is that when an

extrinsic value (wealth or profit) is drawn attention to, other more intrinsic values (social justice or helpfulness) can become less important. One member of the leadership team attempted to resolve this conflict by the use of the term 'for profit for good' and so attempted to redefine the narrative at Oxfam NZ about its role as a charity and its operational activities (fieldnotes, November 2018).

Newth (2015) discusses how income derived from profit can challenge staff and supporters' perceptions of the identity of an INGO, what it does, and the values and beliefs that it holds. He examined another INGO (World Vision New Zealand) which also introduced a social enterprise component to their business model and noted that it clashed with the idea of 'doing good for others'. He also discussed the question of whether INGOs can become hybrid endeavours which have both social and commercial value propositions and argued that it takes a significant amount of time to overcome the dominant institutional logics of INGOs, these being business models largely based on fundraising and institutional funding.

It can be argued that undertaking such commercial activities can also be seen as a double edged sword. On the one hand income generated from the activity can provide a level of independence in decision making, particularly on the use of the funds raised. For example, they could be used for projects that are alternative to existing or traditional ones, that is, projects that are more politically oriented such as land rights campaigns. On the other hand it could create a perception of an organisation which is too commercial and this could impact on its ability to raise funds from all donors, both public and institutional. For Oxfam NZ it is too early to say that their income from donations was affected by their venture into this commercial activity nor whether the perception of the organisation by donors or supporters changed.

It is important to note that some members of the Oxfam Confederation do have commercial arms in the form of retail outlets which sell goods ethically sourced and linked to their development activities. They also on-sell donated goods. In many countries the Oxfam retail outlets are part of the Oxfam brand and there is an understanding that the income derived from these commercial activities is reinvested in their development activities. In this sense it could be labelled an ethical commercial activity in that the profits are not seen as a reward for investors but are used to address injustice, inequality and poverty, and provide an outlet to support community and grassroots commercial activities. Also it can provide an opportunity to help producers in the fair trade domain as well as through the provision of second-hand goods.

INGOs undertaking commercial activities which use the funds raised from these activities for their development activities question some of the fundamentals of capitalist ideology and the notion of profit. This is discussed by scholars in the Handbook of Diverse Economies (Safri and Madra, 2020), who suggest new ways of thinking about economic activity which unhinges profit from its capitalist implications and consider the externalities associated with economic activities. This thinking provides insights into the nature of the profit motive that generally sits behind commercial undertakings and therefore why it might be difficult for INGOs to justify such activity and to challenge these norms.

What is significant, however, is that undertaking such an activity provided an opportunity for the leadership team and staff to test whether the values could be used to support such an activity or whether they were mutually exclusive. What can be said is that despite the level of risk and perceived compromise associated with the activity, the leadership team decided to venture into such uncharted waters. Further, the collective effort by the leadership team and staff to introduce such ideas was evidence of an attempt to alter the narrative around the traditional view of how an INGO operated. This I suggest is another reflection of taking an 'ontological turn' as it was an attempt to redesign an operational and institutionalised process in the organisation which in turn created new ways of thinking and new ways of acting. Importantly this was also an attempt to inject more autonomy into the organisation which according to Escobar is a key part of an ontological design process. Literature on the use of values suggests that careful consideration of which values (either intrinsic or extrinsic) are used to support this type of activity may impact on the success of the activity or the ability of INGOs to become social enterprises.

Values and leadership

I have indicated above how Oxfam NZ's values were developed by the leadership team and staff and how there was ongoing encouragement to live those values. What I haven't explicitly discussed is the important role that the leadership team also played in supporting and modelling examples of this. Spiller et al. (2015) argue that for values to exist beyond boardroom walls, an organisation's website or the annual report, it is critical that they are embodied and demonstrated by leadership groups. Further, Spiller et al. note that it is critical to a wayfinding approach to leadership that there must be congruency between values and behaviour. Leaders need to exhibit the values in their everyday actions and through this inspire others in the organisation to do so too.

I observed that for the most part the leadership team emphasised the importance of the authenticity of the values and their ownership by the staff body. My fieldnotes describe how the leadership team attempted to enact the values, particularly in their daily interaction with staff. Sometimes this was done in subtle ways and sometimes in more direct ways. For example, the leadership team took the time to know each staff member's name, and some remembered their personal interests or hobbies. I witnessed the leadership team engaging with staff each day and having not only professional but personal conversations with them. I suggest that this nurtured a belief that the leadership team were genuine in their care for staff and were invested in the work that they were doing. This also reinforced, I would argue, the concept of the collective and the 'be connected/manaakitanga' value, and that the 'We' which begins each of the value statements associated with the three values clearly included both the leadership team and staff.

According to Hudson et al. (2018) in their work on the Developmental Leadership Programme (DLP), leadership is seen as both a political process and a collective one. Leadership happens everywhere, at every level, between followers and leaders, across sectors and institutions (Hudson et al., 2018, pp. 1–3). My observations suggest that a similar practice occurred at Oxfam NZ. For example, one senior manager explained the following to me (formal interview, March 2019): '*Part of my practice in taking culture, making sure we have best practice, but also representing New Zealand, Oxfam and our values, is that I do my self introduction in a very, Kiwi, Māori appropriate way'*. She thus introduced herself to new staff by doing a pepeha or whaikōrero (formal introduction of yourself), which in Māori is akin to telling the story of the places and the people that you are connected to. By doing this she connected herself to 'place'. I also witnessed several leaders in the organisation introducing themselves in this way at both internal and external events, and this I suggest, indicated a strong understanding of the use of symbolism to demonstrate the importance of the value of 'be connected/manaakitanga' by the leadership team.

The DLP framework argues that leadership, as a political process, starts with motivated individuals as the primary ingredient. Values feature alongside interests and opportunity to influence change, as reasons which motivate individuals. Motivation in relation to values is also discussed by Harré (2018a, 2018b) and Harré and Madden (2017). Harré argues that values drive and motivate humans to participate in the common good or not.

Further, when leaders are seen to be channeling the values of their potential supporters or followers, this can give them legitimacy (Hudson et al., 2018).

The following account, which was provided to me by a staff member, demonstrated how she regarded leadership at Oxfam NZ:

> Oxfam NZ is very leader-full. One of the things when I first arrived at Oxfam NZ, one of the first things we talked about was leadership... We have a woman who is in leadership and when I look out across the sector there are not many. Then I look at the directors in the organisation, we are 50% men and women. I look across the sector that is also unique... I see leadership starting at the governance level often in terms of how we think about change, understanding the arrangements around governance and leadership, it frames the tone, it gives the direction of where the ship is going. And so it is critical that we have people who are in leadership roles who are highly committed, to have a vision, and to peg down all the activities that need to take place. Oxfam New Zealand definitely has strong leadership in areas where no one in our sector seems to want to go. (formal interview, March 2019)

This staff member placed a particular emphasis on gender and innovative leadership. It was these two aspects which she felt were markers of strength and uniqueness in the leadership team at Oxfam NZ, particularly in comparison to other INGOs in the sector. The majority of the INGOs in the sector were Christian-based, service delivery focused and men predominated the leadership groups. She implied, I suggest, that leaders needed to 'show courage/kaha' to challenge such practices and to look to alternative models. Most of the Oxfam NZ leadership team told me that they were inspired by conceptual frameworks of Māori leadership practice, for example Wayfinding and Manurau (Bean, 2018; Spiller et al., 2015). These frameworks emphasise that leadership and values are inseparable and that leadership evolves out of a deep sense of belonging in an interrelated world.

This account also emphasised that it was not just one leader, or the executive leadership team who stood out in terms of leadership in the organisation but staff from all levels — *'Oxfam NZ is very leader-full'*. This indicates, I suggest, that across the organisation there was strong commitment to what the organisation was about and therefore its values. This was also reflected in the Executive Director's use of the proverb: '*He waka eke noa — A canoe we are all in with no exception*'. I observed that leadership at Oxfam

NZ often came from motivated individuals from within the staff group who suggested improvements to operational activities and which contributed to the transformation of the organisation. For example, the ideas for new human resource software and new fundraising initiatives came from within the staff group.

I also observed numerous examples of leadership by staff and the leadership team in external situations. At sector-wide events that I attended as part of my fieldwork, I noted how several staff asked critical questions in group discussions. Staff also took up opportunities to speak and present about their organisational journey to external audiences both inside and outside the sector. The leadership team and staff presented to external audiences on how the organisation was altering their direction in terms of advocacy, culture, business models and team strategies. Attendance at these events also gave me some insight into how Oxfam NZ was perceived as a leader in the sector. For example, at one event that I attended, the Oxfam NZ Executive Director was described by another INGO leader as the *'moral conscience'* of the sector (fieldnotes, November 2018). Oxfam NZ's institutional donor, MFAT, respected and valued the work and opinion of the leadership team and staff (formal interview, June 2018). For example, in 2018 staff from the Partnerships Directorate were invited by MFAT to join an NGO reference group to decide on the new MFAT funding model.

By creating such a basis for the transformation of the organisation, the leadership team were able to demonstrate their belief in the values and this in turn provided encouragement for staff to show leadership and live the values themselves. Importantly, such encouragement allowed discussions around existing traditional narratives and processes, and to look at alternative ways of undertaking actions and achieving outcomes even if they appeared to challenge long-held norms in the organisation. Having values and leadership which support such conversations, I would suggest, reflects taking an 'ontological turn' for the leadership team and staff thinking and provides opportunities for the growth of leadership among the collective group. As noted by Spiller et al., this latter point is essential not only for the survival of the group but also to build responsiveness to challenges that arise in an organisation's operating environment.

Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the role and importance of Oxfam NZ's three organisational values of 'be connected/manaakitanga', 'show courage/kaha' and 'seek justice/tika' to the operation and life of the organisation, the leadership team and staff. The new values were an initial step taken by the leadership team and staff in their

journey to transform their development practice. The values are significant in terms of this journey for a number of reasons. They were developed and shaped by the beliefs of the leadership team and staff, departed from the Oxfam Confederation values and reflected the local context in which Oxfam NZ operated. I observed that there was a conscious effort made by the leadership team and staff to embed the values into the everyday at Oxfam NZ and this was manifested in the recognition and award scheme and the use of the values as a basis for evaluating staff performance. The values also reflected te ao Māori. I argue that they are an example of taking an 'ontological turn' (Escobar, 2018) in the sense that they are grounded in 'place' (Underhill-Sem, 2002) and are based on Oxfam NZ's identity as an Aotearoa New Zealand based organisation, the beliefs of the leadership team and staff, and the importance of the collective. The process to reach this situation was however a journey which required hard work, dedication, much debate and contestation and the allowance of time for people to work and reflect on, and be confident working according to the values.

I use Spiller et al.'s Waypoint 2 (Implementing Values) to illuminate the attempts by the leadership team and staff to embed the values within the organisation. I argue that developing the new values and attempting to embed them was a strength of the transformation journey and formed a key part of the organisation's kaupapa. The values also provided a basis on which the leadership team and staff could explore alternative narratives to their development practices. The new narratives that emerged included the significance of having values connected to 'place', the importance of 'enacting values' and using 'profit for good'.

In the following chapter I examine the efforts of the leadership team and staff to engage with te ao Māori and the importance this played in framing their identity. This chapter, and those that follow provide an extra layer of analysis and evidence of what I observed in Oxfam NZ, that there was a genuine attempt to live and use their values to influence their thinking about transforming their development practices. They were not tokenistic. These chapters also build on the narrative of being connected to 'place'.

INTERLUDE:

Haere mai
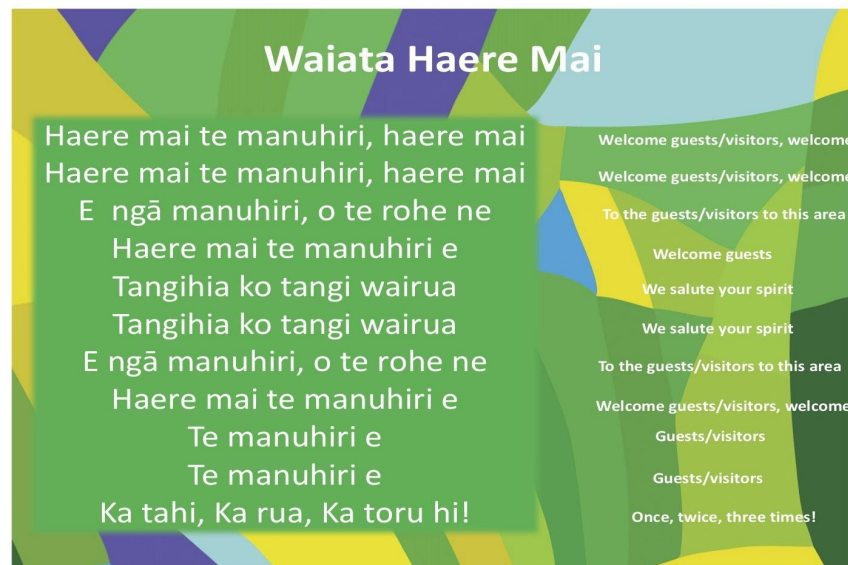
Image 3: Oxfam NZ waiata haere mai
Source: Fieldnotes, April 2018

I sat back down in my chair in the Kauri meeting room after singing and dancing with Oxfam NZ staff. There were probably 30 people in the room. We had just performed the above song at the start of the Monday morning update meeting. This was a weekly meeting where all available staff came together to meet as an organisation, to share information, give updates and celebrate achievements.

The song we sang and danced to was entitled *haere mai*, which translated from te Reo Māori to English as 'welcome'. One staff member led the singing and called everyone in the room to attention. This meant that we all stood up and placed our hands onto our hips ready to begin. There wasn't any music to accompany the song, we just sang. Our voices overlapped in different parts of the song and the whole song built up to reach a climax on the final line. The vowel 'e' which is found at the end of several lines was held and emphasised. We only sang the Māori version. There were several hand movements for different lines of the song. And the movements and words of the song varied by gender. The last line, which was drawn out and held, left a vibration and echo in my body and in the room. As I sat down in the chair this echo stayed with me for several minutes.

When I looked at the English words I found that the meaning and significance of the song was somewhat lost. The Māori lyrics referenced past journeys and ancestors. I learnt

from staff that this song would be performed on a traditional marae and that it was traditionally used to welcome a visitor or stranger from another tribe. The visitor would stand some distance away from the courtyard and building at the beginning of the song and as people were singing they would slowly approach the courtyard, being beckoned in by those singing and dancing. At the end of the song those singing and the visitor would be so close that they would then perform a hongi, a traditional Māori greeting, where people press their forehead and noses together and share one another's breath.

Later in my fieldwork I actually experienced together with other Oxfam NZ staff a formal haere mai at Te Noho Kotahitanga wharenui, the meeting house at Unitec, a university in Auckland. We had gone there together to participate in a workshop hosted by another INGO, Caritas NZ. Having experienced the full ritual I could then see how the Oxfam NZ performance was a small version of the same ritual. Of course being on a marae the performance was very powerful as the building itself and the traditional costumes truly enhanced the experience. However, singing and dancing the same song in the Auckland office of Oxfam NZ still had a lot of spirit, power and heart.

In a short space of time I felt confident to join in with the singing and dancing and even found myself looking forward to the Monday morning update meeting. I found that I always felt energised by the performance of haere mai and performing it together made me feel connected to the collective group.

Chapter Five
The spirit of Aotearoa within Oxfam NZ

Introduction

This chapter discusses how the identity of Oxfam NZ as an Aotearoa New Zealand based organisation was internally affirmed by the leadership team and staff through links and practices which are connected to 'place'. This concept was introduced in Chapter Four and in this chapter I further explore its relevance for Oxfam NZ's identity and to the transformation of its development practices. The chapter also explores the flow-on effects of these links and practices in terms of the connection between the individual and the collective and the personal and the professional (Spiller et al., 2015). Reaffirming its identity in this way and aligning it with their values provided an additional foundation upon which to build and guide the transformation journey.

I begin the chapter with a discussion of the significance of Oxfam NZ being an Aotearoa New Zealand organisation. I discuss the historical, social, political, and cultural influences which impacted on the organisation. I then focus on the attempts by the leadership team to build and recognise tikanga (customs, ways, practices). Tikanga Māori can include Māori language, approaches, values, customs, worldviews and ideas (Sims et al., 2018). Many practices within the organisation were linked to Māori culture and evidenced in rituals, language and the use of Māori metaphors. Importantly, and complementary to this, there was a commitment to te Tiriti. This elaborates further on the introductory discussion I provided in Chapter Two on te ao Māori, te Tiriti and decolonisation (Laenui, 2000).

I draw on the postdevelopment ideas of ontology and plurality to understand and analyse these choices and actions, and I extend the argument I put forward in Chapter Four that the leadership team and staff were taking an 'ontological turn'. By adopting tikanga Māori as an influence to guide their development practices, I argue that the leadership team and staff provided opportunities to allow different perspectives and possibilities for their development practices to emerge. There was an intent to ensure that the development practices were grounded in 'place' (Underhill-Sem, 2002) and imbued with Spiller et al. 's concept of 'self-knowledge', a core requirement of being a wayfinder. Throughout the chapter, where relevant, I make reference to how this reaffirmation of the organisation's identity was also linked to an effort to realise the organisation's values.

It is important to note that the observations provided in this chapter reflect not only what I was able to observe on an organisation-wide basis but also through my participation in the day-to-day operational activity within Oxfam NZ. These observations also were based on my conversations with staff and my perceptions of how staff reacted to the efforts that were made to reaffirm Oxfam NZ's identity as a Aotearoa New Zealand organisation. While most of my observations suggest a positive acceptance of the direction, I also discuss how the process was a constantly negotiated boundary and there were elements and instances of unease and uncertainty. The process continues and will continue to be negotiated.

Being an Aotearoa New Zealand organisation

Identifying as an Aotearoa New Zealand based organisation was extremely important for the leadership team and staff of Oxfam NZ. I observed that although Aotearoa New Zealand is a country which is small in size and population, there was a strong sense amongst the staff of national identity, Aotearoa New Zealand's independence and a connection to the land and its people. There was also a desire to acknowledge and respect the historical and cultural fabric of Aotearoa New Zealand society and this was augmented and supported by a commitment to the responsibilities outlined in te Tiriti.

As outlined in Chapter Two, much of Aotearoa New Zealand's history is shaped by the relationship between Māori and Pākehā. This relationship was formalised in te Tiriti of 1840 and has continued to evolve and influence the everyday socio-political landscape since. During the 1980s and 1990s bicultural imaginaires and concepts began to surface in Aotearoa New Zealand and this period saw an increasing politics of Māori mana motuhake (self-determination) and an increasing recognition by the Crown of the rights of Māori as indigenous peoples (Larner, 2007). In the last 10–15 years there has also been significant development in this relationship to a point where engaging with te ao Māori has become a dominant aspect of Aotearoa New Zealand (Brandt, 2013). The anthropologist Dame Joan Metge (2010) describes the relationship as one of cultures meeting, arguing and dealing with diversity. Metge uses the metaphor of the tuamaka (round cord) to describe the process of the coming together of Māori and Pākehā to forge a strong and resilient 'rope of peoples'.

Te Tiriti formalised the rights of Māori and non-Māori people to coexist and recognised the importance of Māori culture and history and its place in Aotearoa New Zealand. In this regard it provided the basis for the movement for a strong engagement with te ao Māori within Aotearoa New Zealand. This is also reinforced by what Cooney (1994, p. 9)

outlines as the significance of the term biculturalism: '...that we are a bicultural country, it ensures that Māori are given rightful recognition as the indigenous people and therefore obligations under the Treaty must be addressed'.

In a similar vein for Oxfam NZ, understanding both what te Tiriti means and the responsibilities it places on New Zealanders has been critical. Understanding and integrating a Māori worldview and Māori language, approaches, values, customs and ideas into contemporary life in Aotearoa New Zealand formed an important context for their transformation journey. It also links, I would argue, to the Oxfam NZ value of 'seek justice/tika', as it gives voice to seeking justice for Māori and committing to the responsibilities outlined in te Tiriti. This value speaks about everyone's equal value, their rights, promoting what is right and fair, and standing with marginalised and powerless groups. As in wider Aotearoa New Zealand society, in Oxfam NZ putting te Tiriti into practice is an ongoing process and an issue that is constantly being debated and negotiated.

Underhill-Sem (2002, p. 55) discusses the importance of having an understanding of local and situated contexts. She writes about how time and space can shape a sense of 'place', and that 'many places, however defined, are entangled in personal and collective identities'. As noted in Chapter Four, for Underhill-Sem (2002), 'place' is not purely about a geographical area, but is about the layering of all of the historical, cultural, social and political factors that give identity to people associated with that area. There is a layering effect that occurs over time of all of these influences to give meaning to a place. The *Dictionary of Human Geography* (Johnston et al., 2009, p. 540) describes 'place' as 'always-already ongoing assemblage of geographically associated, ontologically co-constitutive elements and relationships'. What I observed at Oxfam NZ was that such a sense of 'place' was prevalent, and that this was a product of Aotearoa New Zealand's historical journey. This idea surfaced in conversations that I was involved in around development practices and was also manifest in the leadership team and staff actions. Part of this idea of 'place', amongst many factors, I would argue, was a recognition of te Tiriti, an acknowledgement of the movement towards a stronger engagement with te ao Māori, and decolonisation within Aotearoa New Zealand.

That the idea of 'place' would have such an influence on Oxfam NZ's transformation journey was not something I had thought about prior to my fieldwork. When it stood out in my data coding process, I was quite surprised but also extremely interested. What intrigued me was the fact that for staff in Oxfam NZ the idea of 'place' was grounded in

their localised context. At first glance this might not have seemed relevant for an organisation which implemented programme activities in an international context or risked reinforcing notions of difference with other 'places'. I observed that initially signs of 'place' occurred in small and nested ways but as my fieldwork data collection and involvement with the organisation progressed there was an intensification of its manifestation. By the end of my fieldwork, I concluded that linking development practices to 'place' was a key factor in Oxfam NZ's transformation journey.

As noted above, I have argued that for the leadership team and staff the idea of 'place' included a recognition of te Tiriti, acknowledgment of the movement towards embracing te ao Māori and decolonisation within Aotearoa New Zealand. This also aligns with Escobar's concept of taking an 'ontological turn'. As outlined in Chapter One, an 'ontological turn' includes an examination of attachments to place and body, understanding surroundings and context, or breaking down the colonial divide. In what follows I outline that there were elements of Oxfam NZ's transformation journey which contained these ontological concepts. For example, there was acceptance of other cultures, an understanding of the identity of the organisation in terms of its links to place and history, and the responsibilities associated with this; there was use of Māori metaphors to help understand and undertake their organisational transformation; and the use of Māori rituals and language to encourage and further the importance of engagement with te ao Māori within the organisation.

Acknowledgement of and enacting the principles of te Tiriti is at the heart of the movement towards engaging with te ao Māori within Aotearoa New Zealand. Sims et al. (2018) discuss the importance of te Tiriti as it relates to the international aid and development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. They argue that the turn to the use of values, relationships and the soft skills of flexibility, respect, humility and ethics in development practices cannot be considered without reference to te Tiriti.

It is significant that a copy of the Māori version of te Tiriti hung on the wall at the entrance to the Auckland office building of Oxfam NZ for all to see. This acknowledgement of and priority given to te Tiriti indicates the importance of the principles in te Tiriti within the organisation. Extending an understanding of te Tiriti to what it means in the context of development practices was a new area of exploration and created a new narrative and insights which the leadership team and staff embarked on during my fieldwork. Further, it allowed the discussions on identity and culture which takes place in wider public spaces in Aotearoa New Zealand to influence and be reflected

in how the leadership team and staff operated and undertook their development practices.

For example, one staff member (formal interview, September 2018) who was non-Māori described the connection between te ao Māori and the advocacy work of the leadership team and staff:

> I think New Zealand is on a journey of biculturalism and so when you are coming from that frame of we are two cultures in NZ, this is our history, it has been a difficult history but bringing in certain values around that and how we speak, how we talk of justice, social justice, harmony, living together, connectedness, I think that does translate into how we campaign and our approach.

In this case she saw how broader societal and political processes shaped and formed both the discourse of INGO development practices in the advocacy space through language and speech, but also through strategy. She also talked about the importance of values to this discourse, values such as justice and connectedness. These are two of Oxfam NZ's three organisational values. For another staff member, engaging with te ao Māori represented a way to live some of the principles of te Tiriti, self-determination and respect. It also made them feel that they were '*part of something bigger*' (formal interview, March 2018). This indicated that this staff member perceived that the transformation of Oxfam NZ was part of and concurrent with the transformation that was occurring in greater Aotearoa New Zealand towards greater engagement with te ao Māori.

Understanding staff reactions and the process of progressing on a path towards greater engagement with te ao Māori however, needs to be seen within the context that Oxfam NZ is part of the Oxfam Confederation. Oxfam NZ as an organisation has multiple identities (Aotearoa New Zealand, Global North, INGO) all of which operate simultaneously and which wield different kinds of influence on how the organisation is structured, the perspectives of the leadership team and staff and how they undertake their development practices. Managing these different identities is problematic and challenging (being both global and local) but it also brings benefits. For example, the leadership team and staff were able to tap into many of Oxfam International's campaigns and this provided them with not only knowledge from this work but also access to world forums on international development (World Economic Forum, 2019). Further, the fact that the Oxfam global brand and identity has no geographical bounds and is not tied to

any one specific place allows individual Oxfam organisations to identify more fully with their local environment while still being part of a greater whole. I observed that the leadership team and staff expressed a desire to be both part of the Oxfam Confederation but also a desire to stand apart as a distinct Aotearoa New Zealand organisation. For example, one staff member (formal interview, November 2018) described his sense of the broader Oxfam identity:

> I think there is one [Oxfam] but then many. One in the sense that they all believe in one cause. But then translating them into each Oxfam [organisation]. Different cultures from different countries come into influence... They try in different circumstances to always steer things towards justice. So I think that is where they become one.

This desire to be both similar and different is explored by Suzuki (1998). He argues that there is a tension between the two and that both are desirable but each come with their own set of consequences. For example, one consequence of similarity is that it can create a false sense of equality or power. I observed that Pacific Island staff noted that while they worked with staff from Oxfam NZ on a very equal basis they still felt that the power associated with Oxfam NZ being a 'Global North' identity was ever present. Such feelings of power disparity also stem from Aotearoa New Zealand's colonial past in the Pacific which was characterised by 'power over' other Pacific Island nations to the point of violent force and control (Banivanua Mar, 2016; Rowlands, 1997). These perspectives, such as power disparity, indicate that the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ needed to balance the desire to be identified as an Aotearoa New Zealand organisation with the desire to be also seen as a member of the greater Pacific community, which also was the area it mostly operated in.

The haere mai ritual

The interlude for this chapter provides an insight into one ritual which was one of the most visible signs of engagement with te ao Māori performed by the leadership team and staff. This ritual occurred in two distinct but linked formats. The first was at the weekly staff group meeting which was distinguished by the integration into the meeting of traditional Māori waiata (song). This was significant because Oxfam NZ is not a Māori-based organisation. Singing haere mai also occurred when welcoming a new member of staff, a new volunteer, an external person working with the organisation (such as myself) or an important visitor. It recognised that the person being welcomed was a

stranger and an outsider to the organisation. However, by the end of the song the visitor was deemed to be part of the organisation, the Oxfam NZ whānau.

Conversations I undertook with people in the organisation furthered my understanding that singing haere mai was an important ritual within the organisation. Significantly, staff were told that it didn't matter about getting the words and/or dance perfect, but it was more about performing the ritual with heart and spirit. In this sense they found that there was no need to write down and define the meaning of this ritual in words, rather engagement with te ao Māori within Oxfam NZ was performed and experienced and this made it part of organisational life.

Staff members who talked about their experiences of the ritual noted that they felt it to be a very emotional and welcoming experience. For example one staff member (formal interview, March 2019) with whom I spoke related the following:

> … that was quite a humbling experience because it is one thing to sing but Oxfam NZ also performs. So they are singing and dancing. So I was like, oh jeepers. I was moved. Because often I only see the singing. So for Oxfam New Zealand [they] sing, dance and also harmonise at the end. I thought oh my gosh. There is this attention to making sure that we take te Reo Māori, Māori culture and Māori worldview and embed it in places where we assemble.

Another staff member (formal interview, September 2018) said the following:

> It is quite unique. I think it is so powerful…I reflect on when Winnie [the then Executive Director of Oxfam International] came, she said that she had never seen another affiliate [member of the Oxfam Confederation] who had embraced biculturalism so strongly and so effectively. And she has nearly been to every office in Oxfam and we work in 92 countries and she said that she was so overwhelmed and so proud about how we had done that. And that strengthens identity, it strengthens connectedness and it strengthens our ideas about who we are… And you never forget where you are. You are in Aotearoa and proud to be so.

What these quotes articulate, I suggest, is that this ritual accorded these staff members a strong experience of welcome and a connection with 'place'. Suzuki (1998, pp. 86–95) discusses how NGOs use rituals to address diversity and fragmentation and to build a sense of commonality. I observed that haere mai did have this effect, bringing together a

diverse mix of staff from a range of national identities (for example China, Malaysia, Sweden, Great Britain, Brazil, Canada). Linguistic scholars Lakoff and Johnson (1980, pp. 223–234) note that the performance of rituals give structure and significance to activities, and that they can unify aspects of human experience. It is through the repetition and creation of habits that narratives and identities are created.

At some Monday morning update meetings at Oxfam NZ other songs were sung, for example, 'tutira mai nga iwi', the words and meaning of which relate to collective work and knowledge. This song had particular meaning on one occasion where it was used to recognise the contribution of two volunteers who regularly worked in the Auckland office assisting with administrative duties. Making the thank you in song provided a conduit for further cultural affiliation because one of the volunteers also responded in a Samoan song. Significantly, this dialogue took place through song and reflected elements of both cultures and indicated, I suggest, an acknowledgement of other cultures and their practices.

I also participated in the ceremony for Winnie Byanyima. I had participated in a number of ceremonies prior to this but what struck me about this particular ceremony was the intensity of the staff in demonstrating their acknowledgement and commitment to the ritual and engagement with te ao Māori. Over the time of my fieldwork, I observed that this commitment had grown to the extent that the lyrics and actions to songs were learned and rehearsed by staff and the occasions were used by the leadership team to explain tikanga Māori practices, increase everyone's understanding of the broader social and political history of Aotearoa New Zealand, and the significance of te Tiriti to everyday practices within Oxfam NZ.

The above discussion of how the leadership team and staff reacted to their own efforts to introduce certain elements of Māori culture describes it in a positive light and suggests a level of acceptance. These observations however, relate more to the period nearing the end of my fieldwork and it must be said that the process was not devoid of contention. Certainly such strong positivity was not present when I first arrived. As noted in Chapter Two, there was an ongoing and negotiated understanding of what introducing these activities meant for, and how they were relevant to Oxfam NZ itself, particularly in respect to the organisational values. I have suggested above that there are linkages between the values of 'be connected/manaakitanga' and 'seek justice/tika' and te ao Māori activities and practices, although the linkages were not always formalised.

I observed that at the beginning of my fieldwork some staff were less engaged in the performance of haere mai in the Monday morning update meeting. I learnt from conversations with staff that the reticence to be involved was either a result of their unfamiliarity with the ritual or that they felt that it was tokenistic. Such reactions are possibly a result of the fact that Oxfam NZ staff, which was predominantly non-Māori, were being encouraged by the leadership team to take onboard and practice elements of Māori culture, a culture which in many cases was very different from their own.

Over time discussions around this process continued. For example, I participated in a meeting between the Executive Director and a number of staff from the fundraising team where the process was openly discussed. The Executive Director asked the group why Oxfam NZ was incorporating tikanga Māori into its organisational life. A number of staff responded that it was about respect for the [indigenous] people of this land (fieldnotes, January 2018). The Executive Director pointed out that the leadership team were concerned that what they were trying to achieve should not be perceived as tokenism but that it was a genuine attempt to live the 'be connected/manaakitanga' value through an acceptance and acknowledgement of Māori culture and the responsibilities of te Tiriti. In this case the Executive Director used this value to give support to, and justify why the leadership team had decided to engage with te ao Māori in the way that they had.

Sometime after this meeting I had a conversation with another staff member from a different Directorate who had the following to say:

> Performing waiata every Monday is not simply tolerating difference or 'giving a nod to Māori'. When you walk into a room you recognise that everyone has a right to be seated at that table, that there are many ways of being and knowing, and that you are not separate from the reconciliation and decolonisation process, you are part of it. (fieldnotes, July 2018)

This account depicted the powerful effect that the haere mai ritual had on this individual. As this staff member suggested, this was not just about singing. Such rituals could allow different worldviews to be acknowledged and respected.

Mercier (2020, pp. 70–74) discusses how tokenism, that is, paying surface accommodation to the remnants of culture belonging to colonised people and cultural appropriation, is part of the decolonisation debate. Further, she highlights that decolonising actions undertaken by non-Māori people can bring with them tensions, as

activities that might look decolonial can in fact be another form of colonisation, what she refers to as a 'colonisation of indigenisation'. Kiddle (2020) and Thomas (2020) both argue that good intentions from non-Māori are not enough and that they need to be backed with respect, care, an acknowledgement of the politics and power relations involved, and an understanding of the broader structures and systems which perpetuate colonisation (Thomas, 2020, pp. 123–125).

The significance of non-indigenous people engaging in actions which progress the process of reconciliation with indigenous peoples is highlighted in another perspective by Porter (2018). She argues, in reference to the Welcome to Country practices conducted in Australia, that such kinds of practices are a response to be in a relationship with Country and its people. The attempts by the leadership team and staff to value Māori culture and its place in Aotearoa New Zealand, I would argue, was a conscious decision and a starting point for embracing te ao Māori and recognising the important role that non-Māori could play in their transformation journey. As noted in Chapter Two, Mercier (2020) argues that there are many different ways and means of bringing about decolonisation and that this requires significant and adaptive thinking, planning and action. It is important to note that the embracing of te ao Māori was not an isolated goal of the leadership team, but occurred alongside other activities in the transformation journey such as modelling, leadership and demonstrable adherence to Oxfam NZ's values in the everyday. This in turn influenced how staff perceived these practices and whether or not they were viewed as tokenistic.

The haere mai ritual attempted to embed Māori culture in the everyday life of the organisation so that it formed a significant element of their kaupapa and strengthened the collective by binding people together to a common commitment and practice. This links, I would argue, to the Oxfam NZ value of 'be connected/manaakitanga' which talks about linking up, having respect and authenticity, and using knowledge drawn from diverse thinking. Such sentiments are what defines the postdevelopment idea of plurality, that is, placing a value on different 'worlds' and working towards a state where many 'worlds' can exist alongside each other. Could the actions and staff simply be one dominant 'world' becoming more diverse? To offer a partial answer to this question, I suggest that this will depend on the next steps that the leadership team and staff decide to take in regards to engaging with te ao Māori and whether they can hold onto and build on the ritual of haere mai. Significantly, the ritual was not happening in isolation but existed alongside the use of Māori language and metaphors, which I will now discuss.

Using Māori language and metaphors

Language is an imperative and enduring part of any culture. I observed that by the end of fieldwork it was significant that there was widespread use of te Reo Māori in everyday verbal and written communication by both the leadership team and staff within Oxfam NZ. The greetings and farewells of email communication were in te Reo Māori although this was not mandated. The signs which directed people to the toilets, kitchen, reception and meeting rooms were written in Māori as well as English, as were the signs on the doors. All of the meeting rooms had Māori names: Rata, Manuka, Nikau, Totara and Kauri. These names are all native trees of Aotearoa New Zealand and each have a cultural significance in te ao Māori. When staff described their advocacy and campaign work they used the Māori word mana (prestige, authority, power, influence).

In addition to rituals and language, engagement with te ao Māori was also demonstrated through the use of Māori metaphors. Two particular such metaphors were the waka and whānau. A waka is a Polynesian sailing vessel, much smaller and narrower than a Western style sailing vessel, but which was used by Māori to sail to Aotearoa New Zealand. As such, it has a strong traditional meaning for Māori. Whānau is a familiar term used to address one's family and relations. In a modern context however, it can refer to those who don't have a blood or family tie. Oxfam NZ as an organisation was frequently described by the leadership team and staff using these two metaphors and the words are commonly used in general conversation in Aotearoa New Zealand.

It is notable that at the end of particular performances of haere mai, the person for which the song was performed was recognised as being part of the Oxfam NZ whānau. This recognition was not only bestowed on employees of the organisation but also included volunteers, ex-staff members, and consultants. In this regard, people connected to and involved with the organisation were whānau and this relationship could be lifelong. For example, during my fieldwork I listened to a number of farewell speeches for individuals who were leaving the organisation and in these speeches the individual's place as part of the Oxfam NZ whānau was reiterated. I was also introduced to several people during my fieldwork who had long since left the organisation or who had moved on to work in another organisation in the Oxfam Confederation but who perceived themselves to be Oxfam NZ whānau.

Being considered Oxfam NZ whānau therefore embodies a strong and ongoing connection with the organisation. The metaphor suggests that the organisation is not just where one is employed and works but that there is a strong bond between the individual

and the work that the organisation attempts to do. Further, it opened up the conversation that there are many ways of understanding and legitimising. Other words that staff used in conjunction with whānau included kotahitanga (unity, solidarity), kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and aroha (affection). Staff were often referred to by the leadership team as the 'heart' of the organisation and their connectedness to both the organisation and each other was said to be vital to the life of the organisation. Further, I observed that while there was a focus on staff performance there was also an emphasis on building strong and supportive working relationships, and enacting the values, both essential to fostering and sustaining whānau.

This emphasis on building strong working relationships and whānau, is an issue which Escobar takes up in his discussion regarding the current crisis that he sees facing the Global North. He argues that there has been a breakdown of social relations and that part of the pathway out of this problem is to recognise the interdependence of all beings, starting with humanity. Using whānau as a metaphor, I would argue, was an attempt to build connectedness amongst both the leadership team and staff and to emphasise the importance of being connected to and part of the collective. Such practices also mirror what Rebecca Warne Peters (2020) describes as deeply social, interactive and relational work. This kind of work, Warne Peters argues, often receives little recognition and support. However, she sees it as central to development practices. I explore a relational approach to development practices in Chapter Six.

Yet another powerful cultural metaphor which was used by the leadership team and staff was that of the waka or sailing vessel. It is noted that sailing in general is an activity inherent with unpredictability, vulnerability, agility and adaptability. It requires highly trained navigation skills as well as a heightened sense of judgement and intuition. A waka is only powered by wind or human effort. It is reliant on a coordinated team effort to progress towards, and reach its destination. There is also a great deal of care involved in order to maintain the vessel and crew. These characteristics of the waka, and its use as an analogy for the organisation's journey of transformation, indicated that the journey would be complicated but through a collective effort and linking their actions to their values progress towards new development practices could be made. Again this was a deliberate choice by the leadership team to use a metaphor that was grounded in 'place' and Māori culture.

Spiller et al. (2015), as noted in Chapter One, use the waka metaphor to explain their leadership framework. Each waypoint in the framework metaphorically relates to a different part of a doubled-hulled waka. For example, as discussed in Chapter Four,

Waypoint 2 (Implementing Values) relates to the hulls of the waka. Waypoint 3 (Human Dynamics) relates to the rudder (self-knowledge), mast (alignment of the team), sails (the collective will) and mauri stones (nurturing life energy) of the waka. A number of other scholars have also referenced sailing as a metaphor in their critique of international development agencies. For example, *Plan for Sailboats not Trains* by Rachel Kleinfeld (2015) looks at the paradox of how international development donors know that change and long-term development happens in a nonlinear way, mimicking the path of a sailboats, however manage and plan activities and programmes in linear ways, mimicking trains. Similarly, Dan Honig's (2018) *Navigation by Judgement* emphasises that management processes in the international development sector should be navigated with a reliance on judgement and intuition, and particularly the judgement of grassroot agents.

A further manifestation of the waka metaphor by the leadership team within Oxfam NZ was how they used it to describe the organisation as a collective that was navigating its way through both the internal and external uncertainty caused by the restructure of the organisation, the 'Oxfam 2020' process, and the changing nature of foreign aid. Members of the leadership team sometimes used the metaphor to describe the process of dealing with the organisation's complex and changing operational context as being similar to '*a waka in turbulent waters*', or '*a lone waka out on the ocean without a seagull in sight*' (fieldnotes, February and May 2018). Importantly, a waka is recognised as a sturdy and seaworthy vessel and in this regard, I would suggest, there was an attempt by the leadership team to use a symbol of stability and continuity, to embolden staff that they could face and deal with uncertainty. Using a waka in open waters metaphor also helped to 'normalise' dealing with uncertainty. A waka is a culturally embedded symbol because Oceanic navigators have been using these craft to sail around the Pacific ocean for over a thousand years and have faced all manner of uncertainties with respect to weather and rough seas in doing so (Mack, 2011).[18]

Green (2015) compares INGOs to large oil tankers both in terms of their size, bureaucracy and inability to adapt and change direction quickly. He challenges the notion that change happens in a predictable and linear way. A waka, as an ocean-going vessel, is designed to cope with complexity, non-linearity, uncertainty, risk, the unexpected. I observed that these concepts were often used in leadership team and staff

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[18] Another culturally embedded approach being used in the context of community development work in the Pacific is the Rebbilib framework. A Ribbilib is a Marshallese stick map which was used by ocean navigators to navigate the Pacific ocean. See Pacific MEL (2020) for more information on the application of this tool to the monitoring, evaluation and learning of capacity-strengthening programmes.

presentations and meetings, both internal and external, to explain their efforts and the challenges faced in trying to transform their development practices.

The widespread use of Māori language and metaphors indicates, I suggest, a strong recognition and a powerful ongoing reminder that Māori culture is an important element in the makeup of Aotearoa New Zealand — it creates a link to 'place' and a unique identity. It also provided a means by which the leadership team and staff could create their own and evolving sense of engagement with te ao Māori as they progressed along their journey of transformation.

The emergence of self-knowledge

Flow-on effects from the use of these culturally significant rituals, metaphors and language suggest that the leadership team and staff tried to build an identity that was grounded in 'place'. It also attempted to foster amongst staff an appreciation of the need to understand different perspectives and worldviews, and encouraged them to think about their own personal experiences and perspectives, and how these could influence the way they approached their development practices.

In Waypoint 3 (Human Dynamics), Spiller et al. (2015) emphasises this link between the individual and the collective in an organisational setting. They use the example of steering the waka to demonstrate the link (emphasis added).

> On the waka, self-awareness is everyone's responsibility, because the hoe is not just about the steerer, it is a collective responsibility... At all times people around the waka must be mindful not to obstruct the steerer's view or get in the way, and there are always people positioned up front on the lookout, feeding information about conditions ahead to the person on the hoe. This illustrates that *Ko wai au? is not just about Who am I? but about Ko wai tātou, Who are we?* Each person is reflected in the other, and this becomes deeper and deeper as the journey together unfolds. (p. 103)

My observations suggest that the leadership team's emphasis on collective work, such as what occurs on a waka, is directly linked to the 'be connected/manaakitanga' value. They were concerned with not only what the organisation was about but also what the individual, as part of that collective, was about. By introducing tikanga into everyday organisational life and encouraging staff to perform culturally significant rituals and think about their organisation in a culturally metaphoric way, this created an

environment where self-reflection about who staff were, how they understood themselves, where they had come from, and why they worked at Oxfam NZ.

An example of this reflexivity was an activity that took part at an off-site staff day in December 2017. The staff day was entitled *Whaiwhakaaro: Consideration and Reflection*. As part of my fieldwork I attended this staff day and participated in this activity which was led by the Executive Director. Below is an extract from my fieldnotes of the activity:

> Part three of the day focused on privilege, and to demonstrate this the format was based on movement only, no dialogue. This particular activity was called 'the privilege walk'. Everyone stood in the middle of the room, a large loft, in one long line. The Executive Director read out a series of questions and you took one step either to the left or right of the room depending on your respective yes/no answer to each question. You didn't respond out loud. Your movement was your answer. You stood still if the question didn't apply to you. The questions explored a range of topics on gender, education, race, sexual orientation, wealth, mental health and access to services. The questions were simple, for example, Did you always have enough food? Did you receive private education? Were you raised by two parents? By the end of the exercise about two-thirds of the staff were scattered on the left-hand side of the room and one-third scattered on the right. This showed that a majority of staff had experienced some level of privilege in their life. At the end of the set of questions people were asked to pause for a moment and reflect quietly on their privileges or lack thereof. Following this the Executive Director gave some reflective comments on how your current situation can very much be determined on where you were born and what opportunities were open to you. While answering the questions and stepping either way only took about 15 minutes, afterwards the room ignited with lots of conversations. Many staff were surprised by the result and the preponderance of privilege in the staff group. (fieldnotes, December 2017)

I was interested in why the Executive Director chose this particular activity for the staff. I perceived that the aim of the activity was to get staff thinking about and understanding not only their own life experiences, but the life experiences of other staff and those outside the organisation, and the relative privilege of most staff in relation to these outsiders. Not everyone had had the same life experiences and there were important differences in the level of privilege that people had experienced. I observed in the

conversations amongst the staff at the end of the activity that it had highlighted for participants how important it was to be cognisant of other people's experiences and how these could influence the way they perceived and approached their work. Further, the activity suggested a link between the personal and the professional and that in making decisions, particularly decisions about development practices, staff needed to be aware of how their own personal experiences, and the innate power inherent in those experiences, could influence decisions made on behalf of others.

The activity demonstrated that there exists a range of life experiences and different 'worlds', to use Escobar's language of the pluriverse. Feminist postdevelopment scholar Dombroski (2016) writes of the principle of 'starting where you are' in order to see diversity and multiply possibilities. This reflexive activity was an attempt to do this, to encourage staff to reflect on where they were and how they had come to be where they were. Both Escobar and Dombroski have engaged with the idea of 'multiple ontologies' taken from Law (2015). The idea is that you have to encounter and become comfortable with the fact that there is more than one way of knowing the world, being in the world and acting. What biculturalism has brought to Aotearoa New Zealand is a necessity for all of the population and its institutions to recognise different coexisting realities and to be able to enact bridges, or movement between these in daily life. The activity also encompases what Spiller et al. describe as self-knowledge, which is a core requirement of being a wayfinder. Spiller et al. (2015, pp. 98–102) state that it is crucial that the wayfinder has the ability to respond to the world within oneself and to shed any layers of status, position, power and privilege in order to fully recognise others.

Participation in this type of activity and having associated conversations gave staff an opportunity to gain a stronger sense of who they were and the possibility to be a connected and cohesive group of individuals. It also had the risk of dividing the group and highlighting their differences although I observed that there were continuous efforts by the leadership team to reduce this possibility. An example of these efforts, as discussed above, was the haere mai ritual performed by the whole staff group on a regular basis and which provided a conduit through which staff could experience their connection with the collective and to 'place'. Further, irrespective of one's position in the organisation staff were encouraged to raise issues or make suggestions, and these were shared with the whole staff. Spiller et al. argue that there is a complex two-way dialogue system that occurs between the individual and the organisation. Individual experiences and perspectives influence and are being influenced by the organisation and this is particularly true when an organisation is on a journey of transformation and discovery.

What this can lead to is that one's professional activities can become an extension of one's personal beliefs and values.

The leadership team at Oxfam NZ gave staff an opportunity to understand their own experiences and those of others, and gain an insight into another culture through participation in tikanga. Interviews which I conducted with Oxfam Pacific Island staff supported this. Some of these staff expressed the view that Oxfam NZ's integration of aspects of Māori culture into their working practices developed in them a cultural competence which created the opportunity for positive flow-on effects when working in a Pacific development context. As discussed in Chapter Two, there is a strong historical connection between Māori and peoples of the Pacific, and in particular Polynesia. There is a unique common ancestry and this created a sense of common ground and common interests. Oxfam Pacific Island staff stated that this, plus the appreciation of Māori culture by Oxfam NZ staff, could make a difference in how Oxfam NZ staff approached their work with their fellow Oxfam staff and with their partners. They also noted that staff had a strong understanding of the Pacific context and the dimensions of poverty, vulnerability and social injustice which characterised the region. This is not to say that the power imbalance associated with the Global North/Global South divide and the awareness of Aotearoa New Zealand's colonial history was forgotten but it did have the potential to lessen the occurence of paternalistic attitudes in development practices. Nor does it say that Oxfam NZ's experiences with its Pacific partners would lead to similar types of relationships with indigenous people from other regions. However, it may help to provide a foundational understanding that there are numerous ways to perceive the world and its peoples and the importance of learning how to deal with and utilise these differences so as to create alternative development practices.

Summary

In this chapter I have discussed how the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ attempted to affirm the identity of Oxfam NZ as an Aotearoa New Zealand organisation. My discussion centred on their engagement with te ao Māori via the use of ritual, language and metaphors from Māori culture. I argue that this was not an arbitrary decision and that the process also stemmed from the organisation's commitment to the responsibilities of te Tiriti.

I use Underhill-Sem's (2002) concept of 'place' to explore how the leadership team attempted to identify the organisation with what it means to be an Aotearoa New Zealand organisation. I then provide a discussion and analysis of how an engagement with te ao

Māori formed an important part of this process, how it was gradually introduced into the organisation and how this was used to inform and understand their journey. This affected both individual staff and the collective staff group. I describe the practice and importance of Māori rituals and the use of Māori language in everyday organisational practices. I also discuss how the leadership team used Māori metaphors to help staff understand the process of the overall transformation journey and to deal with the challenges it presented. I discuss that the choice made by the leadership team to introduce an engagement with te ao Māori was not without contention. However, I observed that over the term of my fieldwork there was an increase in support for this engagement in the organisation and ongoing and active discussions about how this could be enacted.

I draw on the postdevelopment ideas of ontology and plurality to explain the choices and actions of the leadership team and staff to affirm their identity and to link this with te ao Māori and te Tiriti. I also suggest that the engagement with te ao Māori and te Tiriti is another example of Escobar's (2018) concept of taking an 'ontological turn' in that it attempted to include an attachment to 'place', an understanding of the surrounding context and a breaking down of the 'us and them' colonial divide. As outlined by Spiller et al. (2015) in Waypoint 3 (Human Dynamics), I explore the flow-on effects of Waypoint 2 (Implementing Values). For Oxfam NZ, an engagement with te ao Māori had flow-on effects in terms of the connection between individual staff and the collective staff group, and the personal and the professional. This suggests that for INGOs to bring about change there needs to be reflection on and understanding of an organisation's ethical and authentic presence, and how these can inform development practices.

The narrative which emerged was one of being grounded in 'place'. This highlighted how the concept of 'place' can be used to gain an understanding of individual and collective identity and also a perspective on how to engage with other cultures. I argue that the narrative of being grounded in 'place' was a key influence and strength of Oxfam NZ's transformation journey.

In the next chapter I discuss a specific element of Oxfam NZ's attempt to transform their development practices, that being its Partnerships Strategy, and how this strategy is linked to the organisation's values, is grounded in 'place' and therefore linked to their engagement with te ao Māori.

INTERLUDE:

Whāriki and relationships

Image 4: The Partnerships Directorate's whāriki (woven floor mat)
Source: Oxfam NZ Partnerships Strategy 2017–2020

It was November 2018. I was in the latter part of my fieldwork time and I was sitting in the Fale Pasifika complex at the University of Auckland. This was a magnificent building in and of itself. It combined various ethnicities from across the Pacific in its architecture and art. The space marked a link between the University and Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

It was day two of the Oceans and Islands Conference. The conference was being hosted by the New Zealand Institute for Pacific Research. One of the key organisers was also a Board member of Oxfam NZ. The University of Auckland was a short 10 minute bus ride from the Auckland office of Oxfam NZ. I was at the conference alongside several other Oxfam NZ staff members, as I was curious to know more about the broad concept of 'the Pacific' and what that meant in relation to Aotearoa New Zealand.

The conference themes touched on Pacific identity, mobilites, sustainable development, research methodologies and ethics of research and care. There were so many topics that sparked my and others' interest. There was also a strong representation of Pacific

indigenous researchers whom I had not had the opportunity to meet prior to this conference.

One scholar, Kabini Sanga, originally from the Solomons Islands and now based at Victoria University in Wellington, delivered his keynote address that morning. His presentation stood out for me as he centred his talk around the image of the woven mat and its meaning in the context of international development in the Pacific. He described how the woven mat moves us away from the duality framework of the two-way donor-recipient concept. The strands of a mat, he said, were multiple and varied and were woven together to create a complex and supportive whole. He talked about how the 'holding together' of the different strands was significant. In the physical construction of the mat some strands were placed at the forefront and were more visible. Other strands were placed behind and provided more support for the overall physical shape or structural integrity of the mat. He described an image of his wife weaving the mat that he sat on in his living room and he talked about the significance of the process of both weaving and reweaving. He described how some parts of the mat needed to be replaced after they were worn down from overuse. A particular spot where he always sat on his own mat at home, for example, had been cut away and replaced several times. Replacing this part, he said, could involve returning and weaving back parts of the mat which were previously cut away.

Sitting in the audience and listening to this presentation I reflected on how the images he presented were directly linked to the thinking behind the Oxfam NZ Partnerships Strategy, a strategy which I had worked on together with staff from the Partnerships Directorate as part of my fieldwork.

The whāriki was used as a metaphor in the Strategy to highlight the complex nature of the task to build partnerships based on trust, power sharing and inclusion. It also described and symbolised how staff within the Partnerships Directorate recognised and brought together a number of different cultures and worldviews in their approach to partnerships. Further, the strategy also singled out tikanga Māori as a particular aspect that was significant for their development practices in terms of knowledge, perspectives and ways of working. The staff highlighted this in the Strategy in the following way:

> Oxfam New Zealand will draw on the metaphor of the whāriki — or the woven
> mat — which will reflect the interwoven nature of our work, and our intention

to embrace a diversity of worldviews within Oxfam, strongly influenced by tikanga Māori and in the context of tuakana-teina relations, and interconnectedness to other ways of knowing and working. (Oxfam NZ Partnerships Strategy, internal working document, 2017)

My thoughts went back and forth between the everyday tangible description of the mat provided by Professor Sanga and the relational-like language of the Strategy. Like a woven mat, relationships and partnerships have many different components and elements to them and encompass financial, technical, personal and professional aspects and/or a combination of these. As his description of the repair of the mat suggests, relationships are not static but change over time through a continuous process of building, maintaining and modifying, discovering new bindings and letting go of the old.

All of this made me think about how my fieldwork extended beyond the boundaries of Oxfam NZ's Auckland office and could involve the complex network of the relationships between other Pacific Island nations. It also reaffirmed for me the significance and relevance of Oxfam NZ's values of 'be connected/manaakitanga', 'show courage/kaha' and 'seek justice/tika' to the task of building and maintaining strong and inclusive partnerships with other Oxfam offices, local partners, their supporters and donors.

Chapter Six
Oxfam NZ's Partnerships Strategy

Introduction

This chapter outlines the efforts by staff within the Partnerships Directorate at Oxfam NZ to develop and implement strong, respectful and inclusive partnerships and by doing so transform their development practices. My understanding of a partnership is where two or more parties agree to work together to achieve a common outcome. How such partnerships might be built was proposed through the development of the Oxfam NZ Partnerships Strategy (herein referred to as the Strategy). In the first part of the chapter I provide a general discussion on partnerships and the types of partnerships that are prevalent in the development sector. I explore the initiation of the Strategy, how it was developed by staff within the Partnerships Directorate and discuss the main factors that influenced its generation. I provide a short overview of the main propositions contained within the Strategy.

In the second part of the chapter I outline the difficulties that the Partnerships Directorate's staff faced in their attempt to have the Strategy accepted within Oxfam NZ and the challenges that staff encountered as they began the process of attempting to transition existing partnerships into ones that were more aligned with the principles proposed in the Strategy. I also discuss the important role that power can play in partnerships and how this is linked to the postdevelopment idea of autonomy. In their attempts to begin implementing the Strategy, I suggest that Partnerships Directorate staff had to consider balancing the transactional and the relational aspects of their interactions with partners both within the Oxfam Confederation and with the Aotearoa New Zealand Government.

I use Eyben's (2006, 2010) work on relationships and relations in aid and development to explore the shift and direction taken by the Partnerships Directorate staff to the development of the Strategy and subsequent partnerships. Significantly, staff from the Directorate proposed that the relationships embedded in their partnerships needed to be viewed as developmental goods in their own right. By emphasising the role of relationships, the staff in the Partnerships Directorate attempted to provide an alternative approach to development practices which was significantly different to the model in place, a model based on project management and transactional contracts.

As noted in the interlude, the metaphor of the whāriki was used in the Strategy to indicate that partnerships are composed of many elements. I use the work of Roche and Madvig (2016) and other scholars to help understand the differences between transactional and relational partnerships. Throughout the discussion I indicate how the Strategy was not only linked to, but also provided a means by which the leadership team and staff could put the Oxfam NZ value of 'be connected/manaakitanga' into practice.

Partnerships in INGOs

Most of the work that is undertaken by INGOs is premised on the notion that there exists a partner type relationship between an INGO and an external party to achieve a specific outcome. INGOs work with a wide range of development actors and this can be in the form of a partnership or other types of relationships. As outlined by Kelly and Roche (2014), typical partners include local NGOs, governments, civil society organisations, research institutes and private enterprises. Each of these partnerships is generally based on different governance and financial models and the roles of the respective partners can and do vary. They can be influenced by a wide variety of factors such as where the decision-making power lies, the ability of INGOs to establish and manage partnerships, and the purpose and values that guide the partnership. More general influences include shifts in the nature of poverty and its location, a growing focus on inequality, the increase in the number and type of players in the development sector, and calls for greater levels of accountability (Barder, 2010; Batiwala, 2011; Kelly and Roche, 2014; Kharas and Rogerson, 2012; Sumner, 2012). These influences are increasing the complexity and uncertainty associated with partnerships and may need longer time frames to achieve outcomes. Further, these influences are affecting who, where and how INGOs partner. In some cases INGO legitimacy and leverage in their partnerships is being reduced and their value add is being questioned. It has also meant that INGOs need to develop new skills and engage with multiple actors rather than bilateral relationships with a 'single' partner (Kelly and Roche, 2014).

Development partnerships can sit anywhere within a broad spectrum. At the one end of the spectrum are contractual arrangements characterised by a funding relationship, service delivery, contracts, financial accountability, and a transfer of risk downward. At the other end of the spectrum are collaborative partnerships characterised by co-created activities, shared risk and decision making, complex and interactive relationships, mutual accountability, and less emphasis on financial obligations (Smith, 2017).

Roche and Madvig (2016, pp. 9–10) discuss and explore two divergent types of partnerships along the spectrum and label them as transactional and transformational. Transactional approaches are defined as exchange-based relationships with the project funding aligned with the value of the goods, services or infrastructure being provided. Relationships are managed through contracts which are bound by time, predetermined results and upwards accountability to donors for both delivery of projects and budgetary compliance. These types of partnerships are based on the principles of project management, are linear in design and contractual in nature and were generally the norm for INGO development practices at the time of my fieldwork, despite much rhetoric to the contrary. In these types of partnerships there is little space or need to develop strong interpersonal relationships nor address issues of power. Success is often measured using quantitative indicators such as timelines, financial budgets and service delivery outputs, all of which can readily be reported on and thus provide visible accountability to donors, both institutional and public. This approach to development practices has been much critiqued in development studies literature and many scholars have advocated for change and to establish alternative development practices and types of partnerships. One critique, for example (see Ramalingam et al., 2008) argues that this approach focuses on what is being delivered and whether this is done 'right' rather than whether the delivery is needed at all and/or whether the development agency is the right actor to deliver what is needed, that is, whether it is the 'right' thing to be done (see also Eyben and Guijt, 2015).

Transformational approaches, according to Roche and Madvig, are defined as being characterised by a relational way of thinking and a questioning of the distribution and use of power. Such approaches frame people who are poor as rights-holders rather than beneficiaries or consumers, ask questions about how and with whom development actors work, as well as how and with whom they are accountable. Transformational approaches address common problems collectively and view relationship building, and people and the collective's potential, as ends as well as means. Relationships are managed through 'processes of politics' which include resolution of conflict, the use of negotiation and compromise and extensive cooperation (Roche and Madvig, 2016, p. 14).

Eyben (2006, pp. 46–47) also has much to say on the role of relationships in development practices and suggests that working in a relational way is a matter of politics and power. She suggests that relationships have significant characteristics; they can be dynamic, diverse, complex, contain contradictions and are weighted with power. Navigating the components of partnerships requires development practitioners to use

their political skills of intuition, judgement, brokerage and facilitation. Leftwich and Wheeler (2011) discuss the need for similar skills and define them under the umbrella term 'thinking and working politically' (see Chapter One). These kinds of relational ways of being and acting, Eyben outlines, stand in contrast to standard bureaucratic modes of organisation where rational objective thinking is positioned above feeling and emotion as a basis for decision making. She also suggests that quality relationships can benefit from reflective practice, the naming of and challenging the roles of power and mutual accountability.

Escobar pays particular attention to the role of politics and power in relationships. He argues that all partnerships are bound up with relationships as are development practices. According to Escobar there is a need for an ontological process which leads to a questioning of how people (and by association, organisations) think about and enact partnerships, particularly in the development sector.

Following the restructure of Oxfam NZ in 2016 and the 'Oxfam 2020' project, many questions were raised about the suitability of the types and roles of partnerships that Oxfam NZ was involved in. One outcome of this questioning was the development of the Strategy. In what follows I give a brief introduction of the Partnerships Directorate and outline my observations about the process that staff undertook to develop and implement the Strategy.

The Partnerships Directorate

Prior to the restructure of Oxfam NZ in 2016, there was a Programmes Department which had primary responsibility for the management and distribution of donated funds to a wide range of projects supported by Oxfam NZ. This work within Oxfam NZ was undertaken on a project management type basis using guidelines established in the Oxfam Confederation's Strategic Plan 2013–2019 (Oxfam International, 2013) and which were based on a centralised model of project management. Following the restructure of Oxfam NZ in 2016 and in line with the 'Oxfam 2020' operating model, the Programmes Department was renamed the Partnerships Directorate to reflect Oxfam NZ's new partnership role within the wider Oxfam Confederation and signalled a move away from direct programme management to exploring alternative approaches. This is described below. Both these events provided impetus and opportunity for staff within the Partnerships Directorate to rethink their traditional strategic and operational planning processes, and how to best manage the various types of partnerships and relationships that Oxfam NZ already held and could create. The significance of the Directorate within

the organisation was evidenced by the fact that the four staff members within the Directorate at the time of my fieldwork held senior positions within Oxfam NZ.

The role of the Partnerships Directorate was described in the Strategy as follows:

> [The Partnerships Directorate] aims to be an effective and innovative broker, facilitator and resource mobiliser for humanitarian and development initiatives, in the Pacific (including in Aotearoa New Zealand) and beyond; and to be a credible, trusted and preferred partner in the Oxfam network, with donors and supporters, as well as other change agents'. (Oxfam NZ Partnerships Strategy, internal working document, 2017)

The 'Oxfam 2020' model proposed that the role of national members, such as Oxfam NZ, be that of 'coordinating relationships, providing funding, increasing capacity to influence and providing thematic or functional expertise' (Oxfam International, One Oxfam Model, internal working document, 2016). This proposal removed the role of directly managing projects from national members and shifted this to the regional offices within the Oxfam Confederation. The role of national members, such as Oxfam NZ, was therefore more about building relationships with the regional offices and working alongside them to manage their development practices. For Oxfam NZ this meant that they would need to transition from dealing directly with numerous Oxfam offices located in various Pacific countries to a primary relationship with Oxfam's newly established regional office in the Pacific. This transition began during my fieldwork time and was still ongoing at the end of my fieldwork.

In addition to managing this partnership, the Directorate was also responsible for the management and creation of partnerships with Oxfam International, partnerships within Aotearoa New Zealand and the development sector, and partnering and collaborating with the other three directorates within Oxfam NZ.

Part 1 — The development and content of the Strategy

When the Partnerships Directorate was first formed, in line with the 'Oxfam 2020' framework, there was uncertainty amongst staff as to what their new role would encompass and how they would undertake their work. Alongside this uncertainty there was also a questioning of the suitability of the existing processes they were using to manage their projects as well as their focus on contractual compliance. In addition to this there was a groundswell of concern from Oxfam staff across the Confederation that the

historical power dynamics within the Confederation needed to be challenged. I had many conversations with the leadership team and staff in which we talked about the need to shift financial and human resources to the regional and country offices, closer to where project activities were being undertaken.

The Partnerships Directorate staff were cognisant of these issues and set out to not only address these concerns but to develop a strategy to guide how their work and activities could change and be sustainable in the future. Staff within the Directorate began this process by thinking about the development of a Partnerships Strategy, a strategy which would guide and help the Directorate staff move towards a management style which focused more on relationship building rather than traditional project management and compliance. This approach aimed to reflect the 'Oxfam 2020' model and to address existing power dynamics. The development of the Strategy also provided staff with an opportunity to review and reflect on the orientation and nature of their general development practices, to align these with the organisation's new set of values (see Chapter Four) and to have a renewed basis on which to support and undertake their future activities.

The aim of the Partnerships Strategy was to provide a framework for the creation of partnerships which were based on strong, respective and inclusive relationships and make these a priority in their development practices. This purpose also included embracing diversity and diverse worldviews, incorporating Māori culture and knowledge, and looking at alternative ways of learning and working. The Strategy suggested that Oxfam NZ's values should be integral to the development of strong, respective and inclusive partnerships. It stated that partnerships should:

- be relational not transactional — this meant embracing the centrality of self-determination and reciprocal relationships of respect to create a more just world ('seek justice/tika');
- integrate not separate — this meant drawing on perspectives that offer important insights into multi-dimensional, complex, and woven worlds, and embracing shared values and using this interconnectedness to engage globally ('be connected/manaakitanga');
- be innovative not status quo — this meant learning, experimenting and iteratively adapting; being open to mutual learning with partners, and for staff to have the courage to challenge themselves and the sector (within NZ and beyond) to think and work differently ('show courage/kaha').

As noted in the interlude, the metaphor of the whāriki was used to indicate how all of the various elements of the Strategy were important and needed to be intertwined in order to begin the transformation of this aspect of the Directorate's development practices. Importantly the Strategy emphasised the need for people to work together in partnership and there was a conscious decision by staff to support this intent with the use of a Māori proverb: Ko koe ki tēnā, ko ahau ki tēnei kīwai o te kete (You take this handle of the basket and I'll take this one) (Oxfam NZ Partnerships Strategy, internal working document, 2017).

The Strategy and its contents were developed through a process of reflecting on and attempting to enact the 'Oxfam 2020' directives; using external scholarship on human development; gathering staff perspectives and using reflexivity; and recognising and drawing on the contribution that could come from their engagement with te ao Māori. In the following sections I discuss each of these factors.

Ideas and influences

The Strategy was developed during my fieldwork for this thesis, a time when there were significant changes occurring at both the local and the global level for Oxfam NZ. This quote from a formal interview with the Partnerships Director (November 2018) provides a good summary of this context and the mindset within the Partnerships Directorate regarding the attempt to transform their development practices:

> We have to justify our existence more meaningfully I think in light of the fact that we have to create something that works for our financial reality. It wasn't that the Strategy was driven by finances but when you are under the crunch to determine what is core that does lead to a whole lot of existential questions around 'What is the role of the Partnerships Team?'. Ultimately in a world which is changing under [Oxfam] 2020, [a process] which is all about increased self determination, increased autonomy... it is about, in the Pacific, as an example, Pacific led development.

A number of important factors are mentioned in this quote. These include financial concerns, the broader 'Oxfam 2020' process, the need to reflect on power dynamics and decolonisation, a turn towards a focus on the Pacific region and questions around the role of the Partnerships Directorate. The Director also flags how identity, culture and the 'be connected/manaakitanga' value should be incorporated into Oxfam NZ's policies, strategies and conversations.

The process to develop the Strategy provided an opportunity, I suggest, for the Partnerships Directorate to define what its role was and what it could be within the restructured and refocused organisation, and also provided staff with the space to explore questions about how the Directorate would perform that role. Being involved in this process, I was able to observe the many ideas that the Directorate staff began to explore, how they tried to make sense of their transition process, and formulate an approach which was grounded and based on their local context (their 'place') and aligned with the organisation's values. Some of the prominent ideas which were discussed and explored were those mentioned in Chapter One: 'doing development differently', 'thinking and working politically', 'adaptive management' and 'problem driven iterative adaptation'. Further, staff in the Directorate also began thinking about development in complex, non-linear ways as well as the organisation's relative power and its desire to change the status quo (fieldnotes, April–June 2017). The practice of another INGO in the Aotearoa New Zealand context (see Leuthart, 2016) was also used to learn about different approaches to partnerships within their immediate context, and in particular how a partnership with a Māori community was established.

An important aspect of the Strategy's content was that it referenced and used external scholarship on human development to support the proposed new role of the Partnerships Directorate. For example, the Strategy references Spiller et al.'s (2011) relational Five Well-beings approach to human development which focuses on the interconnectedness of spiritual, cultural, social, environmental and economic wellbeing. It also references Raworth's (2017) Doughnut Economics which focuses on an economic model that seeks to create a floor or benchmark of social justice above which all should live within the planet's environmental boundaries. It is notable that Raworth was a former employee of Oxfam GB and her ideas were well known within the Oxfam Confederation. Significantly, neither Spiller et al. or Raworth's concepts and models were specifically written in relation to INGOs. This indicates, I suggest, that staff within the Directorate looked to external sources and concepts to stimulate discussion, make sense of their context and help them discover a pathway towards transforming their development practices.

The number of influences and the use of such external scholarship to both develop and support the Strategy, I would argue, reflects a recognition by the Directorate staff of the complex nature of what they were trying to achieve. Like the metaphor of the whāriki there were many ideas and concepts that needed to be brought together to form a new approach to development, and one that had validity and which could be justified to the

Oxfam NZ Board. The process that the Directorate went through provided a basis on which staff could continue to discuss and explore alternative ways of working and to understand that not one idea or approach may be the best fit.

I suggest that an impact of this process was that it not only encouraged staff within the Directorate to explore new ideas but also gave them the permission to do so. An example of this was a scoping project undertaken by one of the staff in the Partnerships Directorate (fieldnotes, April 2019). The project entitled *Aotearoa is Home for Pacific Peoples: Oxfam is Shifting Borders*, was a new concept and sought to identify potential new partnerships between Pacific peoples living in Aotearoa New Zealand and Māori. It was thought that such partnerships could enrich and support the work of Oxfam in the Pacific. The project led to the establishment in 2019 of the first network of indigenous Pacific and Māori development and humanitarian practitioners, the Pacific Koloa Collective, within INGOs in Aotearoa New Zealand. I would argue that it is unlikely that such types of partnerships would have emerged without the development and intent of the Strategy.

In many ways the focus on building relationships and partnerships reflects what Eyben suggests about development occurring through strong interconnected linkages. Eyben uses the concept of an interconnected web to describe the interrelatedness of actors in the international aid and development sector and how development practitioners decide with whom and under what criteria they form relationships. This outlines a very different framing of development practices to the traditional model of donor/recipient or development as part of an aid chain (Eyben, 2006; Wallace et al., 2007). Exploring ways to establish partnerships with Pacific peoples living in Aotearoa New Zealand demonstrates how staff within the Partnerships Directorate were also beginning to think within this alternative framework. What the scoping project undertaken at Oxfam NZ indicates is that the possible connectedness and relationship that was hoped to be established between Oxfam NZ, Māori and Pacific peoples living in Aotearoa New Zealand could provide a basis on which to build new and enhance existing relationships.

My involvement in this process provided me with an interesting insight into the motivation of those who were trying to develop a strategy with such aspirational ideas, and which could have been viewed as merely following the zeitgeist of the time. My sense, however, was that there was a genuine attempt and conscious effort to create a platform upon which, and through which, change could occur. The staff in the Directorate wanted

to design a strategy that was authentic and one that staff could believe in, take ownership of, and support and guide their exploration of alternative development practices.

Gathering staff perspectives

To develop the Strategy one of the first actions that the Partnerships Directorate took was to consult with other Oxfam staff in Oxfam NZ and in Oxfam country offices in the Pacific region. I worked together with the Partnerships Directorate staff to undertake these consultations. Together with staff from the Partnerships Directorate I designed interview questions which were used to interview staff from Oxfam NZ, Oxfam Australia, Oxfam in the Pacific, Oxfam Polynesia Micronesia and Oxfam Vanuatu. These questions focused on gaining an understanding of their perspectives and experiences about partnerships with Oxfam NZ on both a national and international level. These conversations revealed much about the strengths and weaknesses of approaches across both these domains.

I alone conducted the interviews and each of the conversations that I had during the consultation process were summarised in a report and a workshop was undertaken with the staff from the Partnerships Directorate to discuss the report and what could be derived from it. The workshop then prioritised what staff thought would be useful to frame and develop the Strategy and what should be included. Some of the major ideas which surfaced included the importance of: understanding the cultural values and context of others; building relationships at an individual and organisational level; reducing complexity; becoming an influencer and enabler; and building collaboration. Each of these ideas were influential in the development of the Strategy and are reflected in the guidelines and in the use of the whāriki metaphor. This suggests that the views and practical experiences of staff who were at the forefront of Oxfam's development practices provided valuable insights for the Strategy and what could be realistically achieved in terms of building new and inclusive partnerships. In this sense there was a reframing of their thinking about how they should undertake their development practices from lived experiences. This shift to placing lived experience at the foundations of practice can be understood as part of taking an 'ontological turn', that is, recognition of the importance of understanding who you are and how this impacts on your viewpoints and actions.

During this consultation process I was also able to discuss and reflect with a number of practitioners about 'partnerships'. What emerged from these conversations were insights on how they viewed partnerships, what kinds of existing partnerships the organisation had and what could make partnerships work well.

Staff had a range of views on partnerships. One Country Director (formal interview, May 2017) described partnerships as going up and down, with periods of miscommunication, misunderstandings and external pressures causing partnerships to strain whereas periods of open and trusted communication made partnerships work well. This perspective was based on her experience of working within the Oxfam Confederation for over twenty years and specifically her experience relating to long-term partnerships that Oxfam NZ had with local partners in the Pacific region. She conveyed to me how external donors often had a major influence on what the parties in the partnership could and could not do, and sometimes the policies of donors reinforced the power imbalances which existed. She cited an example of one partnership between Oxfam NZ and a Pacific partner where the policies of the Aotearoa New Zealand government were channelled through Oxfam NZ's role in the partnership. She suggested that this broke down the level of trust between Oxfam NZ and the Pacific partner. She also raised another important aspect of partnerships in that they often evolved from interaction and connection between strong individuals and leaders. She considered that this built trust and as such helped to sustain the partnership.

Another staff member similarly reflected that there were different components to partnerships and that an understanding of '*the spaces that the different components of the partnership occupy*' was required in order for them to work well (formal interview, May 2017). He suggested that each partner should respect the others' autonomy and also their areas of interdependence. Partners work from different bases and the constraints that are placed on each organisation or member of the partnership vary, and these factors influence how the partnership will work. And it is important that the partners understand that this is the reality and that partnerships are generally built on compromise.

Yet another staff member raised his experiences with transactional partnerships which aligned with more bureaucratic modes of working. In his view (formal interview, June 2017), this type of partnership could be harmful and should be avoided:

> Oxfam NZ's role is a low footprint and this is deliberate. Oxfam NZ's role is one of being a buffer between the local partners and the donors. We should provide strategy and vision. Longer term. Don't contaminate them with the project cycle. Move to another level. We should not be an ATM and a transaction.

What this staff member is emphasising is that partnerships should not be based on, or perceived as, a means to gain financial resources but should be based on using the knowledge and expertise in one organisation to help and guide the other in its decision making and that accountability should preferably be to the partner that is being assisted.

He cited an example of a project where Oxfam NZ and UNICEF provided funding for a facilitator in Tonga to assist with bringing stakeholders and local experts together and for them to be able to create their own agendas in their own timeframe. Importantly in this case there was recognition that the time dimension associated with the funding be based on the timing of how decisions were arrived at in the local context and that accountability was to the local partner not the funding agencies.

The accounts and perspectives of these three staff members suggest that power plays an important role in the operation of a partnership and that there is a need to devolve or share power and to ensure that the rights of each partner are respected. In this regard there needs to be some elements of autonomy for each member of the partnership, which suggests the presence of the postdevelopment idea of autonomy. However, such autonomy needs to be negotiated and agreed to, either explicitly or implicitly. Where more than two agencies form the partnership the difficulties of achieving these outcomes require even more complex negotiation. Additional key points include that each partnership is different and needs careful tailoring and negotiation; that there will invariably be ups and downs but these can be managed if the partnership and communication and trust is strong; and that trust can be lost if there is not mutual accountability and INGOs simply pass on demands from donors rather than acting as a buffer.

Cultural commonalities

One of the major aspects of the Strategy was to highlight the cultural commonalities within the Pacific region. The strong Māori and Pacific connection that has historically existed and which continues to define Aotearoa New Zealand was a significant influence for staff from the Partnerships Directorate on how they viewed partnerships and what type of partnerships they wanted to propose. There was a strong desire to draw upon and use this interconnectedness as they attempted to move towards alternative development practices. This was further underpinned by the efforts by the leadership team to engage with te ao Māori within Oxfam NZ and an intention to embrace that reality. In Chapter Five I discussed how the leadership team and staff were endeavouring to encourage and embrace te ao Māori and how it was an important element of their kaupapa.

Given the above, the content in the Strategy recognised shared culture and other worldviews. For example, the Strategy referenced how Oxfam in the Pacific had grounded its development practices on holistic Pacific approaches that prioritise relationships, talanoa (dialogue and conversation), vanua (connectedness to land, people and custom), regional solidarity, and sustainable development. Another example was the use of the two metaphors of the whāriki and the koru (spiral motif) to represent the Oxfam NZ concept of partnership. Notably these are metaphors used in both Māori and Pacific culture. A conversation with a staff member from the Directorate also confirmed this. She (formal interview, May 2017) noted that there was a lot to learn from the '*rich indigenous and knowledge praxis*' of Aotearoa New Zealand including the work done by local NGOs. In another formal interview, one Country Director (May 2017) described the connection between Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia Micronesia as '*a profound link of history and culture, personal relationships, political relationships*'. What these examples indicated to me was the importance of these connections to staff within the Partnerships Directorate and that they were attempting to understand what significance they had for the development of new types of partnerships both within the Pacific region and within Aotearoa New Zealand, but particularly with Oxfam in the Pacific and other Oxfam offices in the Pacific.

It is important to note that cultural commonalities were also a feature of the general discourse on international development that was occurring in Aotearoa New Zealand at the time of my fieldwork. This was conveyed to me by the Partnerships Director when she noted the following (formal interview, November 2018): '*I do think that we have been presented with a critical juncture, a moment to change politically where conversations are opening up to discuss more issues connected to that [cultural connection]*'.

This Pacific (re)invoked narrative was of particular relevance for the partnership and long-term relationship that Oxfam NZ had with its institutional donor MFAT, as most of the funding from MFAT was earmarked for the Pacific region. The Partnerships Director also noted that many Aotearoa New Zealand aid and development actors were placing culture and cultural ties to the Pacific at the forefront of their development practices. It is likely that there were a range of motives driving this narrative, some of which may have been economic, political, marketing, or human rights based. The ramifications that this narrative had for the Aotearoa New Zealand development sector was still working itself out by the time my

fieldwork ended. My observations of what occurred within Oxfam NZ suggested that this movement had the potential to influence and alter their development practices.

Reflexivity

A final but important factor that was significant in the development of the Strategy was the opportunity provided to staff within the Partnerships Directorate for collective self-reflection. This, I argue, was an attempt by the staff within the Partnerships Directorate to step back from 'the what' of their development practices and reflect on 'the why' and 'the how' and the 'who we are' questions relating to their development practices. Sims et al. (2018) argue that it is important to undergo such a process before one begins to engage with other cultures and contexts. This is an important point as the work of the Partnerships Directorate was centred on other cultures and contexts. Chambers (Pasteur in Eyben 2006, p. 34) calls the process of self-reflection 'self-critical epistemological awareness', a process that can occur at both an individual and collective level. As discussed in Chapter Five, a similar concept, 'self-knowledge' is discussed by Spiller et al. in Waypoint 3 (Human Dynamics). They highlight the importance of self-knowledge at both the individual and collective level as it impacts on relationships and decision making within organisations. They argue that one needs to understand one's perspectives, beliefs and influences before attempting to build relationships with others.

I observed staff from the Directorate undertaking self-reflection as a team, in doing what Spiller et al. (2015, p. 103) refer to as understanding 'Ko wai tātou? (Who are we?)' In my role as an action researcher I participated in many meetings where Directorate staff were encouraged to stand back from their day-to-day work and think about the premise on which that work was based and how it was undertaken. For example, I participated in one meeting in which the staff reflected on what they had achieved and the challenges they had faced in developing the Strategy during the three months prior to that meeting. I recorded in my field notes that the conversations were open and honest, which, I suggest, was an indication that it was a safe space for reflection (fieldnotes, January 2018). One of the challenges which was discussed was related to the timeframes associated with building relationships. Staff discussed the transition of the Polynesia Micronesia office from Oxfam NZ to Oxfam in the Pacific. They questioned the length of time that the process was taking and discussed some of the reasons behind this. They were concerned about how much time they could dedicate to building relationships and when and how a relationship was at a point where it could be capitalised on and lead to action. They also discussed the many and different kinds of relationships that they had within the Oxfam Confederation and that they often faced dilemmas in prioritising one

relationship over another. What these reflections give is insight into what Desandi et al. (2016) call the 'thinking and working politically' aspects of relationship building, that is, being conscious of the power dynamics in place, seeking to work through the contextual complexities, trying to avoid paternalism, and creating space for collective decision making and accountability.

Eyben and Chambers (Eyben, 2006, p. 34) suggest that the processes of self-reflection and reflexivity can be challenging for individuals. They identify a number of factors which can constrain one's ability to undertake these processes. These include fear of exposing oneself to criticism, loyalty to colleagues and friends, and having the opportunity and time to undertake the process. These factors are more pertinent, they point out, for individuals who hold power and status. My observations of how staff worked together in the Partnerships Directorate suggested that the first of these barriers was present. I observed a level of apprehension amongst the staff within the Directorate regarding the presentation of the Strategy to the leadership team, the Oxfam NZ Board and other Directorates within Oxfam NZ. This was because it was a very different approach to that of results-based management where results and associated evidence were predetermined, and where these were able to be quantitatively measured and easily reported upon. An additional challenge to overcome was that Oxfam NZ's fundraising was focused on demonstrating to supporters and taxpayers what their donations and funding had achieved in terms of tangible results over the short to medium term. In what follows I discuss such challenges in more detail.

Part 2 — The implementation of the Strategy

In Part 1 of my discussion in this chapter I have outlined the numerous factors and influences which were used as inputs into and helped shape the content of the Partnerships Strategy. The bringing together of all of these elements to form the Strategy was in many ways an explorative and cumulative learning process and required a substantial effort on the part of the Partnerships Directorate staff. It involved a deep reflective process and this was a new experience for many of those involved.

Despite the amount of work that went into the development of the Strategy and the concurrent impetus for change within Oxfam NZ, it proved difficult for staff within the Partnerships Directorate to get the Strategy accepted by the organisation. They understood that it would require substantial promotion to convince the leaders of the other Directorates, the Oxfam NZ Board and the wider staff group of the validity of the Strategy. In a substantive way the Strategy sought to change the focus of how staff went

about their development practices and to link this to and build on the 'Oxfam 2020' themes.

Operational requirements and resourcing

As noted above, the Strategy was aspirational. It did not provide specific directions on how these aspirations could be achieved. However, what it did provide were guidelines on what would be required of the organisation to implement it. For example the Strategy emphasised:

- a need to invest time and resources in strengthening new and existing partnerships, and maximising face-to-face opportunities that bring diverse stakeholders together;
- a need to develop systems and processes that ensure pan-Pacific approaches,[19] as well as a deliberate cross-directorate engagement to connect as much as possible;
- a need to invest resources into research, coordination, partnerships, and programme quality to collectively shift development thinking and initiatives within a range of spaces.

The Partnerships Directorate argued in the Strategy that relationships may take time to generate project ideas and associated funding sources and that the nonfinancial relationships should be recognised as just as important as the financial ones. Bokil et al. (2012) note the same point, that building genuine partnerships and strong relationships is a time, resource and energy intensive process without easily measurable impact and that investment does not always pay off. Furthermore, part of the problem is that the relationship is seen as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

The move from traditional project management processes to an emphasis on building partnerships and relationships required Oxfam NZ's leadership team to reassess how this would affect their financial resourcing, allocations and multiple accountabilities. While some of these financial issues were purely related to operational matters, in other ways they related to fundamental business processes which embedded deeper sets of values and culture. Changing such fundamental business processes may therefore require reestablishing links with values and reassessing the beliefs and assumptions associated with them. What this meant is that trying to build better relationships with partners was not simple but required a multilayered and complex support mechanism.

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[19] That is, approaches that were suitable to the different and varied countries and cultures in the Pacific.

Barcham (2018, p. 44) argues that breakdowns in change programmes can often come at the operational level despite well-meaning and well-intentioned action at higher levels of governance. Eyben (2006) also discusses some of the challenges which confront an organisation where a focus on developing relationships is a fundamental part of development practices. A relationship-based approach, she argues, requires a high degree of flexibility in organisational systems and a set of staff competencies which: emphasise an ability to build and maintain positive relationships; discourage narrow interpretations of cost-benefit; and avoid notions of control, be it financial or power based. These matters are explored below. It also requires that the leaders and the wider staff body within an organisation subscribe to and can justify a relational approach to development practices and have the ability to operationalise it. A significant element of this justification is that it also needs to be aligned with and supported by the values of the organisation.

As noted above, the acceptance of the Strategy was not a fait accompli within Oxfam NZ. In a formal interview with the Partnerships Director (November 2018) I was informed that it was difficult to get the leadership team to subscribe to the narrative that the Partnerships Directorate had created in the Strategy. She described to me how her initial presentation of the Strategy was met with questions and concerns from the leadership team, particularly about the lack of tangible outcomes for partners and programmes which could be measured over time (fieldnotes, November 2018). There was a high degree of financial anxiety in the organisation at the time and questions were asked about how fundraising could support such an approach. To overcome this reaction and to try and convince the leadership team and the Oxfam NZ Board (most of whom were familiar with and experienced in development practices based on project management) of the Strategy's validity, she worked with two members of the Board and the Oxfam NZ Humanitarian Specialist to elaborate on the thinking behind the Strategy, its alignment with 'Oxfam 2020' and the potential benefits for the organisation.

This collaboration and support of expert advice from staff and Board members proved to be successful in promoting and affirming the Strategy and it was consequently accepted by the leadership team and the Board. As noted by David et al. (as cited in Eyben, 2006, p. 144) in their analysis of an organisational change processes at the INGO ActionAid, alternative attitudes, behaviors and principles took time to be internalised in the organisation and 'enter into the lifeblood' of the organisation. The work of bringing systems into line with values, they argue, was a difficult task to achieve.

Pasteur (as cited in Eyben, 2006) discusses the shift in thinking that is required to implement and practice a strategy such as that proposed by the staff within the Directorate and refer to it as 'double loop learning'. This occurs where action is taken to question the role and function of the framing and learning systems on which an organisation's development practices are based. The divergent nature of the Strategy in itself and being one which proposed alternative and somewhat uncertain outcomes for the organisation's development practices generated numerous questions about how the Strategy could be used to inform and guide these practices.

While the Partnerships Director was successful in getting the leadership team to accept the approach to partnerships outlined in the Strategy there were still major obstacles to overcome in trying to fit the intent of the Strategy within the constraints placed on the organisation by the transactional nature of its funding model and traditional project management development practices. This model meant that the activities of staff within the Directorate were linked and driven by budgetary-focused project management. This was also compounded by the fact that the Partnerships Directorate, at the time of my fieldwork, followed an approach of linking budget lines to projects as a result of MFAT conditions, thus expenditure was closely aligned to project outcomes and could not be freed up for broader goals of relationship building.

I experienced an example of the obstacles that staff faced in trying to implement the Strategy when I attended budget meetings where plans for more frequent travel to develop relationships with regional and country offices within the Oxfam Confederation were discussed and recommended. These travel plans could not be linked to any specific project, and as a result could not be approved because there was a lack of discretionary funds to undertake such travel. Staff were frustrated with this decision by the leadership team and it highlighted the difficulty of trying to implement a new way of working while still being subject to the strict guidelines associated with project-based funding from specific donors and a limited amount of discretionary income. One staff member used the phrase 'stuck in the mud' to express their frustration in the meeting (fieldnotes, August 2019). This experience illustrates the challenges of promoting these new ways of working without changes in the overall institutional (particularly government) and the internal organisational funding models. This was something that the leadership of Oxfam NZ were conscious of and helps to explain their attempts to develop alternative funding streams, as discussed in Chapter Four.

Accountability

Another example of the difficulty that the funding models caused was captured by the Partnerships Director (formal interview, November 2018) who expressed the following:

> You can try and change as much as you can at the NGO level or even at the civil society level but ultimately if you are still responding to an ecosystem that still privileges those ways then it is really hard I think... aid architecture still drives so much of what we do and then NGOs have to mobilise their own resources to be able to respond to that while also responding to very diverse environments in which people are living.

The ecosystem and aid architecture that the Partnerships Director referred to was made up of both the institutional funding arrangements with MFAT and direct public fundraising. The MFAT funding was all project-based funding and how the funds were spent was constrained by the dictates of government which required high levels of reporting and financial accountability. Oxfam NZ's partnership with MFAT is further discussed below. The income received from direct public funding was used to supplement government-funded projects, fund non-government funded projects and organisational running costs. What occurred was that the leadership team deemed that it could not afford to divert a greater proportion of its public income to non-project costs and that it could not afford to reduce expenditure in other non-project areas to support what the new strategy needed. The quote highlights the dilemma that staff within the Partnerships Directorate faced in terms of acting as an intermediary which mostly managed and distributed government funds with a high level of conditions attached, and in being unable to access funding to implement their proposed changes. While the Strategy stated a need to value non-financial relationships there was no suggested means on how this would be funded.

A key element to this change, I suggest, was developing a new interpretation of the concept of accountability. The project management model which was used and which guided development practices, as noted above, predominantly aligned accountability with financial compliance, meeting budgets and timelines, and the delivery of predetermined project outputs and outcomes. Each of these can be quantified and therefore provide tangible evidence of the use of funds and project delivery. I observed that staff within the Partnerships Directorate spent a lot of time reporting results and impact for MFAT (fieldnotes, May 2019). Honig and Gulrajani (2018) provide evidence that this is common across the entire aid and development sector and is typical of

reporting on projects which are funded by government entities. Honig (2018) shows that in many cases these forms of accountability can undermine the autonomy and trust of frontline staff and in so doing ultimately threaten the achievement of development outcomes.

This underlying emphasis on reporting in such contractual arrangements suggests that there is less reliance on the element of trust between partners, and the judgement of local actors, and more reliance on the controls and caveats which are associated with the project contract. This reliance on contractual arrangements tends to permeate the whole length of the project stream right down to the partnership with local communities. This compliance is also related to the power relationships embedded in the contract. In this model power resides mostly with the donor. However this power can also extend to the intermediary and less so to the partners on the ground. One staff member from the Partnerships Directorate problematised the very notion of projects and their associated project cycles. He saw project-orientated practices as something which polluted development practices and which led to more management and control as opposed to support (formal interview, February 2018). This Partnerships Directorate staff member also emphasised the different roles that INGOs could play as a partner other than being a funding intermediary. He suggested that they could be less prominent in terms of taking a lead role and be more attuned to a behind-the-scenes support and brokerage role.

It is important to note that staff within the Partnerships Directorate did not dismiss the need for project reporting and accountability. For example, the Partnerships Director (formal interview, November 2018) expressed the following to me:

> We live and work in a world where you have to have the transactional sorted out. You have to know what budgets are going on. If it is all about the relationships and not about the other stuff, and if the systems don't allow for that, you are going to get yourself in a real pickle. Because that is going to hurt the relationships. But you can't be too overly transactional because that won't help you either.

The Strategy highlighted that trust was a core component of accountability and it was stated that this could only be achieved through building strong, respective and inclusive partnerships. Trust didn't replace the reporting mechanisms which were in place but the importance of building trust-based relationships was elevated and seen as a development good in its own right. Staff within the Partnerships Directorate explained to me that being accountable extended to and encompassed living the values of the organisation. I

discussed in Chapter Five how staff performance was measured against their practice of the organisation's values. Further, in written performance review feedback forms, all staff were reviewed in terms of their ability to build and sustain relationships. This reflects what Eyben emphasises about staff competencies and their importance to implementing a relationship-based approach to development practices.

An important impact of the Strategy and its development was the creation of an authorising environment which encouraged staff to prioritise building relationships over contractual and compliance activities. Importantly this environment was also supported by the values. What I observed was that there were many conversations about the prioritisation of relationships and partnerships, conversations which may not have had the opportunity or impetus to occur without the Strategy. This effect is evidence of what Eyben (2006, p. 44) describes as a pushback on rational choice theory which she suggests underlies the operation of many bureaucratic organisations. This is also taken up by Suzuki (1998, p. 146), who discusses how organisational systems are needed to facilitate learning, avoid opportunism, enhance accountability and manage performance. He outlines how these systems can also establish a dominant working language and modus operandi of task orientation and formal process over interactions and informal conversations.

While the Strategy contained a lot of aspirational ideas and intentions about building and maintaining strong partnerships it did not provide detailed guidelines on how to go about achieving these outcomes, nor how such an approach could be resourced. Also there was no new methodology by which development practices based on partnerships could be evaluated. In the conversations I had with staff within the Partnerships Directorate it was evident that they perceived the business model at Oxfam NZ was not necessarily attuned to support a relationship-based approach to development practice. What they proposed required significant changes and there were no ready-made solutions. What was required was a move away from a 'principal-agent' notion of accountability to a relational or mutual form of accountability which Roche (2015) calls 'power sensitive accountability'. This is challenging as it would require moving away from a central tenet of neoliberal managerialism, and which permeates the operations of many INGOs. In a similar way, Eyben (2006) refers to creating 'mutual accountability'. She also notes that the need for strict financial accountability can tend to drive the dynamics of a partnership and reduce the opportunity for critical feedback and learning. In a relational approach, power is more evenly distributed amongst partners and each partner takes on a share of accountability for the working of both the partnership and the outcomes it is trying to

achieve. Eyben (2006, p. 13) argues that this mutual accountability is about a shared construction of knowledge and explicit recognition of the operations of power which lay the foundations for trust and transparency.

In an attempt to overcome these accountability issues, staff within the Partnerships Directorate had to learn and invent ways by which to implement the Strategy. By the end of my fieldwork they were still attempting to resolve and develop funding and accountability mechanisms. Further, creating the context in which this new paradigm could work would require not only staff from the Partnerships Directorate to promote and champion the Strategy to all of its partners, including the government, but for staff across the organisation to change their perspective and behaviours. At the point of writing this thesis it was too early in the transition journey to make any conclusions about how successful Oxfam NZ would be in implementing the Strategy. What can be said is that the Strategy provided, together with the other attempts of transformation within the organisation, another step towards changing its development practices. Importantly, the organisation's values were embedded in the Strategy and therefore it also presented potential for devising opportunities to put the values into practice.

The role of power

While the Strategy supported and proposed the development of partnerships and relationships, it also recognised that these relationships were often shaped by the dynamics of which partner held or could wield power, whether it was one way or whether it was shared. Eyben (2006) argues that power is relational and embedded in relationships and behaviours. The concept of power and its influence on relationships is mentioned many times in the Strategy document. Three examples of such are as follows: 'transformative change that challenges historical power dynamics within the confederation'; 'existing power imbalances have sometimes been reframed as "partnerships", with NGOs continuing to reflect power relationships they have with their own donors'; 'being explicit on who holds what level of power is a key step in establishing a partnership'. These extracts suggest how staff within the Partnerships Directorate understood the role of power in relationships and the way it can differently manifest itself in partnerships across a range of stakeholders.

The Strategy outlines the various types of partnerships that existed between Oxfam NZ and Oxfam International, within Aotearoa New Zealand and the development sector, and within Oxfam NZ itself. Each of these partnerships are distinct in their own right and have their own particular power dynamics. However, the Strategy states, and as depicted

in the metaphor of the whāriki, that the operation of each should be guided by the organisation's values ('be connected/manaakitanga', 'show courage/kaha', 'seek justice/tika') and respectively be integrative, relational, and innovative. For the purposes of this discussion about the Strategy and the role of power, I focus on the partnerships between Oxfam NZ and Oxfam regional and country offices (mainly in the Pacific region), and Oxfam NZ and MFAT as these were the partnerships that the Directorate was mainly involved in during my fieldwork and which I had participation in.

I have noted that this new approach to partnerships which emphasised building relationships was also supported by 'Oxfam 2020'. This process emphasised the need for power redistribution within the Oxfam Confederation and therefore the establishment of partnerships which were based on an acknowledgement of the need for power sharing and a resultant fairer distribution of power (formal interview, Oxfam International staff member, February 2018). An example of the impact of 'Oxfam 2020' on staff was that there was a shift of power over project management from Oxfam NZ (and other Oxfam Offices like Oxfam Australia) to the regional office, Oxfam in the Pacific. One result of this move, as noted by a staff member within the Partnerships Directorate (informal interview, March 2018) was an increase in the level of project ownership and strategic direction by Oxfam in the Pacific. This she viewed as a positive step in the process of power redistribution within the Oxfam Confederation and for the development of strong, respective and inclusive partnerships. These shifts suggest the presence of the postdevelopment idea of greater autonomy. Power, from this staff member's perspective, was shifting from the Global North (Oxfam NZ) to the Global South (Oxfam in the Pacific) with the view to such regional offices becoming independent members of the Oxfam Confederation over time. What was unclear, however, was how and if country offices in the Oxfam Confederation would or could be included in this power transfer. In the Oxfam NZ Annual Report for 2018/19, Oxfam in the Pacific was described as a peer and a partner of Oxfam NZ rather than as a recipient of funding, which is an indication of this shift.

Despite these sentiments Oxfam NZ's partnerships with Oxfam regional and country offices continued to exhibit complex power relationships. Suzuki (1998) discusses the tension and conflict that often exist between central and field offices within INGOs and argues that tensions can manifest when organisations are global. While they may share a common objective, operating in separate cultural, social and political contexts can create difficulties around the understanding of, distribution and use of power. For Oxfam NZ the ongoing transformation that was occurring within the organisation around its values,

engagement with te ao Māori and the 'Oxfam 2020' process provided opportunities to rethink and reframe its relationships with Oxfam regional and country offices and therefore to lessen the impact of some of the tensions and conflict noted above. One idea, which may help to bring about such an outcome and which was put forward by Smith (2012) would be to create what she termed 'negotiated space' such that there is an opportunity to explore what a shared Pacific-led development could look like and how to achieve it. This could possibly be orchestrated by Oxfam NZ. One impact of the Strategy was that staff from the Partnerships Directorate began referring to 'Team Pacific' rather than separate Oxfam offices.

While staff within the Partnerships Directorate were eager to rethink and redesign their relationships with their partners in the Pacific, the Pacific offices noted however that Oxfam NZ's ability to build such partnerships was not helped by the fact that Aotearoa New Zealand was part of the Global North and had a history as a former colonial power in the Pacific. In addition, as noted elsewhere in this thesis, a cautious scepticism was expressed as to whether the shared culture and identity between Aotearoa New Zealand and other Pacific Island nations could be extended to include a power sharing arrangement. While Aotearoa New Zealand demonstrated a 'yes Māori' and 'yes Pacific' culture, several staff said that this did not change the fact that it was still a Global North power and therefore continued to hold a power advantage (fieldnotes, May 2017).

I observed that having the Strategy gave the Partnerships Directorate a basis and a justification to try to build relationships with Oxfam country and regional offices that emphasised a sense of a 'power sharing' and working together. This intent was driven equally, I would argue, by the fact that Oxfam NZ was a small organisation in terms of income and size, and a belief by the staff within the Partnerships Directorate in collective action to solve complex problems. For example, in some of these partnerships Directorate staff had deliberately attempted to listen more, to wait, to step back, and not lead. In a formal interview with staff from the Oxfam Polynesia Micronesia office (May 2017) I was told that their partnership with Oxfam NZ had worked well when individual staff were more willing to relinquish control, reflect on their position of power, understand the context, and think more holistically as partners rather than as an intermediary or spokesperson for an institutional donor. Being small, however, also had its disadvantages, as it limited the influence that Oxfam NZ could have in trying to implement a Strategy that may not have been subscribed to by other Oxfam offices or who were trying to maintain their own traditional power bases.

The dynamics of power within the Oxfam Confederation, in particular as they related to 'Oxfam 2020' and the redistribution of power, was a sensitive issue for staff across the Oxfam offices in the Pacific region as it changed the longstanding established status quo related to programming and control over the distribution of funding. Some staff that I interviewed did not want their comments on this issue to be on the record as they questioned the distribution of resources within the Oxfam Confederation. For example, it was intimated that staff in the larger member offices should be reduced and staff in country and regional offices should be increased. In addition, technical staff, who traditionally worked in Global North offices, could be replaced with local staff in the country and regional offices. Such changes, however, could be resisted or contested, and while there were some examples of where changes to staff were already taking place within the Oxfam Confederation, my observations were that progress was slow. There were also different perspectives around the level of support country and regional offices needed from other Oxfam organisations including Oxfam NZ. No guidelines on how this would be established were provided, which meant that individuals and organisations, as Hudson et al. (2018) suggest, had to 'negotiate and contest' how power and interests would be redistributed and what incentives, if any, were needed.

In the Pacific region such renegotiations of power for Oxfam NZ had to also take into account other actors in the Oxfam Confederation. Oxfam Australia is a key actor in the Pacific, with a much larger resource base in terms of staff and funding. For example, I observed that the conversations that staff within the Partnerships Directorate had about their partnership with Oxfam in the Pacific almost always referenced Oxfam in the Pacific's partnership with Oxfam Australia, who were a dominant player in the region. In this regard Oxfam Australia had a significant influence on the operations of Oxfam in the Pacific. Staff from both the Partnerships Directorate and from Pacific regional and country Oxfam offices conveyed the sense that one couldn't just consider bilateral partnerships (Oxfam NZ and Oxfam in the Pacific, or Oxfam Australia and Oxfam in the Pacific); one needed to consider the relationships between all three agencies. In this sense the relationship between the actors within the Oxfam Confederation could be described, as Eyben's argues, as a connected web.

Conversations that I had with staff in both Oxfam NZ and numerous Oxfam Pacific offices revealed that there was a desire by both sides for their partnerships to include both the elements of autonomy (around decision making) as well as notions of interdependence which facilitated access to funds, local knowledge and ideas, networks and the Oxfam brand. A balance of these elements, I would suggest, is what could make

for a mature partnership and also could indicate evidence of power sharing. One staff member from Oxfam in the Pacific (formal interview, May 2017) commented that within the Oxfam Confederation there was an emphasis by members on gaining autonomy and lessening their interdependence. Being interdependent, he felt, was perceived by many staff as being bound by traditional relationships which had a legacy of paternalism. However, he noted that staff needed to recognise the reality of interdependence as it was unlikely that development progress could be achieved by individual offices alone. This view was supported by a staff member from the leadership team at Oxfam NZ (formal interview, May 2017) who emphasised the need for interdependence in partnerships within the Oxfam Confederation, that is, *'how we rely on each other, how we enhance each other and how we need each other'*. However, she also expressed concern about the traditional transactional nature of most existing partnerships which left very little space for autonomy and that this constrained what kinds of issues they could work on and with whom they could work.

The following quote, I suggest, summarises the intention of the staff within the Partnerships Directorate in terms of working with country and regional offices in the Pacific: *'Our job is to support our partners in the Pacific. Our role is to stand in solidarity with the Pacific, be context driven and to partner, not to manage'* (fieldnotes, December 2017). The quote emphasises the difference between development practices based on principles of management and those based on support, solidarity, and being context driven. There is also an intention expressed to transition from the former to the latter. There was, however, still a way to go to understand what 'support' looked like, how to navigate the power dynamics of the Oxfam Confederation which continued to play out and what staff from the Partnerships Directorate could do differently. It was also difficult for staff within the Partnerships Directorate to know what their development practices might evolve into as it was in part to be determined, in the Pacific region at least, by the regional Oxfam in the Pacific office.

This suggests that addressing the underlying dynamics of a partnership and getting a balance between transactional and relational components is a significant issue. Eyben recognises however, that in some circumstances, taking a relational approach to partnerships can also result in limited power-sharing outcomes. This can occur when a partnership is based on strong historic professional relationships and therefore an element of exclusiveness can be present and continued. In such situations those who have not been party to the long-term relationship can find it difficult to become part of the influential circle. This is exacerbated for those who lack power or financial resources

and who then become disenfranchised and excluded from decision making. This is exactly where some regional offices and country offices within the Oxfam Confederation find themselves.

Other issues around the Partnership Directorate's efforts to broaden and disseminate levels of accountability were also highlighted by some staff within the Partnership Directorate. Questions around how to build accountability into and how to assess and/or measure the effects of taking a relational approach were raised. As noted above, this was an issue of concern for the Oxfam NZ leadership team when the Strategy was first presented to them. Staff members from the Partnerships Directorate, while supportive of the Strategy's direction, also recognised how difficult it would be to change the dynamics and transactional nature of some existing partnerships. For example, one staff member from within the Directorate (formal interview, June 2017) was concerned whether the current relationships that she managed could be anything other than transactional. Another staff member from the Directorate warned of being naive about the realities of aid and development where contracts do matter and where strings needed to be attached for accountability (informal conversations, fieldnotes, July 2018). Further, in her experience she found that local civil society organisations wanted financial help from Oxfam NZ rather than 'friendship'. These comments suggest that the ideals and direction outlined in the Strategy would be difficult to put in place and that they would require a significant amount of internal and external politicking and negotiation, or as described by Leftwich and Wheeler (2011) 'thinking and working politically' to achieve this.

These comments highlight why building partnerships and changing existing partnerships to ones which are based on a sharing of power and accountability, and greater levels of trust, is challenging. Further, the act of creating and maintaining partnerships which are based on trust and strong relationships also requires a particular skills set for staff. For example, one staff member from the Partnerships Directorate (formal interview, May 2017) commented that an important element of a partnership was having the capacity to understand when to step in and offer support and when not to. This was particularly true for the relationship with the Oxfam in the Pacific office. Staff from the Partnerships Directorate discussed how they could simultaneously support the office to establish itself but also allow them to develop their own ways to manage projects that were attuned to their own particular context and strategic direction. Such comments suggest a need for a level of independent decision making which links with the postdevelopment idea of autonomy. The capacity to manage and negotiate this autonomy requires skills such as intuition and judgement, brokering and facilitation. Having this type of skill set enables

what Eyben (2006) terms 'positive relationship management'. She also suggests that such a skill set must also be supported by having values which are aligned with and which complement a relational approach to partnerships. This is an important factor and I have highlighted throughout this discussion how the Oxfam NZ values formed part of the whāriki concept on which the Strategy was based. Further, the Strategy specifically stated that Oxfam NZ's approach to working with partners should be viewed through the lens of its three organisational values.

The context of my discussion so far indicates the complex nature and the many factors that the Partnerships Directorate needed to resolve to implement the Strategy and the associated supportive infrastructure, systems and skills base that would be required. Partnerships can be made up of multiple and sometimes conflicting elements and they are not static in nature. Further, and as indicated by the metaphor of the whāriki, the interdependencies between these complexity of issues also needs to be considered. It is a multifaceted political process (Eyben, 2006; Roche and Madvig, 2016) as it involves getting buy-in, challenging attitudes and long-held beliefs, and compromise. It is learning about how to manage and implement development projects using partnerships based on trust and a sharing of power and decision making, and accountability. Further it is about navigating the broader political economy of the sector in politically savvy ways to make space for these new ways of working.

Oxfam NZ and MFAT

A discussion of Oxfam NZ's relationships and partnerships would not be complete without some reference to Oxfam NZ's relationship with MFAT. At the time of fieldwork MFAT was Oxfam NZ's main institutional donor and Oxfam NZ had an ongoing and sustained historical relationship with MFAT. One Oxfam NZ staff member (formal interview, May 2017) described the relationship as strong and close and acknowledged that MFAT was (and continues to be) a key actor in the aid and development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. For the most part, however, the relationships that existed between the two parties, particularly with the conservative government, were based on contractual arrangements and focused on the management of MFAT's direct funding to support projects. The challenging effects of this funding for the organisation were discussed in Chapter Two. Fowler (1998) notes that partnerships based on contracts are unlikely to produce the levels of interpersonal and organisational trust required for social change because of the exercise of power associated with funding. Several staff expressed to me that the partnership with MFAT during the time of the previous government had been very much constrained by the contractual nature and obligations of the relationship.

Engagement between Oxfam NZ and MFAT occurred on a number of levels, between different teams within MFAT and through a range of connections established between individual staff at Oxfam NZ both within the Partnerships Directorate and the Oxfam NZ leadership team. Staff from the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate also engaged with MFAT and a number of other Aotearoa New Zealand Government ministries. In Chapter Seven I discuss an additional and different interaction between Oxfam NZ and the Aotearoa New Zealand Government which occurred through an advocacy coalition to change the government policy on climate change.

In 2017, as noted in Chapter Two and during the time of my fieldwork, a change in Aotearoa New Zealand's government occurred and with this change came a new perspective on overseas aid. This new perspective resulted in an increase in the aid budget; the development of a new, overarching international development cooperation policy; new thematic priorities for international development cooperation; new Pacific diplomacy principles; and a new Pacific Connections team. What this meant for Oxfam NZ was that there was greater opportunity to provide input into government thinking regarding development funding and programming; and to where and how funding should be allocated.

This change in government thinking provided an opportunity for Oxfam NZ to try to revise the nature of the relationship with MFAT and to align it with the partnerships approach outlined in the Strategy. This was also opportune because MFAT began thinking about changing the way it worked with INGOs. The staff within the Partnerships Directorate saw this opportunity and tried to capitalise on it. As Hudson et al. (2018) argue, to realise goals actors need opportunity, and then to use a combination of power and skill. And this is what the staff within the Directorate tried to do to facilitate a change in the relationship with MFAT.

By 2019, the MFAT funding process had been reviewed and a new funding model was established which began a transition to a Negotiated Partnerships programme. This new approach was applied to engagement with Aotearoa New Zealand NGOs and civil society, and included a revised funding mechanism. In the last months of my fieldwork, MFAT began a three-phase process to pilot the new Negotiated Partnerships programme with a number of Aotearoa New Zealand NGOs.[20] In Phase One of this process the Oxfam NZ

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[20] More information on MFAT Negotiated Partnerships can be found here:
https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/aid-and-development/working-with-the-aid-programme/funding-opportunities/partnering-for-impact/negotiated-partnerships/#bookmark

Partnerships Director participated in a reference group which discussed ideas surrounding new approaches to development and funding arrangements. Phase Two of this process began at the end of my fieldwork and focused on scheduled negotiations with individual NGOs, including Oxfam NZ, as to whether the proposed Negotiated Partnerships was a fit-for-purpose funding mechanism for each organisation. At the time of writing this thesis these negotiations had yet to be finalised. My discussions with staff from the Partnerships Directorate indicated that they saw these proposed changes as positive but it was still unclear as to whether any of the changes aligned with where Oxfam NZ was heading on partnerships.

This optimism of staff within the Partnerships Directorate was also supported by the fact that from MFAT's point of view, Oxfam NZ was recognised as being an influential player in terms of generating ideas and approaches in the sector, having a strong voice in the Pacific, producing good outcomes, and having a balance between advocacy and programme delivery (fieldnotes and informal conversations, June 2017). In this sense, I suggest, there was an established level of trust between MFAT and Oxfam NZ. However, as Eyben points out, bringing about a change in this partnership would require negotiation, advocacy, and compromise, and leveraging off the strengths and trust associated with the relationship. How the partnership could evolve was still subject to debate and ongoing. Central to the Strategy was the proposal to place less emphasis on contractual arrangements and reporting, and given that the historical relationship with MFAT was centred on such, this meant that to change this would present a significant challenge.

Summary

In the first part of this chapter I discussed the development and content of Oxfam NZ's Partnerships Strategy by staff within the Oxfam NZ Partnerships Directorate. The Strategy was developed in response to 'Oxfam 2020' and the organisational restructure within Oxfam NZ which occurred in 2016. There was also concern expressed by staff within the Partnerships Directorate about the need to look for alternative ways to implement their development practices which were outside project management and transactional contract models. I outlined how the Strategy was influenced and developed by external ideas and an engagement with te ao Māori, staff input and reflexivity, and how it was linked to the Oxfam NZ value of 'be connected/manaakitanga'. Central to the Strategy was a proposal to develop partnerships which were strong, respectful and inclusive.

In the second part of the chapter I discussed the difficulties faced by the Partnerships Directorate in not only getting the Strategy accepted by the leadership team and the Board but in having done so, then understanding and coming to terms with the practicalities of implementing the Strategy. These practicalities included breaking down power dynamics within the Oxfam Confederation, creating power-sharing arrangements, and changing how accountability was viewed and shared. I specifically examine the changing relationships between Oxfam NZ and Oxfam country and regional offices in the Pacific, and the opportunity to revise the nature of the relationship between Oxfam NZ and MFAT post the election of a new national government in 2017.

I argue that the attempts by staff within the Partnerships Directorate at Oxfam NZ to develop and implement strong, respective and inclusive partnerships was about trying to prioritise and make visible the relational. This proposed a new narrative about development practices which centred on developing partnerships which relied on strong and inclusive relationships but at the same time allowed for independent decision making and autonomy. It was a multifaceted political process (Eyben, 2006; Roche and Madvig, 2016) to create, design and implement the Strategy as it involved much negotiation and contestation. This included getting buy-in, challenging attitudes and power, and learning how to manage relationships which were to be based on trust, a sharing of power and decision making, and new forms of accountability. The significance of this is that it promotes a radical change from the project management and contractual model which tends to be used by many INGOs and which has a strict reliance on compliance and results-based measures of accountability. To implement the Strategy also suggests the need for new skills sets and system supports.

The use of the whāriki metaphor provided an insight into the complexity of trying to achieve the aspirations of the Strategy. By the end of my fieldwork the work of implementing the Strategy was still in its infancy. Staff within the Partnerships Directorate were learning by doing and in so doing were testing the practical validity of the application of the Strategy. This was new ground for staff and much learning was to be gained in the process. I suggest that the ideas of devolving power and the postdevelopment idea of autonomy were beginning to take seed. This work is continuing. There is still a long way to go not least because of the pervasive nature of previous approaches and the broader structural nature of the sector.

The development of the Strategy was a strength of Oxfam NZ's transformation journey as it proposed a new narrative about alternative ways to undertake development practices.

It sought to change the traditional nature of the relationships between agents and to create partnerships based on sharing power, decision making and responsibility. It highlights the complexity of not only building new type partnerships but also the difficulties faced by Oxfam NZ in balancing the requirements of transactional models with new relational typologies.

In the next chapter I focus on another example of how staff within a different Directorate within Oxfam NZ also attempted to transform their development practices by being involved in and co-leading an advocacy coalition with other INGOs in Aotearoa New Zealand to change domestic government policy on climate change. This added a new dimension to the narrative about advocacy not only within Oxfam NZ but also the development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand.

INTERLUDE:

Influencing politics

Image 5: Oxfam NZ staff campaigning in the School Climate Strike 2019
Source: Oxfam NZ internal communications document, Photo: Vernon Rive/Oxfam

I checked my phone to see that I had the right address. I had travelled to Wellington to attend the Aotearoa New Zealand's CID annual conference. But as I had arrived the day before the conference, I organised to meet Oxfam NZ's Advocacy and Campaigns Director who worked out of Oxfam NZ's Wellington office. Other INGOs and the CID also shared space on the same floor of the building. The office Oxfam NZ occupied was small and only two staff members worked there.

The Advocacy and Campaigns Director stood up to greet me and began to put on her coat. I noticed several large Oxfam campaign banners in the background. The distinct green colour was also found here. There was a sense of urgency to her movement and she explained to me that today, this afternoon actually, the newly elected members of the national parliament were going to make their maiden speeches. Today was the turn of Greens Member of Parliament Chlöe Swarbrick, known to everyone by her first name, and at 23 years old, the youngest member of parliament in Aotearoa New Zealand for 40 years.

It was only a short walk to the parliament and the centre of political decision making in Aotearoa New Zealand. When we got to the parliament we made our way to the public gallery where we would be able to see and hear Swarbrick's speech. My host and I stuck together and entered the parliament chamber at the appropriate time. I realised that I had never been inside a parliament house while it was in session, let alone seen a maiden speech. The chamber was small and rectangular. When we got to the gallery Swarbrick had already begun her speech. We listened with intent and great interest as she talked about her personal story, how she came to be standing in the parliament and the things that had shaped her political path. For me it was a memorable moment and this feeling was also shared by the Advocacy and Campaigns Director.

I was struck by Swarbrick's personal story and her readiness to let people hear about it. She impressed me with her sense of being connected with people and her willingness to be accessible. As we sat in the gallery, the Advocacy and Campaigns Director talked about the importance of this accessibility to members of the Aotearoa New Zealand parliament and how the Oxfam NZ Executive Director had previously been able to contact the now Minister of Finance via text. I wondered about how such accessibility could be used by staff in their role as an advocate for change. Further, I thought about how that accessibility could change given the new Labour-led coalition and how it might change the political landscape and reset political debate.

Several months later I had a telephone conversation with the Advocacy and Campaigns Director about Oxfam NZ's role in the advocacy coalition 'Back the Plan: Back to Zero Campaign'. We also talked more generally about advocacy and the matter of the Oxfam Confederation and Oxfam NZ getting more involved in politics and domestic politics respectively. Her personal profile icon appeared on my phone but she had replaced the famous Los Angeles 'Hollywood' sign to read 'Go Vegan'. I smiled and thought about how her role as an advocate was reflected both in her personal and professional worlds.

During this conversation we talked about the role of advocacy at Oxfam NZ. She had a strong opinion that if you were an '*Oxfam employee you were a campaigner and a campaigner for change*'. She also said the following:

> There are a lot of people out there who think, as they say, we should stick to our knitting and stick to programme work and helping the poor. [I believe] what we

are actually about is quite courageous, which is about challenging the power, challenging unequal power in society. (formal interview, September 2018)

I was interested in her emphasis on the need to campaign for change and the importance of thinking outside the box in terms of how you can influence change and the existing power structures. She also infers that there is often a perception that the roles of advocacy and programming are mutually exclusive. She described, however, how over the past few years she had seen the Oxfam Confederation move towards a vision of being a truly influencing organisation and that the longer-term goal would be to move further away from service delivery and undertake more advocacy work. Her description of INGOs '*sticking to their knitting*' highlighted to me how some INGOs had become more focused on projects and their management and less focused on being advocates for change. I was interested to observe what the transformation of Oxfam NZ's development practices would lead to, how their advocacy and campaign work would evolve with the addition of Oxfam in the Pacific and whether there would be more resources put towards advocacy as part of their transformed development practices.

Chapter Seven
Solidarity, power and domestic politics

Introduction

In Chapter Six I discussed the development of the Partnerships Strategy. This was driven by staff in the Partnerships Directorate and represented a part of the Oxfam NZ leadership team and staff efforts to transform their development practices. In this chapter I discuss the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate within Oxfam NZ and how staff within this Directorate attempted to transform their development practices by taking its advocacy and campaign work to a new dimension. This involved their participation in, and co-leadership of, a multilateral advocacy coalition which campaigned on introducing domestic legislation on climate change in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The campaign was titled *Back the Plan: Back to Zero* (herein referred to as the advocacy coalition) and occurred in the lead up to the 2017 national election in Aotearoa New Zealand. The advocacy coalition, the membership of which included 14 Aotearoa New Zealand INGOs, was the largest such coalition for the international development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The chapter begins with a historical overview of advocacy by INGOs. This is based on the work of de Waal (2015) which focuses on the operation of transnational coalitions. These have been the traditional types of coalitions entered into by INGOs, although in more recent years new variations of coalition building have emerged. The advocacy coalition formed by the members of the international development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand was an example of such a new variant of coalition. This is followed by a description of the work of the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate within Oxfam NZ and its role in Oxfam NZ's development practices. I then outline the background and structure to the advocacy coalition and the difficulties associated with forming and working in a coalition. This includes a discussion of how the campaign was selected, how external influences were managed and the issue of coalition leadership. Throughout the chapter there is continuous reference to the role that the leadership team and staff from Oxfam NZ played in the advocacy coalition. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how the involvement of staff at Oxfam NZ in the advocacy coalition formed an important element of the journey towards the transformation of their development practices.

I argue that the decision and action by staff within the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate to participate in and co-lead a collective action initiative was a new dimension in that it brought solidarity to a new level in the Aotearoa New Zealand international development sector context through intra-organisational collective action, campaigning and domestic political engagement. The advocacy coalition demonstrated that a shared concern for an issue could bring organisations, which were normally competitive in nature (for example for funding and support) into a coalition and to harness, nuance and direct whatever power was created by solidarity to bring about change. I discuss how the decisions and action by staff are linked to the Oxfam NZ value of 'be connected/manaakitanga'. There were various ways that power was manifested in this coalition which demonstrated that power could be used in a multidimensional and multifaceted fashion. I also use the postdevelopment idea of solidarity to explore the significance of Oxfam NZ framing climate change as an issue of shared concern, an issue of equity and of shared responsibility, and link this framing to the Oxfam NZ value of 'seek justice/tika'.

I was not a participant of the advocacy coalition and therefore my discussion about the intimate internal machinations of the advocacy coalition is based on a post-evaluation survey and follow-up interviews with the members of the advocacy coalition. This was supplemented by my fieldnotes of my own observations and conversations and experiences with the leadership team and staff within Oxfam NZ about the advocacy coalition. I assisted in undertaking the evaluation which was aimed at gathering perceptions from the members of the coalition about how the advocacy coalition worked, and other operational matters such as strategy and leadership. It also looked at the sector's advocacy capacity for future similar campaigns. The evaluation process had two components: an online survey and separate interviews with members of the advocacy coalition. The online survey was sent out to all advocacy coalition members and data collection took place in October and November 2017. Interviews were also conducted with advocacy coalition members. Nine of the 14 members of the advocacy coalition provided feedback through these two methods. Initial insights from the responses were presented at the CID annual Annual General Meeting in November 2017 and a written evaluation was co-written and completed in 2018. The latter was sent out to all advocacy coalition members and provided to the CID Board for discussion at their August 2018 Meeting. Three advocacy coalition members contributed feedback to the written evaluation document.

Overview of advocacy within INGOs

De Waal (2015) provides a historical context around advocacy between domestically rooted movements in colonies or postcolonial and the solidarity these movements had through support campaigns in the Global North. He outlines four different stages of its history. The first involved antislavery and anticolonial movements which were driven by national self-determination. In this stage there was a heavy emphasis on transnational solidarity. The second stage (circa 1970s) related to advocacy around human rights and famine where INGOs advocated with their national governments to put pressure on other national governments to address these issues. Organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch focused on civil and political rights and in the 1990s this expanded to include economic, social, cultural rights and promoting women's rights.

The third stage emerged in the 1990s and as outlined by Keck and Sikkink (1998) involved local organisations appealing to international groups or governments to assist in overcoming obstacles in their local environment, particularly governments, to the achievement of their goals. Keck and Sikkink (1998, p. 3) describe such advocacy as 'transnational advocacy networks' — a set of relevant organisations working internationally with shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information. There was more emphasis on Global North agencies determining the agenda including what might gain traction and how to achieve that through public campaigning and insider advocacy.

The fourth stage (around 2000 and beyond) saw the rise of specialist INGOs in the Global North, notably in North America and Europe, which, by becoming lobbyists, engaged in what de Waal describes as 'insider policy advocacy', and tried to set agendas around what issues needed to be addressed by governments. As a result, many campaigns were built around agendas decided by Global North organisations and used very specific and selective data which aligned with the global advocacy demands (de Waal, 2015). What inevitably occurred was a situation where there became a separation between the development programmes and projects which were required by community partners and advocacy work aimed at getting political influence for INGOs in the Global North.

Advocacy within the Oxfam Confederation has also evolved over time and follows the general trends outlined by de Waal. Advocacy and campaigning is viewed in the Oxfam Confederation as coming under the broader umbrella term of 'influencing'. Oxfam International (2013) defines 'influencing' as: 'systematic efforts to change power

relationships; attitudes, social norms and behaviours; the formulation and implementation of official policies, laws and regulations; budgets; and company policies and practices in ways that promote more just and sustainable societies without poverty'. Oxfam International (2013) also outlines strategies by which 'influencing' could be achieved. These include building coalitions, alliances and strategic partnerships, and shifting the terms of debate through the use of communication and media.

Mayne et al. (2019) describe how in the 1940s and 1950s the Oxfam Confederation was concerned with humanitarian response and alleviating hunger. They note that in the post-WWII period and well into the 1970s the approach to 'influencing' shifted to forming partnerships and being in solidarity with common movements to address the root causes of poverty as well as its symptoms. Further, in the 1990s to early 2000s the main emphasis of 'influencing' was directed at alleviating poverty created by the actions and policies of Global North nations and institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, for example, globalisation, unfair trade agreements and exploitative corporate practices. These were seen as the root cause of poverty and so to address this Oxfam International focused its attention on trying to change the systems that supported these actions and used the situations faced by local and community partners as evidence to support this move for change. The latter also became a tool to increase market share and branding. To deal with and influence organisations and national governments in Europe and America Oxfam International set up advocacy offices in a number of countries, as outlined in Chapter Two. One advocacy office was established in Addis Ababa in 2006 to engage with the African Union.

The evolution of Oxfam International's advocacy focus shows the dynamic nature of the approaches to international development which had occurred since WWII and how the focus on solidarity and locally determined agendas lost out to increased power of the Global North. While members may have agreed on issues to be addressed, it was the members of the Oxfam Confederation in the Global North which determined the strategy, process and focus of action to be taken, and this in turn was based on the political space and strategies they deemed feasible in the Global North. Community advocates and country offices often had little, if no influence, on the development of Oxfam's political strategy.

Oxfam International's models have changed as new perspectives and priorities have emerged and the context in which development efforts have been enacted. INGOs need to continually evolve to meet these changes and to look for new ways to adapt to their

circumstances, whether it be through new types of advocacy or other changes to their development practices. Another shift occurred within Oxfam International as advocacy driven by the centrally determined global policy agenda started to wane. Oxfam began to engage more on gender equality issues and with local partners who saw shifting societal norms as particularly important. This approach focused more on hidden power (issues that are taken off the agenda and are never openly debated) and invisible power (structural forms of power which shaped people's desires, values and ideological beliefs) rather than the previous approach which had focused on visible power (powerful individuals and institutions who have decision-making power) (Hudson et al., 2018).

Oxfam NZ's historical path of advocacy practices was influenced by Oxfam International but it also expressed an independent voice on specific issues that were of major concern in its own region. Climate change was such an issue. Oxfam NZ was established in 1991 and it emerged from the Council of Organisations for Relief Services Overseas (CORSO) which was actively involved in creating solidarity to redress civil rights issues and support independence movements (Stephens, 2013). At this time there were only a small number of members within the Oxfam Confederation. Oxfam NZ's first efforts at influencing (early 1990s) were directed at supporting the Fiji Women's Rights Movement and independence activists in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea (Oxfam NZ, 2021a). Further, the Aotearoa New Zealand Government's aid programme at the time encouraged INGOs to focus on rights-based and women's rights issues. In my conversations with members of the leadership team they noted that Oxfam NZ had a history of advocating on climate change and this reflected its connection with Pacific island nations. It also expressed this concern within the Oxfam Confederation. Oxfam NZ were also involved in the 'Make Poverty History' campaign (circa 2005) together with other INGOs in the Aotearoa New Zealand international development sector and this also aligned with similar campaigns being run by other members of the Oxfam Confederation.

Banks, et al. (2015; see also Kleinfeld, 2015) unpack some of the patterns of action and advocacy by INGOs and argue that over time these organisations have become less political due to their weak roots in civil society, their focus on the technical, and the constraints imposed on them by their national and international contexts. Others note the challenges of attempting to manage both insider and outsider strategies, as well as the trade-offs between running single issue campaigns, such as humanitarian relief for disasters, versus supporting movements to address complex and overlapping demands such as poverty and gender equality (Mayne et al., 2019; Nazneen, 2019). At the same time, the nature of civil society has changed significantly with movements now global

rather than being country-specific. Atia and Herrod (2018) also argue that there has been a process and movement towards depoliticising agendas, diluting activism and prioritising service delivery. In fact, these critiques have long been made, most notably by the anthropologist James Ferguson (1994), who argued that development discourses work to depoliticise resource allocation and strengthen bureaucratic power.

While these arguments may hold true for many INGOs, Oxfam NZ continued from its infancy, its 'influencing' (or advocacy) role alongside its long-term development work and humanitarian assistance. In my conversations with the leadership team and staff from Oxfam NZ these three roles were recognised as important parts of their development practices. However, it is important to note that its advocacy role diversified over time as new challenges and changes in context emerged. This was true for the establishment of the advocacy coalition as I will discuss in further detail below.

Working in coalitions and alliances

In the following I outline some general comments regarding what it takes to develop and maintain a successful process of advocacy through collective action. These many and often discussed aspects of coalitions provide background and insight into my discussion of the advocacy coalition in which Oxfam NZ was involved.

The role of collective action in bringing about change is discussed in a wide range of literature (Hudson et al., 2018; McAdam et al., 2001; Olson, 1965; Tarrow, 1998). Nazneen (2019) provides an excellent summary of this literature and the different types of groups/collectives and modes of collective organising. Coalitions are one particular type of collective action. They can be formed organically or purpose built, the latter being the case for the advocacy coalition in Aotearoa New Zealand. Coalitions can play an important role in achieving reform in different developmental and institutional settings but require effort and input by all members and do not necessarily lead to successful outcomes (Peiffer, 2012). Leftwich and Wheeler (2011, p. 8) argue that coalitions (local, national, sectoral, including government, private sector, civil society) are needed in order to overcome development challenges which are described as 'collective action problems'. I suggest that climate change is an example of such a problem, as it is an issue which has political, social and economic dimensions, and needs to be addressed by action from both the Global North and South.

The dynamics of collective action have been described by several scholars (Baden and Hardin, 1977; Heckathorn, 1996). Some benefits include the creation of a sense of

solidarity and the ability to harness, nuance and direct what power is created by that solidarity. This power is based on having a unified voice, diversity of representation, bringing together different skills and experience, and an ability to aggregate interests. There are also a number of challenges including aligning interests, maintaining group cohesion, free-rider problems and lack of trust (Nazneen, 2019; Olson, 1965). Hudson et al. (2018; see also O'Keefe et al., 2014; Tadros, 2011) argue that a coalition needs to have political capacity skills. By this they mean that reform and change have more to do with getting the politics right and less to do with technical design. Therefore skills such as negotiation, communication, influencing, and the ability to generate constructive policy options are necessary.

My observations suggest that a number of these aspects were present in the advocacy coalition. Some were significant while others were not so, and as will be discussed, the ability to manage, resource and address the many issues and challenges that the coalition faced was essential to its success. Working in, and in the case of Oxfam NZ, co-leading a coalition was not an easy task particularly to maintain over time the solidarity of the members, to harness and direct the power of that solidarity, and to stay the course. Each of these form part of my discussion below.

Advocacy and the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate

When I arrived at Oxfam NZ, the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate already existed and the staff within it were involved in a number of advocacy campaigns. My conversations with, and observations of, the staff within the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate indicated that they continuously looked for ways to widen and strengthen the narrative that the organisation's development practices should be more focused on advocacy and 'influencing'. I also observed through my fieldwork that the leadership and staff across all Directorates within Oxfam NZ, were also motivated by a deep personal belief in advocacy. Advocacy was viewed as a means to bring about greater impact as it was often directed at policy and system changes, both of which can contribute to addressing systemic causes of poverty and injustice. In this sense advocacy was a means of enacting the value of 'seek justice/tika', that is, to recognise everyone's equal value and fight for their rights, and to promote what's right and fair.

An Advocacy and Campaigns Strategy (Oxfam NZ, internal working document, 2016) had been developed by the Advocacy and Campaign Director and this guided the work of the Directorate. The Strategy proposed more leadership of, and involvement in, advocacy coalitions in Aotearoa New Zealand and for Oxfam NZ to continue to be an active

member of CID working groups. While the Directorate had at the time of fieldwork only 1.5 staff, it strongly pursued its advocacy role. The guiding Māori metaphor of the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate was: *He panehe toki ka tu te tangitangi kai — A little axe well-used brings heaps of food*. This reflects what Ganz (2010, p. 221) argues, that is, the importance of strategy to advocacy and campaigning and the need to transform available resources and collective will into power.

Oxfam NZ has always described itself as a small 'p' political organisation in the sense that it wanted to influence government policy but it was not a political party. The Advocacy and Campaigns Director described to me that she believed that the role of Oxfam NZ is that of a campaigning and rights-based organisation (formal interview, September 2018). She also believed that this had always been the case. The following quote summarises her views:

> [Oxfam NZ] has always seen itself as a campaigning organisation and a rights-based organisation and one which believes that the government is the duty bearer to its people. Oxfam NZ, since its inception, has seen itself as an actor for change...[and] as the development organisation who looked at politics, that poverty is political. In New Zealand it has always, and globally there is a movement towards it being a global influencing organisation to tackle the systems and structures that make people poor. (formal interview, September 2018)

The idea to challenge the structures and systems which make people poor is highlighted in Oxfam NZ's mission. The Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate recognised that outside of Oxfam International campaigns, for example, fair trade arrangements, debt and arms control and climate change, the impact that the Directorate or Oxfam NZ, acting on its own could have on bringing about change was limited. However, it also recognised that by acting in collaboration and coalition with other actors in the Aotearoa New Zealand development sector more potential power to bring about change could be harnessed.

One factor which supported the direction of the Advocacy and Campaigns Strategy was that the importance of advocacy was highlighted in 'Oxfam 2020'. It stated that advocacy should remain as a major component of development practices within the Oxfam Confederation and that it should become more localised and regional (Oxfam International, One Oxfam Model, internal working document, 2016). An important aspect of this was to place the leadership and decision making about advocacy and

campaign work in Oxfam offices located in the Global South. For Oxfam NZ this meant greater leadership and decision making about advocacy would be undertaken by Oxfam in the Pacific. Oxfam NZ, however, would continue to undertake advocacy in Aotearoa New Zealand. I observed that not only the Directorate but many staff across Oxfam NZ supported this move and were of the opinion that empowering local actors to take a leading role in advocacy was a major shift in the framing of development practices within the Oxfam Confederation (fieldnotes, May 2018). This was significant because it meant that by empowering local actors this would reinforce the legitimacy of any advocacy and might allow for longer-term advocacy movements to be fostered and pursued. For example, the Advocacy and Campaigns Director described to me the vision and potential for the relationship between Oxfam NZ and Oxfam in the Pacific in terms of advocacy and campaigning:

> If we can get policy positions that are clear and realistic from Oxfam in the Pacific that is what we can push when we are talking to MFAT, when we are talking to MPs [members of parliament]. And realising the legitimacy of what we are doing as we are speaking with the voice of the Pacific. This is not just white people in Aro Valley talking to people in New Zealand. This is Fiji and Port Vila and Tonga. This is what they are saying in terms of what they need from New Zealand. We have that legitimate voice. I think that that is a real strength of the whole 'Oxfam 2020' and the strength of the confederation. (formal interview, September 2018)

This account signals that having a legitimate voice and pursuing it within the political sphere was seen as an important part of the development practices at Oxfam NZ. Further, this legitimacy could only hold true if it also represented the views of Pacific peoples, and reflected a bottom-up and decolonial dimension. The interaction between top-down and bottom-up legitimacy is an important point of interest, as noted by Walton et al. (2016). The Director also states that legitimacy is about '*speaking with the voice of the Pacific*'. Her choice of words, I suggest, is important as she uses the preposition 'with' rather than 'for' or 'to', and the words 'together' and 'collective'. I suggest that this indicates an emphasis on a development narrative which uses the language of solidarity and links to Oxfam NZ's organisational values of 'be connected/manaakitanga' and 'seek justice/tika'. It is also reflective of de Waal's (2015) argument for reclaiming activism through allowing space for solidarity amongst transnational activists and their campaigns for change. What is also notable is that the Director states the need for '*policy options that are clear and realistic*'. This indicates the challenge in the advocacy space around the selection and

framing of issues and achieving this in the context of negotiating with government agencies and MPs in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Another factor which influenced the Directorate in its advocacy role was the change in the broader political landscape of the Pacific region. During my fieldwork time, a new Pacific diplomacy emerged and forums such as the Framework for Pacific Regionalism and the Pacific Islands Development Forum provided opportunities for voicing Pacific views on a global scale. The Pacific Islands Development Forum began the development of a strategy entitled *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*. The concept of 'Blue Pacific Continent' is similar to the term 'Pacific Blue Economy' which was in use by Oxfam in the Pacific. Both of these terms suggest a belief that strength and power could be harnessed by using the ocean as the foundation for the identity, culture and development of the region. However, these terms were subject to some criticism as outlined by Dornan et al. (2018). This criticism points out that Pacific actors attach varying meanings to terms like Blue Pacific Continent that reflect both their worldviews and particular agendas. In reality what existed was a non-homogeneous group which attempted to engender a strengths-based approach and to reframe Pacific Island Developing Countries as important parts of a great interconnected system. What came through most clearly was a common argument that Pacific Island nations should be viewed as equal partners in any attempt to preserve the natural environment in which they exist. In the words of one Oxfam NZ staff member: 'It is about changing the narrative so that we [Pacific Island Developing Countries] are not small, vulnerable or victims but powerful and great' (fieldnotes, June 2017). As the political climate shifted towards stronger representations of a connected Pacific, and stronger demands for equal partnership, the way advocacy was undertaken also needed to shift. This resurgence and reframing of the Pacific identity was useful in providing a context for, and helping Oxfam NZ to, reframe its narrative about the Pacific, notwithstanding the risks of presenting a homogenous picture of a diverse region.

Staff from the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate perceived that a possible Pacific collective could provide the potential to work in coalition with local Pacific actors to develop proposals for these frameworks and forums, and to use their influence as part of the Oxfam Confederation to bring about change. Being part of the Oxfam Confederation also afforded staff the ability to use its links to a global network and the power associated with that network to its advantage. This however also had the ability to restrict the role that Oxfam NZ could play in any initiatives by heeding Oxfam International directives. While there was an underlying desire by Oxfam NZ staff for cooperation and solidarity to

address issues of concern for the region, the coordination to plan and operate in this space was not initialised or formed.

Oxfam International has a long history of attempting to bring development, advocacy and humanitarian work under one umbrella. At Oxfam NZ these activities were managed by two separate Directorates, one for development and humanitarian work and another for advocacy work. However, I observed that the leadership team and staff attempted to break down this separation of responsibilities and create more synergies across both areas. For example, I participated in a conversation with several staff where we discussed a programme which focused on the development of farmers' cooperatives in Timor Leste. One of the major challenges for the cooperative was securing land rights and titles for farmers from the national government and staff discussed if and how advocacy and influencing should be a core part of programming work to achieve this outcome (fieldnotes, November 2018). This type of thinking was becoming more central in their development practices and was indicative of the alternative pathways that were being explored in their transformation journey.[21]

My overall observations of the way in which the staff within Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate approached their role during my fieldwork time was that they were open to exploring new ways by which they could harness the power created by the solidarity of working in partnership with others. This not only applied to their relationships with other offices in the Pacific region, which was fostered by the regional shifts to connect and harness collective strength in the Pacific, but also within the Aoterora NZ development sector. Some of this thinking was a direct outcome of the 'Oxfam 2020' process and the growing awareness of the inherent strength and power within the Pacific region. In what follows I discuss how staff within the Directorate manifested this in the Aotearoa New Zealand political landscape and how it was linked to an issue which impacted on Pacific islands.

The advocacy coalition

The advocacy coalition which Oxfam NZ and a number of other INGOs in Aotearoa New Zealand were involved in was explicitly focused on the campaign 'Back the Plan: Back to Zero'. The following provides a discussion of what the advocacy coalition was about, the difficulties staff at Oxfam NZ and CID had in establishing and maintaining the advocacy

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[21] Post my fieldwork, the organisation had another restructure in which the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate and the Partnerships Directorate were combined.

coalition, and how this impacted on staff within Oxfam NZ and their thinking about development practices.

The advocacy coalition grew out of an advocacy working group which was formed by CID members in 2015. With a planned national election for Aotearoa New Zealand in 2017, there was a recognition amongst the working group that this presented a critical opportunity to influence government thinking and policy about development. CID had over 45 members and it was recognised that more could be achieved if the intellect, capacity and resources of these members could be pooled together. As a result, a specific Election 2017 Advocacy Group was formed and this evolved into the 'Back the Plan: Back to Zero' advocacy coalition. Both Oxfam NZ and CID became co-leaders of the advocacy coalition although each organisation and individual members of the advocacy coalition developed and published their own campaign material.

The following image depicts the 14 members of the advocacy coalition.

Image 6: The 'Back the Plan: Back to Zero' advocacy coalition members
Source: Oxfam NZ internal document

The advocacy coalition was the first time that such a large number of CID members campaigned in one collective voice on an issue which was perceived as 'outside of the aid debate', that is, outside the issue of the percent of gross domestic product (GDP) that the government should direct to foreign aid (formal interview, September 2018). The issue that the advocacy coalition took on board was climate change, but this issue was only agreed upon after much discussion and interaction between the members of the advocacy coalition. In what follows I outline this process and how the advocacy coalition came to understand that this was an issue that was relevant for all advocacy coalition members.

The end goal was to convince the Aotearoa New Zealand Government to commit to climate legislation in the form of a Zero Carbon Act.

In March 2016 the advocacy coalition met and agreed to utilise the SDGs as a framework, and to campaign on a strategically relevant issue for the election. The four most relevant issues identified were Gender Equality (SDG 5), Inequality (SDG 10), Climate Change (SDG 13) and Partnership for Sustainable Development (SDG 17). Discussion on which issues and how many to campaign on took place and the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches were identified. Following this evaluation of each of the issues the advocacy coalition eventually decided that the single issue of greatest relevance to all of the group was that of climate change. Oxfam NZ had a significant influence on this outcome.

Climate change as the campaign issue

Choosing climate change as the issue that the advocacy coalition would campaign on required members of the advocacy coalition to reach a consensus through negotiation and persuasion. This was intensified by the fact that they were also taking a position on an issue which had political connotations and would require them to become an active player in domestic politics.

The following quote from the Advocacy and Campaigns Director (formal interview, September 2018) provides an introductory insight into the internal process of selecting climate change as the issue to campaign on.

> The background of the issue and landing on climate change was one that as a collective I don't think they had done before because it was outside of the scope of talking about aid. And for some people they felt oh I am not very comfortable about this. A couple of the chief executives felt that we shouldn't be doing that. But in terms of the whole development argument... a number of the agencies were starting to come to the conclusion that climate change was the biggest threat to development and that it would unwind all the development efforts in the Pacific in the last 50 years. If we didn't tackle climate change we couldn't do our livelihoods programme. There is no livelihoods programme if they are waterlogged.

This account identifies how some of the advocacy coalition members needed to be convinced that climate change was an issue that they could and should speak out about,

and in doing so become 'political' agents in the domestic sphere. To get to that point, what the co-leaders of the advocacy coalition, one of whom was the Oxfam NZ Advocacy and Campaigns Director, the other from CID, needed to do was to legitimise climate change as an issue relevant to all members of the group and needed to be brought into their development narrative. The Advocacy and Campaigns Director highlighted to me that this was not an easy task as '*landing on one issue outside of the aid parameter was a first*' as was moving the sector's thinking on climate change. Research on systems change notes that one of the most significant ways to alter a system is to cause a change in paradigm, that is, a change in the set of assumptions and thoughts about how we act and what rules govern our practice (Meadows, 2008). For the advocacy coalition this was arguably the case as it required underlying assumptions about what kinds of issues were relevant for the advocacy coalition to campaign on needing to be challenged and reset.

In order to legitimise the idea of climate change as the campaign issue, the co-leaders made a range of arguments which appealed to knowledge and evidence, moral sentiments of justice and individual organisational priorities and interests (Harrison and Kostka, 2012). Each of these factors are discussed in turn in the following paragraphs. It is noted that as I was not privy to internal discussions and debates that occurred in the advocacy coalition meetings, my analysis is based on my conversations with the Advocacy and Campaigns Director and the information and comments I gathered through the post-campaign survey and interviews.

One means by which the co-leaders of the advocacy coalition achieved this was to draw on evidence from the Pacific partners of all the advocacy coalition members that climate change was, in the words of the Pacific partners, '*a root cause of poverty*' and that it was having a significant impact on their daily existence (survey respondent #7). Climate change impacts were happening in the Pacific region where many of the advocacy coalition members implemented development and/or humanitarian programmes. It was argued by the co-leaders of the advocacy coalition that members needed to stay relevant and speak out on significant issues which were affecting the communities they worked with. More frequent extreme weather events were inflicting significant damage on these regions and this impacted on humanitarian aid efforts and programming work, and increased the demands on limited resources. In their interviews a number of members also acknowledged that climate change disproportionately affected women and children, which they observed through their work with these social groups. As highlighted in the quote above by the Advocacy and Campaigns Director, climate change had the potential to unwind the development progress of all CID members over the past 50 years. This

suggests that in some way the sensitivity to local partners' concerns and priorities shaped the decision on what issue to campaign on and was also instrumentally useful in persuading others in the coalition.

Another argument made was about the opportunity to tap into the groundswell for action on climate change and the significant level of debate which was occurring in the public domain in Aotearoa New Zealand about this issue. Further, scientific evidence suggested that climate change was a worsening problem and there was a strong and growing consensus of scientific opinion that action needed to be taken sooner rather than later. This evidence strengthened their argument because it added credibility to the campaign. There was also heightened debate around the issue because it was an election year.

The advocacy coalition co-leaders also stressed that by focusing on climate change there was an opportunity to complement and form alliances with environmental organisations, specifically with Generation Zero which proposed a Zero Carbon Act. Conversations with advocacy coalition members revealed that the link to organisations outside the development sphere, such as Generation Zero and the World Wildlife Fund, worked well for the advocacy coalition. For example, a legal framework for the Zero Carbon Act had been developed by Generation Zero and once the campaign issue had been agreed upon this framework was used by the advocacy coalition rather than developing one themselves. This illustrates how forming coalitions can provide opportunities to become strategic and harness and use work already completed or underway by other agencies.

A final argument that was used by the co-leaders to convince the advocacy coalition members that climate change was a legitimate issue for them to be involved in was to highlight the links to international frameworks and international consensus on the importance of climate change in the aid and development sector. In particular, references to SDG 13 and the Paris Agreement were made. All of these arguments gave credence to the idea that climate change was a suitable campaign issue at the local and international level even though it had strong political connotations. However, it was known that a successful outcome would require a change of government, which at the time of the advocacy coalition was deemed unlikely.

In addition to putting forward these arguments, the leadership of the advocacy coalition also harnessed the inherent power they held within the coalition. Oxfam NZ was a significant player in the Aotearoa New Zealand development sector and CID represented the sector as a whole. This meant that both of the leaders had a 'visible' power to

influence decision making (Hudson et al., 2018). This co-leadership also indicated that they were both motivated agents and thus able to work strategically within the advocacy coalition. Further, this suggested that the complexities and global nature of the issue meant that it was unlikely that it could be tackled by one organisation alone. It would require a collective effort based on a strong, broad-based voice. In this regard, context and the agency of the co-leaders came together to convince the advocacy coalition to campaign on the issue of climate change.

Managing external influences

One of the many reasons why it took a concerted effort by the co-leaders to convince the members of the advocacy group to choose climate change as the campaign issue was a concern about how the members were going to convince their domestic supporter base that the issue fell within the auspices of their development practices. What became clear from my interviews was that some members in the advocacy coalition had faced an impasse. Whilst their local partners in the Pacific expressed the view that climate change was one of the causes of localised poverty and injustice, their domestic supporters included people who were climate change sceptics. This major challenge was described by one member of the advocacy coalition as a question of maintaining their integrity on the one hand, to their local partners in the Pacific (who were being impacted by climate change), and on the other hand risking alienation of their domestic supporters by using resources on what were perceived as non-aid specific activities and/or activities which were irrelevant to climate change sceptics.

This raises the issue of power and how the influence of power and its expression can impact decision making within INGOs. Postdevelopment scholars McKinnon (2011; see also McKinnon et al., 2016) and Esteva (1992) argue that power and politics can very much shape the how and why of development practices. Power is often thought of in a negative and coercive way, however, as outlined by Cornwall (2002), Cornwall and Coehlo (2006) and Gaventa (2006), power can be expressed in ways that pave more positive thinking and action. For example, 'power with' helps build bridges across different interests, experiences and knowledge and is about bringing together resources and strategies. 'Power with' is evident in collective action. Both internal and external politics and power dynamics can influence and shape the efforts of collective action campaigns and the extent to which 'power with' can be fully realised. As intimated above, one dimension of this in Oxfam NZ's context is that while Aotearoa New Zealand INGOs work with local partners in the Pacific their fundraising support is based in Aotearoa New Zealand, and this sometimes is government funding. It was important for Oxfam NZ to

maintain this alliance and support. It also suggests, as pointed out by de Waal (2015), that the politics of campaigns often get shaped by the domestic political concerns of INGOs. As is often the case, perspectives of those on either side of this equation do not necessarily align and thus there can be difficulty in choosing which side has greater priority. What helped to overcome this in the case of the advocacy coalition was that members were able to make a link between the issue and its impact on their work. What also helped was the power that was inherent in the solidarity of the collective. This was a power characterised by an ability to act together. As noted above, I suggest that alone the individual INGOs would not have taken this action but together they brought together resources and strategies and this was an expression of 'power with' (Cornwall, 2002; Cornwall and Coehlo, 2006; Gaventa, 2006).

Capitalising on political momentum was also an important driver of the advocacy coalition. The Oxfam NZ Advocacy and Campaigns Director (formal interview, September 2018) explained how she saw the advocacy coalition's interaction with the political momentum for action on climate change in Aotearoa New Zealand:

> I think the point about collective response to this is really critical because complex problems need collective action and they need a whole variety of actors to work on them. At that time in New Zealand the key actors working on climate change were the environmental NGOs and obviously scientists. But there wasn't an international development voice. But that is really critical because as we know the most poor and vulnerable across the globe in developing countries are disproportionately impacted by climate change. We need their voice in that discussion. And I think that our collective, of all of the 14 agencies, when we went and talked to the MPs, the strength of us talking in one voice was recognised by the MPs. Each one of the MPs mentioned to us that 'You working together has made us sit up and listen'. Our collective strength had power and that is why it was important.

In this account the Director highlights the positive responses of MPs to the cause of the advocacy coalition and this indicates, I suggest, that the advocacy coalition were seen to be legitimate in their call for action on climate change and because INGOs were speaking with one voice. As a result it was able to yield a more attentive and receptive political audience. Her comments also indicate that the issue of climate change was framed within the context of the need for solidarity and it also had an element of morality associated with it. When she referred to having a '*voice in the discussion*' she referenced the

argument, often discussed in postdevelopment scholarship (Esteva and Escobar, 2017), that global systems of exploitation have rendered people powerless and voiceless. She was expressing this view particularly in relation to the voice of Pacific peoples and that her vision was one where Aotearoa New Zealand stood in solidarity with its Pacific neighbours. I suggest that her words, '*we know the most poor and vulnerable across the globe are disproportionately impacted by climate change*', highlight the moral obligations of the need to act on climate change. This sense of morality that is attached to the impact of climate change is one of the many reasons why climate change is a complex problem (Gardiner, 2004). As a phenomenon, climate change is highly prejudicial and selective and it is argued that those least able to bear the costs of it face the most severe consequences (IPCC, 2001).

The Director's account demonstrated that collective action and the influence of a collective voice had the potential to influence the thinking of others. Coalitions are a means by which connectedness can be manifested as they require an alignment of interests or preferences (Nazneen, 2019). This is, however, not always achievable as the level of compromise required by some participants cannot be overcome. However, where you can achieve agreement, the flow-on effects of having a single voice can enable a belief in the power of collective action. In the advocacy coalition this was the case. When I interviewed individuals about their perceptions of the advocacy coalition, they said that forming coalitions was an effective way to mobilise support and advocate on an issue. One advocacy coalition member was of the view that '*having a united front, especially when engaging and visiting MPs was a strength*' (survey respondent #5). Another commented that '*strength in numbers and having multiple campaign champions meant strong advocacy*' (survey respondent #4). At the time that the advocacy coalition was formed only two or three INGOs operating in Aotearoa New Zealand had dedicated full-time or part-time advocacy staff. Members whom I interviewed highlighted how the formation and operation of the advocacy coalition provided effective ways to overcome this gap and create synergies around working together. They also noted the benefits of drawing on different skill sets and the sharing of resources, the flexibility of individuals, creative ideas, financial contributions from key advocacy coalition members, and guidance from staff with campaigning experience.

Once the advocacy coalition had decided to focus on the issue of climate change, the justification of this to the INGO supporter base in Aotearoa New Zealand became a critical step in the campaign effort. This was important for two reasons. One was the actual issue of climate change and the level of concern within the supporter base around

this issue and willingness to change behaviour, and the second was the fact that the supporters of the members may not have accepted that becoming 'political' should be part of INGO development practices. However, it is likely that this would have been a concern regardless of what issue the advocacy coalition had selected to campaign on. Added to this was the issue that most of the organisations in the advocacy coalition were not 'third generation' NGOs (Korten, 1987). In many of these agencies advocacy was not presented as central to achieving the organisation's vision and mission.

How different members of the advocacy coalition went about achieving this varied. For example, one faith-based advocacy coalition member chose to reframe the issue of climate change as one centred on 'justice' rather than 'politics' when appealing to its supporter base (survey respondent #5). It therefore highlighted the moralistic aspect of the issue. Hopgood (2006) however suggests that going down such a path can lead to adverse consequences. For example, his ethnographic work on Amnesty International noted that the more Amnesty was seen to be political the more this undermined their moral authority and ability to claim to be an objective arbiter of moral truth.

The leadership team and staff within Oxfam NZ framed climate change as an issue that went 'beyond politics' in some of their campaign appeals. It also focused on the issue of justice and therefore linked the campaign to one of its underlying values — 'seek justice/tika'. They also invoked connectedness and solidarity by making references to 'our children', 'our Pacific neighbours', and 'our businesses' in campaign literature. This was an attempt to change the narrative about climate change from one which was someone else's problem to a narrative which emphasised the impact it was having in one's local sphere as well, and that it required action by those living in that sphere. Such ideas align with the postdevelopment idea of solidarity which is focused on issues of shared concern for people and the planet. As outlined by Roche and Denney (Varughese et al., 2021), to resolve complex issues requires collective investment in the common good and the common humanity. Further, it placed Aotearoa New Zealand as part of the 'larger us' and not external to the Pacific (Evans, 2020).

A final but important discussion point that occurred within the advocacy coalition is that despite a recognition of the impact that climate change was having on Pacific partners, some advocacy coalition members stated that no organisations outside of Aotearoa New Zealand were part of the advocacy coalition (fieldnotes from formal interviews with survey respondents, October 2017). Thus while the actual campaign material and media coverage did reference the impact of climate change on Pacific partners, their lack of

presence within the advocacy coalition, I would argue, did lessen the legitimacy of the campaign. Further, having no specific Pacific Island organisation as a member of the advocacy coalition did risk the suggestion that it reflected a level of paternalism, an issue that undermined the work of INGOs. However, it could also be argued that given that the campaign was about bringing about a change in domestic policy the presence of a non-Aotearoa New Zealand organisation in the advocacy coalition may have proved problematic. To overcome this lack of Pacific Island presence, Oxfam NZ used actual examples of how climate change was impacting on its partners in the Pacific in campaign material. For example, an email which was sent out to its supporters contained a photograph and a story about a Fijian man, Iliavi, and the efforts that he, former generations and the community had made to build and heighten a sea wall to combat rising sea levels. The email began: 'Meet Iliavi, he's from Fiji and is part of our Pacific whānau'. The email went on to ask for support for the advocacy coalition's goal of reducing carbon emissions and therefore its impact on rising sea levels. What the leadership team and staff attempted to do, I therefore argue, was to create a sense of inclusiveness and interconnectedness between New Zealanders and Pacific Islanders in the campaign to address climate change.

De Waal (2015) argues that advocacy coalitions need to cast a wide net in terms of building coalitions and empowering local actors to participate in the selection of issues to be addressed and the framing of the narrative around those issues. He argues that this could give coalitions greater legitimacy and power, especially if they were able to reach beyond national boundaries and further bridge the gap between Global North and Global South communities. It is a question about who decides on the framing of an issue and that this should involve those who are impacted by the issue. It is also about where the decision making power lies and how the narrative around the issue is shaped and developed by those with that power.

In the case of the advocacy coalition in Aotearoa New Zealand the narrative was based around the impact that a global issue was having on their Pacific partners and how a change in domestic policy could help address this. While the advocacy coalition was not what de Waal would term as transnational, the fact that some of the 14 CID members that came together were internationally based did give the advocacy coalition a sense of international connectedness. This, however, was not a reincarnation of the collective action models of previous eras. As recognised by de Waal (2015), it is not possible or indeed desirable to return to such models given the changed context of the development sector. However, he argues it is still important to engage with those with the least power

in the system, hold allies and authorities to account, and speak out without fear of consequences. Further, while everyone connected with an issue need not be a member of an advocacy coalition, those that are a part need to have equitable relationships with their local partners. This emphasis on equity links to a postdevelopment idea of solidarity. This idea makes visible the importance of moving away from the narrative of 'us and them'. Further, having equitable relationships with local partners highlights how the postdevelopment idea of autonomy is integral to the postdevelopment idea of solidarity. In order to engage well in advocacy practices, autonomy and solidarity need to come together.

The fact that the advocacy coalition members put aside their traditional competitiveness and branding to campaign on a single issue was a new and empowering step and was an example of how advocacy was evolving in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. It also demonstrated that if an issue could be shown to have widespread commonality between the interests of the members this could help manage external influences and overcome the concern that individual members might have about alienating their supporter base. In this regard the power gained by the advocacy coalition's solidarity was greater than other counterbalancing powers.

Leadership within the advocacy coalition

My interviews with advocacy coalition members in the follow-up survey highlighted that effective leadership was crucial for building and maintaining the advocacy coalition (fieldnotes from formal interviews with survey respondents, October 2017). Leadership was referenced by coalition members both in terms of the collective leadership of the advocacy coalition and the individual leadership of the CEOs from particular advocacy coalition organisations. In particular, a number of exceptional individuals from Oxfam NZ and CID were mentioned by advocacy coalition members for their coordination and leadership of the advocacy coalition. Consistent communication and regular updates on the progress of the campaign, and strategic promotion of the issue of climate change were listed by advocacy coalition members as examples of that leadership (survey respondents #1, #3, #4). The advocacy and campaigning skill set that these individuals also possessed also added to their credibility and therefore their role as co-leaders within the advocacy coalition.

Leadership by some organisations' CEOs within the advocacy coalition and their engagement in the campaign, particularly in the public space, was also mentioned by members as significant (survey respondents #1 and #8). This was very important in

promoting and modelling advocacy as an element of their development practice and also demonstrating their need to take action on climate change within their respective organisations. Support from the Trust Boards of the advocacy coalition organisations was also noted as important (survey respondents #3, #4 and #9). However, there were other comments made by advocacy coalition members which revealed that there were only a handful of CEOs amongst the 14 organisations who were willing to speak publicly on the issue of climate change, Oxfam NZ's Executive Director being cited by respondents as the most outstanding one. This, advocacy coalition members said, was due to both the complexity of the issue of climate change and/or an unwillingness by CEOs to be seen to be taking a stance on an issue which had political connotations and which could imply a political affiliation (fieldnotes from formal interviews with survey respondents, October 2017).

One significant issue that the advocacy coalition faced halfway through the campaign was when CID, one of the two leaders, stepped back from their leadership position. This was a sensitive issue and I found that the advocacy coalition members were very reluctant to speak about it or the reasons as to why it had occurred. What it meant was that Oxfam NZ was left as the overall leader of the campaign. One practical consequence of CID's action was that this decreased the level of resources available for the campaign, and this then required part of the campaign budget to be spent on hiring an external consultant to fill this gap. The fact that this was required suggests that some members of the advocacy coalition were unable or unwilling to fill this resource gap. This leadership dilemma meant that in the latter stages the campaign was driven by Oxfam NZ which gave the Oxfam NZ Advocacy and Campaigns Director greater influence in the governance and decision making associated with the campaign.

This highlights the need for strong leadership within advocacy groups and for leadership to be able to adapt and evolve over time. Fletcher et al. (2016) argue this very point and further say that 'the nature of a coalition's leadership can determine its sustainability and its ability to respond to changing circumstances, broker relationships and divergent interests, and challenge vested interests'. This highlights that there is a need for coalitions to understand the trade-offs between leadership and consensus. As a reflection of this, two organisations led the coalition in its formative stages. I suggest that this helped make the leadership more representative of the sector, helped gain initial support and momentum and helped spread the workload of running the campaign. All of these factors were important to the viability of the advocacy coalition which was venturing into uncharted waters and trying to work together in a manner that they hadn't done before.

The duality of leadership however, proved to be problematic when CID pulled out of its role as a co-leader. This created a challenging time for the Advocacy and Campaigns Director who then became the leader but who at the same time did not want to be seen to be dominating the advocacy coalition. Importantly the members of the advocacy coalition were adaptive and accepted the need to hire a consultant to assist in the campaign, which allowed it to maintain its focus and functioning, and attempted to overcome the disruption caused by the loss of CID as a co-leader. This shows that where there is strong and committed leadership, as demonstrated by the Advocacy and Campaigns Director, and an underlying commitment to a cause, that advocacy coalitions can adapt and evolve over time.

Impact of the advocacy coalition

The impact of the advocacy coalition was threefold. It contributed to the general movement to change government policy on climate change. Second, it changed the perspective and narrative around the role of advocacy and the use of coalitions within the Aotearoa New Zealand development sector. And third, for Oxfam NZ itself, it added a new dimension to its advocacy role, became part of its transformation journey, and influenced how the leadership team and staff framed and undertook their development practices. Each of these impacts are discussed below.

The new Aotearoa New Zealand Government committed to introduce a Zero Carbon Bill by the end of 2018. The Bill was passed by the Government in November 2019. It is noted that prior to the election, the advocacy coalition engaged with MPs from all major political parties on the issue and received commitment from all parties, except the National Party, to a Zero Carbon Act. It is likely that the campaign would not have achieved its goal had the conservative government been reelected. While it is not possible to definitively say that the Zero Carbon Act would not have been passed without the campaign of the advocacy coalition, it is reasonable to suggest that the campaign did contribute to the overall political atmosphere which provided the enabling environment for this act to be passed.

A major contribution to the outcome of the advocacy coalition and other agents who campaigned on this issue was the political landscape in which the advocacy coalition operated. Aotearoa New Zealand underwent a significant turnaround in the election year of 2017 and power moved from being in the hands of the political right and a single party to one that was based on a coalition of three parties — Labour, New Zealand First and the Greens. The significance of this was that the Government needed to be cognisant of a

wide spectrum of interests and to share power and decision making amongst the coalition parties. Winston Peters, the leader of the New Zealand First Party, and the MP who had the deciding vote on who would form government, described his decision as follows: 'We had a choice to make for a modified status quo or for change. Far too many New Zealanders have come to view capitalism not as their friend but as their foe and they are not all wrong' (Radio New Zealand, 2017).

The quote provides an insight into some of the sentiments which were present during the election campaign and gives a sense of the character of the political landscape. Peters was a former member of the National Party but established his own party (New Zealand First) in 1993 which leaned more towards the political centre and social conservatism.

The second impact of the advocacy coalition was the learning gained by the advocacy coalition members themselves. For example, it became clear to members that more work and effort was needed to build relationships with supporters and to take them from a place of philanthropic support for humanitarian and aid-based outcomes, to one that looked at the broader spectrum of factors that create poverty and injustice, and how these might be addressed. A Zero Carbon Act, if put into law, would mean that ordinary New Zealanders would have to contribute to the costs of addressing climate change and change their own behaviour to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2050. Getting that message across to the supporter base was a major task and required a shift in the paradigm around what was perceived to be the role of INGOs.

Other learning related to the use of negotiation, communication, influencing, and the ability to generate constructive policy options. These resulted in compromise and trade-offs. For example, a lot of work was devoted to ensuring that the advocacy coalition was effective while at the same time maintaining the unity and solidarity of a diverse group of organisations. When I spoke with advocacy coalition members they identified how the breadth of advocacy coalition members added credibility and strength but at the same time they also noted it was important to recognise the different needs of organisations and the need to adapt messages to suit each organisation. One advocacy coalition member captured the nature of the learning in the following: '*I learnt a lot from it and would now feel more equipped going into another similar coalition*' (survey respondent #7).

Members also gained insights into the amount of work that was required to ensure coalitions were sustained (Nazneen, 2019). The commitment, flexibility and skill level of

key individuals across the advocacy coalition was mentioned as an element in this. As one advocacy coalition member noted, the '*delivery of outputs was on time and to a very high quality*' (survey respondent #9). However, several advocacy coalition members acknowledged that people worked over and above the time they formally allocated to work with the coalition and that there were limited or, in some cases, no dedicated advocacy staff to work on the campaign. As a consequence, most of the work was undertaken by three of the advocacy coalition members (Oxfam NZ, World Vision NZ and CID). However, considering the size of some of the organisations in the advocacy coalition, some of which had five people or less, this perhaps was an inevitable reality. The learning for this advocacy coalition was that the work necessary to build and maintain a coalition like this required a realistic understanding of the resources and expertise available, and how they could be used for collective benefit.

The general consensus amongst advocacy coalition members was that the way they worked together was a significant factor in achieving the campaign goal. There was also recognition that collective action as a means to bring about change was the most significant factor in encouraging advocacy coalition members to work in a coalition again. All advocacy coalition member evaluation respondents were positive about working in an advocacy coalition again for a campaign, and one-third of these said that 'belief in collective action to achieve change' was the predominant reason for this response. Despite this, what was also clear from the post-evaluation survey results was that the advocacy coalition members who completed the survey perceived the sector as one which had a strong advocacy role. Further, it was also clear that there was doubt about whether CID members would become more involved in the domestic political scene. It was significant that only 14 of the 45 CID members which operate in Aotearoa New Zealand participated in the advocacy coalition and this indicates a reluctance by the majority of CID members to become involved in public and politically involved. This was compounded by the fact that members of the advocacy coalition perceived a number of challenges associated with the operation of advocacy coalitions which would need to be addressed if more organisations within the sector were to participate in future advocacy coalitions. These challenges included: How could the CID members harness their collective strength? What were the issues of relevance to all members? Who would provide the initial and ongoing leadership? These challenges were also subject to much discussion within the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate within Oxfam NZ, given the lead role and resources provided to the advocacy coalition by Oxfam NZ. At the end of my fieldwork these challenges still remained unresolved and in particular the questions of

where leadership would come from and how the distribution of decision making power would unfold.

The perceptions of advocacy coalition members on the benefits and challenges of working in a coalition, and what they learnt from the process, gave them an understanding of how solidarity could work to achieve change in their context. However, there were mixed perspectives about being involved in future coalitions and the use and role of advocacy. Some aspects of the advocacy coalition align with a postdevelopment idea of solidarity in that the issue of climate change was presented as not only an issue of shared concern, but an issue of equity and therefore needed to be addressed by the actions of all New Zealanders. It contributed to the 'beyond aid' narrative and a new narrative that with our Pacific partners, we are all in this together.

The third impact of the advocacy coalition relates to how it impacted on Oxfam NZ and importantly how it formed part of its transformation journey. I have intimated above that Oxfam NZ's involvement in the advocacy coalition was very much driven by the Advocacy and Campaigns Director. The Director had the support of the leadership team and the Oxfam NZ Executive Director in leading Oxfam NZ's involvement in the advocacy coalition. In addition, the other staff member from the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate and staff from the Engagement and Communications Directorate within Oxfam NZ were involved in developing Oxfam NZ's campaign material. As noted above, the Advocacy and Campaigns Director played a major role in convincing the other members of the advocacy coalition that climate change should be the campaign issue. The Director also referenced and used Oxfam International's campaign on the issue of climate change to support not only the legitimacy of what the advocacy coalition was trying to achieve but to demonstrate that the solidarity that came from a united effort across all of Oxfam's offices enhanced the inherent power of its campaign. This was an important adjunct as Oxfam International had gained international press coverage on their advocacy work on climate change prior to the advocacy coalition's establishment.

Involvement in the advocacy coalition provided an opportunity for the leadership team and staff to enact Oxfam NZ's values. In particular, the values of 'be connected/manaakitanga' and 'seek justice/tika' were very much evident in the way that the coalition worked and in terms of the outcomes that it was trying to achieve. There was a level of connectedness/manaakitanga and partnership between Oxfam NZ and the other members of the advocacy coalition which had not occurred before and there was a recognition of trying to redress and reduce some of the underlying injustices of how

climate change, mostly caused by carbon emissions in the Global North, was impacting poorer nations. What was evident was that this was not a campaign which focused on a superficial occurrence or event (as defined by de Waal, 2015) but a campaign which attempted to address an underlying cause of an issue relevant to the members of the advocacy coalition.

Within the context of the history of advocacy in INGOs, the actions of the leadership team and staff from Oxfam NZ indicate an attempt to enhance and strengthen three key elements of their development practices — solidarity, collective action and engagement in domestic politics. In terms of solidarity it brought into the mix a postdevelopment idea of solidarity, as discussed above, one which included equity. In terms of collective action and engagement in domestic politics it demonstrated an ability of staff to lead and maintain a large coalition group; it increased staff knowledge about, and experience in, coalition politics; and reinforced the idea that collective action, appropriately directed and planned, can bring about policy change, even on an issue that was perceived by some CID members as 'outside the aid debate'. It therefore opened possibilities for the future and to build on this learning and experience through further interaction by Oxfam NZ with other INGOs.

Summary

This chapter provides a discussion of the attempts by the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate within Oxfam NZ to transform their development practices. It focuses on Oxfam NZ's involvement in and co-leadership of the advocacy coalition 'Back the Plan: Back to Zero' campaign. The advocacy coalition included 14 members of CID, including Oxfam NZ, and it was the largest group of CID members that had joined together to campaign on an issue 'outside of the aid debate', and in particular, one which was deemed to be as politically sensitive as climate change.

I use the scholarship of de Waal (2015) to discuss the changing nature of advocacy in INGO history. I also provide a brief overview of the history of advocacy in the Oxfam Confederation and Oxfam NZ. I then discuss the advocacy coalition and the many factors which impacted on the operation of the advocacy coalition, particularly the gaining of consensus, the need to manage external influences, particularly supporter bases, the important role of leadership, and how power created by solidarity and collective action can be utilised.

I argue that the advocacy coalition is an example of how power was nuanced and utilised to promote a change in government policy. This was shown through the bringing together of a diverse group of INGOs and through a process of debate, gaining agreement on an issue to be addressed and how advocacy could drive this. Oxfam NZ and CID achieved this by using their individual and collective power, presence and leadership to influence and promote the need for collective action, and to show that climate change had commonality across the development sector, even though it was perceived by some CID members as a non-aid issue. The advocacy coalition then used the power inherent in the solidarity of the advocacy coalition to influence both decision makers and the respective supporter bases of the members of the coalition.

Oxfam NZ's involvement in the advocacy coalition added a new dimension to its existing advocacy efforts and demonstrated an enactment of the values of 'be connected/manaakitanga' and 'seek justice/tika'. Similar to the Partnerships Strategy discussed in Chapter Six, it is another example of how the leadership team and staff attempted to transform their development practices. This new dimension brought a postdevelopment idea of solidarity to the fore in that Oxfam NZ framed climate change as an issue of global concern and an issue about equity. The advocacy coalition challenged New Zealanders to recognise the impact that climate change was having on Pacific island peoples, and to act by reducing carbon emissions in Aotearoa New Zealand. The experience of participating in a collective action campaign provided insightful lessons for the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ about enhancing domestic engagement, promoting collective action and systems change, engaging with politics, contributing to the 'beyond aid' narrative and establishing, in this case, a level of solidarity in the Aotearoa New Zealand development sector.

While the model of advocacy used in this case was a deviation from the de Waal (2015) model of transnational collective action, it shows that the crafting of this domestic campaign strategy in Aotearoa New Zealand was necessarily context-specific and it required trade-offs, in particular the noninvolvement of impacted peoples or local partners and offices in the campaign. The lessons learnt are that advocacy and the process of actioning that advocacy by INGOs need to be honed to suit the context and the change sought. It shows that advocacy is an evolving practice and that advocacy as a collective action practice can be a strength and give INGOs the potential to engage well in a contemporary context of change and uncertainty. Further, it shows that while collective action advocacy practices can be contextualised and built on, challenges and trade-offs will be inherent in the process.

In the next chapter I look at how in a time of crisis the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ used their values to base their response to critical global and local media attention on an issue of sexual misconduct and abuse by Oxfam GB staff. This response required leadership, integrity and a commitment to justice, and given the heightened public exposure that Oxfam NZ had through the advocacy coalition, was an issue which could have undermined its standing as an INGO.

INTERLUDE:

A waka in a storm

'Our people, our people, our people'.

I heard these words spoken by the Executive Director at the end of another Monday morning update. But this update was something out of the ordinary. There was much to take in and think about. What we were told raised many emotions and concerns in me and in the other staff in the room. A member of the Oxfam in the Pacific team had been killed in an accident the previous Friday. It was reported that a tropical cyclone would hit Tonga, a country where Oxfam NZ worked with a local organisation on disaster responsiveness, that very night. And in the Aotearoa New Zealand press over the weekend there were two articles reporting sexual abuse by Oxfam GB staff in Haiti dating back to 2010 and 2011.

While each of these events were significant in themselves, the reports of sexual misconduct and abuse were extremely concerning for the whole Oxfam Confederation. The resurfacing of these cases after many years was bound to have a significant impact on Oxfam and particularly in terms of its relationship with its supporters. Many questions began to be aired in the meeting: What were we going to say to our supporters? How was this going to affect how our supporters perceived us? And how would this affect our biggest fundraising event, which was scheduled for the following month? But mostly we sat and listened and tried to digest all of what we had heard. Simultaneously, our hearts both sank and began to boil with frustration and anger. This was a pivotal moment for every member of staff.

I walked back to my desk, sat down in front of my computer and tried to continue with the work I was doing before the meeting. I saw other staff members trying to do the same. But what we had just heard had truly affected us all. It was hard to put my feelings into words. There was silence in the office but I could almost hear the processing, the thinking, the feeling going on inside people as they tried to understand each of these events. As it was going on inside me. And yet the words, *'our people, our people, our people'*, continued to replay over and over in my mind.

As the week proceeded things intensified. On Monday afternoon Tonga declared a state of emergency. And on Tuesday the damage from the cyclone became known. Tonga had been badly affected and Oxfam's local partner was heavily involved in the disaster

response. That day, the Deputy Executive Director of Oxfam GB resigned. On Thursday, the Executive Director of Oxfam NZ was questioned in a radio interview about two historic cases of sexual misconduct at Oxfam NZ. I was struck by how the interview was concluded. The final question from the journalist was: *'Are you confident that Oxfam* [Oxfam NZ] *is clean on this?'*

I wondered what it was about INGOs for the public to perceive them as needing to be clean, pure, and almost beyond reproach. I read commentary in the press which compared the sexual misconduct and abuse cases to those sweeping the Catholic Church and other institutions. More allegations and cases of sexual misconduct and abuse involving Save the Children and UNICEF staff appeared in the press in the UK later in the week.

I found staff and volunteers willing to talk to me about the Haiti incident as I enquired about how they were reacting and responding. But it still felt so raw and unprocessed. I noticed a lot of email traffic on the issue. Perhaps it was easier to put thoughts and feelings into words. Or to circulate the thoughts of others who had verbalised or managed to capture your own sentiments so succinctly.

Vergangenheitsbewältigung! As a German speaker I thought of this word as I observed staff searching for ways to express their emotions and their deflated body language. This German word is a concept which has both an individual and collective meaning. It involves the individual and the collective processing of negative and difficult events from the past. It describes an act of overcoming something which is characterised as negative, repressed, stressful, associated with guilt and/or mental injury. The reference for Germany is their National Socialist past. Here in the Oxfam NZ office, I saw the effort and struggle to confront and process the Haiti incident, behaviour that staff found abhorrent, and while far removed from both, geographically and in time, also strongly connected to us via the Oxfam Confederation global organisational structure, mission and brand. Our people had done this. *Die Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is also about an acceptance of responsibility, that even though we may have no personal involvement in an event, we all had a collective responsibility to own it and speak out against it.

I began to see the ethical dilemma presented to staff. And how *die Vergangenheitsbewältigung* was at work and would require staff to process, understand and build a response to the shocking reports. It almost felt too hard and you wanted to

push it aside. However, in building a response it was clear to all staff that it could not be a 'tick-the-box exercise'.

I attended another meeting with the entire staff on the Wednesday of the following week, this time in the more informal and intimate setting of the kitchen. This meeting had a different feel to it, compared to the previous Monday. Some staff sat around a communal table, some sat on a couch, others stood or sat on stools. After a time we gathered together in a huddle which was instigated by the leadership team. The care and concern of how staff were coping personally was mentioned several times. Something seemed to have shifted. Although there was frustration and disappointment in the air, there was also a sense of a collective spirit and a heart that was wounded but not broken. One of the leadership team brought a metaphor into the discussion. The waka in the storm — not leaking, but surviving and weathering the storm. I could see how this metaphor offered an image of the collective, working hard and together and overcoming whatever this storm threw at Oxfam NZ. Everyone was needed on this waka.

Chapter Eight
Responding in a time of crisis

Introduction

This chapter is a case study of how Oxfam NZ's leadership team and staff reacted and responded to the 2018 media reports of sexual misconduct and abuse in Haiti by Oxfam GB staff (which dated back to 2010 and 2011). I argue that the response became part of their journey of transformation, was an example of an enactment of their values and brought about a process of extensive reflective thinking and the notion of 'care' as an alternative narrative with which to guide development practices.

The media reporting occurred during my fieldwork for this thesis. The nature of Oxfam as a global confederation with shared branding meant that Oxfam NZ's leadership team and staff, despite not being directly implicated in the incident, decided to respond to the reports and address the effects that the incident, and its reporting, had both internally and externally.

The incident, its reporting, and in particular how Oxfam GB initially dealt with the matter, proved to be a significant issue for the leadership team and staff within Oxfam NZ, the Oxfam Confederation and the international aid and development sector as a whole. The issue was labelled by reporters as a 'scandal' and as a 'crisis'. Dealing with such a crisis can reveal much about the inner workings of organisations and therefore a discussion of Oxfam NZ's response to this issue makes it particularly salient for inclusion in this thesis.

It is important to note that the analysis provided in the chapter does not extend to assessing the cases themselves. That has been attended to elsewhere (Daoust and Dyvik, 2020; Eikenberry and Mirabella, 2019; Gillespie et al., 2019; Phillips, 2019). I focus on the reaction and response of the leadership team and staff within Oxfam NZ as my data only provides analysis at this level. I discuss the many questions that the Haiti incident posed for the leadership team and staff within Oxfam NZ. For example: What were the expectations of development and aid workers? Could the Oxfam brand and its reputation as a human rights organisation survive such an incident? How are one's professional activities informed by one's personal beliefs? The responses indicated to me that the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ were committed to the Oxfam mission and to upholding individual professional and ethical standards.

The Haiti incident reporting happened in parallel with two other significant events for staff at Oxfam NZ. The first was the accidental death of an Oxfam in the Pacific staff member. The second was a tropical cyclone in Tonga, Cyclone Gita. During this week Tonga declared a state of emergency and Oxfam NZ staff began coordinating a humanitarian response to the impact of the cyclone. During the same week more media stories about the Haiti incident were also published. And added to all this it was a time where the leadership team and staff were busy preparing for the end of the financial year. Finally and as discussed in previous chapters, other elements of transformational change were occurring within the organisation. Despite all of this, the response to the Haiti incident became paramount and took precedence over all other activities in the organisation. As summarised by one member of the leadership team, the incident meant that the leadership team and staff needed to 'repair the waka as we paddle and chart a new course' (fieldnotes, February 2018).

In the chapter I discuss how the leadership team and staff within Oxfam NZ used their organisational values of 'be connected/manaakitanga', 'show courage/kaha' and 'seek justice/tika' to respond to the Haiti incident. I also explore how the leadership team saw the Haiti incident as being about power and an abuse of power, and how they drew on feminist principles to frame the response not only to external donors, supporters, and the Aotearoa New Zealand people but also to the Oxfam NZ staff body. I use the work of feminist scholars J.K. Gibson-Graham and Joan Tronto to analyse the response. I focus on the Oxfam NZ values, the concepts of 'becoming an ethical subject' and 'ethical negotiation', and the concept of 'care', and how these were demonstrated by the leadership team and staff at the time of the initial and follow-up reporting of the Haiti incident.

Background to the issue

On February 9, 2018, a story was published in *The Times* newspaper describing a number of occurrences of sexual misconduct and abuse by Oxfam GB staff in Haiti dating back to 2010 and 2011. Oxfam GB staff, including the Country Director, had engaged in sexual exploitation in Haiti, a country where prostitution was illegal. This was not only an abuse of their position and their professional ethics but also a criminal offence. There was a significant amount of secrecy around the reporting of the incidents at the time. In the February 9, 2018 *Times* story it was also reported that the then Country Director had been allowed to resign from his position without penalty and that he had also been linked to other cases of sexual misconduct and abuse in Chad and Liberia. When the Haiti

incident occurred, Oxfam GB conducted an investigation and reported the matter to its institutional donor, the Department for International Development (DFID) in the UK. DFID did not take any action at the time. However, when the story resurfaced and was published in 2018 the response from the UK government was radically different.

The story appeared in the wake of the #MeToo campaign, which in October 2017 began to appear on social media websites in response to public revelations of sexual misconduct and abuse in the workplace, most notably in the film and television industry. In the same month, the actress Alyssa Milano used and encouraged the use of the #MeToo metadata tag in order to demonstrate the magnitude of the problem. In the first 24 hours following her tag, 4.7 million people used the hashtag in over twelve million posts on social media to comment on cases of sexual misconduct and abuse (Hillstrom, 2019). Over the following months more cases and allegations of sexual misconduct and abuse in workplaces surfaced as the momentum of the #MeToo movement continued.

Set against this background, there was global press coverage of the Haiti incident. Following *The Times* article, Oxfam GB was summoned to sit before the UK Charity Commission as a statutory inquiry was launched into the organisation and its actions in regards to the Haiti incident. The International Development Secretary for DFID called for 'moral leadership' from the organisation (BBC, 2018a). The Oxfam GB Deputy Chief Executive, who was a senior manager at the time of the Chad incidents, resigned, and DFID halted funding to Oxfam GB pending the results of an inquiry into the incidents. The results of this inquiry were published in June 2019 and made a number of conclusions (Charity Commission, 2019). These included that Oxfam GB did not commit sufficient resources to safeguarding; the importance of responsible behaviours and conduct was not embedded in its daily activities across the organisation and its work and people; the workforce did not have confidence in the management or systems for reporting concerns; victims appeared to take second place and were not taken seriously enough; and whistle blowers and those staff who tried to raise concerns were let down.

Although Oxfam NZ was not mentioned in the *The Times* article or the UK Charity Commission Inquiry, the fact that Oxfam NZ was part of the Oxfam Confederation, with a shared name and a shared brand meant that it was not immune from the reporting and it was also taken up by the Aotearoa New Zealand media. As a result, Oxfam NZ's institutional donor, MFAT, insisted that no funds could be provided to programmes which were managed by Oxfam GB.

Oxfam NZ's leadership team felt that Oxfam NZ needed to respond despite not being directly involved. The Oxfam NZ Executive Director gave an interview to Radio New Zealand (2018) on February 15, 2018 and Oxfam NZ (2018a, 2018b, 2018c) released several press releases on the Haiti incident. Following the reporting of the Haiti incident, other reports of similar incidents involving prominent INGOs emerged in the UK (BBC, 2018b; Chrisafis, 2018; Greenfield, 2018; Perkins, 2018).

As a consequence of these reports, a public debate about the legitimacy and moral authority of non-profit organisations and charities played out in the global media. The debate was polarised between critics and defenders of Oxfam and some opinion pieces pointed to broader questions on foreign aid and the development practices of INGOs. The themes raised in the public debate included power, corruption, incompetence, ethics and morals, colonialism, and charities operating like businesses. Some called for a cessation of funding for such organisations.

Reporting of the Haiti incident also surfaced in a domestic political environment in the UK where questions were being asked about what foreign aid and development was and what it had achieved. Attitudes and opinions in the UK were influenced by the government commitment to 0.7% of GDP being spent on aid and development despite austerity politics. Further, there was ongoing debate about the INGO business model and its dependence on government funding. This meant that the mood of domestic politics was an issue for INGOs and that scandals such as the Haiti incident did not help their cause. There was also some commentary that the Haiti incident was a political attack on Oxfam GB given its stance on issues such as inequality and tax reform (Miller, 2018). Yanguas (2018) reminds us of how aid policy, particularly in the UK, is used by politicians as a 'convenient black box' to cater to ideologies and agendas on both ends of the political spectrum.

Academics also weighed into the debate. Critical feminist geographers sought to look beyond the polarised opinion pieces and discuss some of the underlying issues which have long existed in the aid and development sector. These issues included unequal social power relations, the nature of the way development is 'done' to others, and the agency, power and authority that is afforded to INGOs from the Global North (Ahmed, 2012; Lahiri-Dutt, 2017; Mohanty, 1988; Nagar, 2015). This critique called for a deep inquiry into development practices and for open discussion about the power dynamics which were present and underlying in the international aid and development sector.

There are a number of themes which I identify as being influential to the process which the leadership team and staff went through to respond to the reporting of the Haiti incident. It was complex, multifaceted, interdependent and concurrent. In what follows I discuss each of these themes and their relationship to both the internal and external response developed by the leadership team and staff and how this became part of their transformation journey.

Acceptance, being ethical and maintaining trust

The reporting of the Haiti incident led Oxfam NZ's leadership team and staff to go through a process, which I would argue, was one of both political and moral negotiation. This required developing a response which included acceptance of what had occurred and concurrent reflection on the many ethical questions which the incident raised. Staff had to confront, at a personal and a professional level, the abuse of power that had occurred and the responsibilities that come with holding power. Any response that was developed needed to deal with both of these, as well as many other issues. The Oxfam NZ Executive Director described the reporting of the Haiti incident as pushing the Oxfam NZ waka into a storm and testing their kaupapa.

One of the key analytical tools that I use in my discussion comes out of the Community Economies Collective (a group of 38 members). Gibson-Graham et al. (2021) seek to understand how people relate to and care for each other and stress the need for understanding the concepts of interconnectedness and relationality. They argue that becoming 'ethical subjects' requires negotiation and an understanding of the interconnection between decision making and people's active role in shaping their environment and how they live in it (Gibson-Graham, 2005, 2006; Gibson-Graham et al., 2021; Gibson-Graham and Dombroski, 2021). This suggests that all moments of political decision making be considered as ethical negotiations and this provides a useful methodology to understand the complexity and level of reflective thinking that I observed within the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ in their internal processing of the reporting of the Haiti incident and their development of an internal and external response.

Like many organisations, Oxfam NZ can be defined as a collective group of people who share a common mission, purpose and values. While it is part of the Oxfam Confederation, it has a unique identity in terms of its Aotearoa New Zealand operations and this identity, as I have argued in this thesis, is grounded in 'place'. The leadership team and staff within Oxfam NZ, as discussed in Chapter Four, used the metaphor of

whānau to describe their organisation and I observed that this metaphor influenced how staff interacted with each other in their daily work practices. Following the media reports in February 2018 I observed how the leadership team and staff worked together as whānau to respond to the Haiti incident. Internally there began the difficult process of accepting what had occurred and this was followed by a processing of how the incident was reported. I observed that the leadership team and staff were faced with confronting and processing behaviour by other Oxfam staff, behavior that they condemned and were far removed from, but which required them to deal with both the ethical issues and political ramifications of the incident. One such ramification was balancing what it meant to be both a global and local organisation, and dealing with the risks belonging to a diverse global confederation as well as accepting the benefits of sharing a global brand.

Oxfam's global brand and identity affords members influence in terms of advocacy and campaigning. However, this does not isolate local members from the domestic politics and actions of governments towards their counterparts within the confederation. For example, one member of Oxfam NZ's leadership team, who was familiar with the UK political scene, suggested to me that the Haiti incident reporting was part of a bigger agenda by conservative political elements in the UK who were resistant to increasing foreign aid and in particular had issues with Oxfam's campaign for multinational tax reform and inequality. This highlights how incidents such as the Haiti one can be highly politicised. The Oxfam GB Executive tried to argue this when the reports were first aired but received significant backlash from the government and some media for taking this stance.

For many Oxfam NZ staff there is a close relationship between the personal and the politics of the international development sector and the ethics on which the sector operates. There is a strong belief in the purpose of Oxfam NZ to challenge power inequalities and I suggest that this forms part of becoming an 'ethical subject'. The reporting of the Haiti incident prompted some staff to attempt to use the moment to challenge and bring forward concerns about gender injustice and to ask for broader discussions on the use of power in the international development sector, especially in Aotearoa New Zealand. This was a moment, staff said, to be powerful and to speak out about how gender and power relations are part of any organisational or institutional setting and needed to be included into the conversations about development practices (fieldnotes, February 2018; see Hilhorst et al., 2018 for a broader discussion).

Oxfam NZ's leadership team acknowledged that the Haiti incident was complex and that the issue went beyond being an isolated incident or associated with a single organisation. Their position was that the incident was but one example of where a lack of ethical behaviour had occurred. To try to prevent such incidents happening in the future they argued that there needed to be a shared acceptance that such behaviour did occur and that it was the responsibility by all INGOs to actively respond and reaffirm their ethical standing by clearly supporting a zero tolerance stance. While this had a potential benefit for Oxfam NZ as it could spread the risk of association with the incident, I observed that the primary aim of this approach was to secure a collective response. In addition, and as discussed in Chapter Seven, the leadership team also believed in the power of the collective to bring about change. They saw the Haiti incident as one which went beyond the Oxfam boundary and therefore required the power and impact of a collective response to reduce the likelihood of such unethical behavior occurring in the future.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, a response to the incident was developed by INGOs who were CID members. The response developed by the CID membership however, emphasised actions and policies for safeguarding children and adults and was not as broad as the 10-point action plan suggested by Oxfam NZ's leadership team.[22] While Oxfam NZ was party to the CID response it also decided to publish an individual response which incorporated its 10-point action plan. As one Oxfam NZ leadership member commented '*if the sector was to respond by making this issue about safeguarding children or 'vulnerable' women, this would be limiting and risk failing to challenge all kinds of abuse*' (CID, 2018). The efforts of the leadership team in regards to this response suggest that they saw an opportunity to use the crisis to push for change within the sector.

By their acceptance of the incident and their indirect association with the incident Oxfam NZ staff felt vulnerable and this was exacerbated by the overall media and development sector focus on the behaviour of Oxfam, and in particular on Oxfam GB staff. This impacted on how they felt they could respond. Some staff reflected to me that because of the intensity of the media focus on the incident they felt constrained in their ability to speak out about what they considered to be important conversations which were not being aired in the media or in the development sector, that is, conversations about underlying power inequities and perceptions about the infallibility of INGOs (fieldnotes, May 2018). In this regard there was a significant difference between the portrayal of the

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[22] Safeguarding is a term used to refer to measures which protect individual human rights so that people are able to live free from abuse, neglect or harm.

incident in formal and public statements in the media and the internal discussions and conversations regarding the complex nature of the issue occurring inside Oxfam NZ.

The scrutiny of Oxfam GB and Oxfam in general was also felt by some staff at Oxfam NZ to be disproportionate compared to other INGOs with similar problems. While there was a level of sympathy by other INGOs in Aotearoa New Zealand for Oxfam NZ, some staff expressed how they felt totally alone as an organisation (fieldnotes, November 2018). No other prominent INGOs were prepared to accept or discuss incidents of sexual misconduct and abuse which may have occurred within their own organisation and there was a 'wait and see' attitude, with a hope that questions about their own organisation's operations would not be raised in the media.

Following the reporting of the Haiti incident many questions were raised in the global media about the broader ethical conduct and operations of the aid and development sector as a whole (Columbus, 2018; Edwards, 2018; Gordon, 2019; Mackay, 2018; Radio New Zealand, 2018; Parkin Daniels, 2018; Selk and Rosenberg, 2018). Besides questions regarding sexual misconduct and abuse, there were also questions regarding the level of trust placed in INGOs. These questions also raised issues such as the use of high pressure sales tactics when fundraising and misuse of donated funds. Further, this critique also included the issue of how public trust in INGOs was being undermined by such activities.

For INGOs public trust is exceptionally important and the loss of this trust can be a major problem. Keating and Thrandardottir (2017) argue that once lost it is a difficult task to rebuild public trust in INGOs as it is linked to a positive expectation that both time and donated funds will be used wisely, and this is in turn founded on the deeper concept of 'social trust'. They argue that 'social trust' is a large part of the basis upon which the legitimacy and purpose of INGO activities is built. 'Social trust' includes a range of factors such as shared identity and solidarity on common values, group membership, and the feeling of working towards common goals.

The leadership team at Oxfam NZ were aware of the importance of trust to its survival and the basis on which that trust was built. In this regard they wanted to decouple the Haiti incident and the notion that INGOs could no longer be trusted to carry out their activities in a manner that was safe and where such incidents could be prevented from occurring. Part of the decoupling was admitting that INGOs weren't perfect and that mistakes can and could be made because of the nature of human behaviour and the inability to completely control it. One member of the leadership team commented that it

was important for supporters to know and understand this. She said: '*supporters deserved to know that we weren't and aren't perfect*' (fieldnotes, September 2018). This suggests that part of building and maintaining trust can be through transparency and an admission of error. However, the leadership team were also cognisant of the fact that this should not excuse what happened in Haiti and that there needed to be a zero tolerance for such behaviour. The perception that INGOs, which fight poverty and injustice, could allow abuses of power such as that which occurred in Haiti, begged the question of whether INGOs have appropriate policies and guidelines which support their values and the trust placed in them. Further, the fact that they have greater public presence because of their marketing activities and have become more professional makes them more open to such critique and scrutiny, and the need to maintain the level of trust they have.

Increased scrutiny and investigation into organisations has also become more prevalent in an environment where movements such as #MeToo and the events of social media are additional to mainstream media investigative efforts. For the leadership team at Oxfam NZ, the task of countering these perceptions and maintaining its organisational image and donor and public trust was a process which required, I would argue, ethical negotiation. The leadership team tried to understand the concepts of interconnectedness and relationality and reflected on the role of an 'ethical subject'. This they did by deciding how and when to engage, to listen and take criticism, to defend or provide explanation, and how and when to redirect conversations about the incident itself to underlying themes of power, gender and inequality.

This ethical negotiation also included the leadership team at Oxfam NZ attempting to be open and transparent about the incidents of sexual misconduct and abuse that had occurred within its own global organisation, and recognising how it was also important that their response be sincere and authentic. They also acknowledged that there needed to be a clear commitment to take action (fieldnotes, September 2018). The leadership team also tried to demonstrate that their response and actions provided a clear statement that Oxfam NZ had a zero tolerance approach to such behaviours. I would suggest that this indicated that their values and ethics were at the forefront of their decision making and that they placed an importance on challenging what they perceived to be the underlying causes of the behaviours that occurred in Haiti (power, gender inequality, injustice).

Morality and shame

Aid and development organisations are often perceived as being moral and ethical agents. As discussed by McKinnon (2011, pp. 24–29), discourses about development, emancipation, empowerment and improvement have been built on older ideas of duty and universal moral good. Discourses which concern the Global North also have a Judeo-Christian root which emphasise charity and missionary work and this has been woven together with more secular Western ethics, particularly on human rights. The Haiti incident brought to the surface numerous questions about whether the modern day activities of INGOs continued to reflect and apply these moral and ethical foundations, foundations which are still used by development agencies to justify their work. For example, frameworks such as the SDGs claim that citizens hold a moral obligation to other citizens and countries so as to 'leave no-one behind'. INGOs broadly support the SDGs, including Oxfam NZ. Climate change, which was discussed in Chapter Seven, has also been framed as a moral issue.

Authors such as Quarles van Ufford and Kumar Giri (2003) and more recently Nouvet and Jakimow (2016) explore the link between morality and development practice. The legitimacy of many aid and development organisations, they propose, is tied to their moral authority on human rights and how they challenge power inequities and provide a means for those who are powerless to have a voice. The work undertaken by the Oxfam Confederation is also linked to this notion of moral authority. The Haiti incident brought into question the validity of this moral and ethical authority by highlighting where a breakdown had occurred in the application of values, morals and ethics.

The Haiti incident also raised questions about the moral duty that both individuals and organisations carry, and how this is linked to ethical behavior and being an 'ethical subject'. I observed that the effects were felt at many levels: the personal and the professional, the individual and the collective, and these effects, I would argue, are ongoing. As described by Gibson-Graham et al. (2021) there is no final point to becoming an ethical subject, and I would add, understanding and accepting one's moral duty. It is an ongoing rather than an absolute process. My overall observations were that the reporting of the Haiti incident, the impact of the focus of the media attention on Oxfam NZ and the absence of other INGOs to acknowledge that this was not a singular incident had a profound effect on the leadership team and staff. It questioned their values and external perceptions of their professionalism and work to alleviate injustice and power inequalities. It took them time to accept what had occurred and to process all that was happening around them. It caused the leadership team and staff to undertake a period of

reflection and to use this reflective process to develop and make ethical decisions about how to respond both internally and externally.

For the INGO sector as a whole, the external discussion that was had in the public debate following the Haiti incident had, I suggest, both moralistic and punitive tenets. As noted above, the critique centred on how in this particular incident the 'social trust' placed in INGOs was brought into question and whether INGOs could continue to rely on their moral and ethical foundations for their activities. There was also a question of whether financial support for such organisations should continue. Winnie Byanyima highlighted in her external response the immoral and shameful aspects of the Haiti incident. For example, in a press statement, she said the following:

> What happened in Haiti and afterwards is a stain on Oxfam that will shame us for years, and rightly so. In my language: 'Okuruga ahamutima gwangye, mutusaasire'. It means 'From the bottom of my heart I am asking for forgiveness'. (Oxfam NZ, 2018b)

Brown's discussion of shame (2006, 2012) resonates with Winnie Byanyima's statement both because of the courage it took to recognise ownership of the crisis, and the personal connection that she, and other staff in Oxfam NZ, made to the issue. Brown's (2006) work provides insights into what it might look like to respond to incidents that have caused shame to be felt and then to respond with integrity. Brown argues that in order to build trust and accountability about an issue which is characterised by shame requires a process of ownership, apology, making amends, choosing *courage* and practicing, not just professing values [emphasis in original]. In her statement, Winnie Byanyima emphasises the depths of shame associated with the Haiti incident and that the ownership of that shame needed to be endured. She connects to it personally by using her own indigenous language to express her sentiments and response. Part of the processing that the leadership team and staff undertook also involved accepting this shame both on a personal and a professional level. I participated in meetings which were set up by the leadership team to listen to the perspectives of staff and to discuss what actions could be implemented, both internally and externally. I participated in one such meeting where one of the leadership team began the meeting by asking how everyone was feeling and dealing with the issue. Initially there was silence and a shrugging of shoulders. To me, the staff seemed to be at a loss about what to say. They appeared to be overcome by a range of emotions and feelings.

The leadership team and staff encountered a process which was marked by disappointment, anger, ownership and resolve. One Oxfam NZ staff member remarked that this was the hardest thing that she had to face in her experience working for NGOs over thirteen years. Another staff member (formal interview, September 2018) expressed the following: '*It was shocking and disappointing and frustrating. I would even use the word heartbreaking. In an organisation that people loved and respected and felt proud to work for something like this to happen*'.

The above comments also hint at a sense of personal shame. These staff who had committed the offences were part of the Oxfam Confederation and therefore it reflected on everyone's professionalism and ethics. The comment that the incident was '*heartbreaking*' captures the broad sense of what I could observe and gather from my conversations with the leadership team and staff. This indicated to me that the response developed by staff involved more than statements and actions designed to defend themselves and the organisation. I participated in one staff meeting where staff talked about their hurt and anger regarding the incident and how this needed to be expressed to the outside world (fieldnotes, February 2018). The use of the words '*this will shame us*' by Winnie Byanyima also indicates a sense of collective ownership and this mixture of collective and a sense of individual responsibility also added to the complexity of dealing with the issue and developing a response.

It is notable that the opinion expressed by Winnie Byanyima also refers to forgiveness. She goes on further to say that:

> Oxfam is urgently committed to act upon the moral responsibilities we have towards women in Haiti. We are also meeting with the Government of Haiti to apologise for our mistakes and discuss what more we can do. It is vitally important we re-examine what happened, and learn from it. (Oxfam NZ, 2018b)

This statement was also released to the media by Oxfam NZ (2018b). It was also read out to the leadership team and staff in a meeting that I attended and I observed the impact that it had on everyone (fieldnotes, February 2018). They very much agreed with the sentiments expressed in the statement. A statement from a long-term corporate partner was also read out after this which highlighted all of the work that Oxfam did and that it would continue to have their support. I observed that in some ways this lifted the burden that some of the leadership team and staff were feeling and helped in the healing process. This moral support also gave the whole staff the knowledge that they were not alone and

that their work needed to continue. The release of the Winnie Byanyima statement also indicated that the leadership team was prepared to face the issue head-on both internally and externally.

Values

Ford (2018) suggests that the default external response for many organisations or individuals in cases of sexual misconduct and abuse, as shown in the #MeToo movement, is to defend, deny or bury the allegations. She notes that in many individual cases such an approach can be successful in terms of maintaining reputations. The other response, as noted above, was to focus on revising and strengthening safeguarding policies. Both the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ demonstrated a very different approach in their internal and external response to the Haiti incident. While it did focus on 'safeguarding' it attempted something more profound which was founded on internal dialogue and the use of values. I observed that despite the impact it had on the leadership team and staff, and the difficulties they had in understanding and accepting what had happened, there was a sense that they needed to be proactive in terms of owning the incident, if only through affiliation, and to be open and transparent in dealing with the issue internally and in their external response.

The overall response developed and enacted by Oxfam NZ's leadership team and staff to the Haiti incident was guided by each of their three values of 'be connected/manaakitanga', 'show courage/kaha' and 'seek justice/tika'. What I observed from my conversations with the leadership team and staff was their continued reference to their values and kaupapa, when discussing the Haiti incident and the importance they placed on enacting these values (fieldnotes, February–March 2018). In the week following the media reports the Oxfam NZ Executive Director spoke to staff of '*bringing values back to the surface*'. The media reporting of the Haiti incident also occurred just prior to Oxfam NZ's major fundraising event for the year. Again the Executive Director expressed to all staff that this provided an opportunity to '*put values into action*' during these events (fieldnotes, March 2018). This indicated to me that for the leadership team and staff, values and kaupapa were anchor points around any discussion linked to the Haiti incident.

As noted above, following the Haiti incident reporting Oxfam NZ's leadership team and staff found it difficult to manage and navigate relationships with external stakeholders including its supporters, institutional donors, the Aotearoa New Zealand media and the Aotearoa New Zealand international development sector. Being transparent and open

about its link to Oxfam GB added to this difficulty. It also created a level of unease in using the Oxfam brand to try and raise funds for Oxfam NZ's humanitarian response to the cyclone that had affected Tonga, and which had occurred at the same time. This latter event required greater activity than usual with supporters and donors.

Members of the leadership team also often referred to the need to 'show courage/kaha' in dealing with the issue and to move ahead if only in an uneasy manner in the sense that they did not know what was the 'right' response nor how the media, public, donors nor supporters would react to their response. Their value of 'be connected/manaakitanga' was also used by the leadership team to reinforce the importance of their interconnectedness and collective relations between staff and between staff and supporters and how it could be built in an ethical, respectful and inclusive manner. In the Safeguarding Workshop that followed the reporting of the Haiti incident, CID members identified that leadership courage would be important in responding to these issues, which shows how other members within the sector also placed an importance on the value of courage (CID, 2018).

The public debates and critique following the Haiti incident pointed to a failure of the culture at Oxfam GB and the injustice that had occurred. O'Leary and Meas (2001) discuss how culture can have both a positive and negative influence on any effort to achieve justice, ie, it can contribute to injustice as well as providing a means to overcome injustice. The Haiti incident was an example of the espoused values reality gap which, as noted above, is a factor which can diminish trust in INGOs. On the other hand, the response I participated in and observed during my fieldwork at Oxfam NZ showed evidence of a supportive and positive culture and this helped guide their response to the incident.

Enacting the response

The external response involved three media releases and an interview by the Oxfam NZ Executive Director on the Aotearoa New Zealand national broadcaster (Oxfam NZ, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c; Radio New Zealand, 2018). In these media releases the leadership team expressed their outrage and sadness at the actions of the Oxfam GB staff, their sense of collective responsibility and their determination to put in place comprehensive policies to 'stamp it out everywhere'. In her interview with the national broadcaster the Executive Director explained what a difficult time it was for the organisation and the impact it had on Oxfam NZ and its supporters (Radio New Zealand, 2018). My

understanding of the overall essence of the external response was that it was one of anger, remorse and positive action.

In addition to releasing the statement by Winnie Byanyima, Oxfam NZ was also party to a 10-point action plan which was directed at implementing comprehensive safeguarding policies and bringing about cultural change across the Oxfam Confederation. Oxfam NZ's leadership team were cognisant that these new policies also needed to be integrated into the process of transformation that they were already undertaking. In the 2018/2019 Oxfam NZ Impact Report the Executive Director mentions the Haiti incident in the following way:

> Kua takoto te manuka — The leaves of the manuka tree have been laid down.
>
> In February, we set out a 10-point action plan to strengthen our safeguarding policies and practices and change our culture for the better. We are doing our best to match our apology for our mistakes in Haiti with action: protecting those we work with, and stamping out exploitation, abuse and harassment from all areas where we work. For Oxfam worldwide we step forward to pick up this challenge with humility and a commitment to ensure we have the safety and wellbeing of women and those with less power at the heart of all we do. (Oxfam NZ, 2019b)

During my fieldwork I attended external events where I also observed the Oxfam NZ Executive Director explicitly mentioning the Haiti incident to the audience (fieldnotes, March and November 2018). Further, on the suggestion of a staff member from the Engagements and Communications Directorate Oxfam NZ took the proactive step of calling long-term supporters to alert them to the reporting of the Haiti incident, Oxfam NZ's staff sense of shock and the efforts the organisation was making to respond in an open and transparent manner (fieldnotes, November 2018). The Executive Director mentioned in the Radio New Zealand interview that what had occurred was a betrayal of the trust that people had in the organisation and its moral and ethical foundation. To overcome this, I observed that the leadership team and staff, through openness and transparency, attempted to communicate that Oxfam NZ, in responding to the reporting of these incidents, was an organisation that could continue to be trusted.

The processes associated with modern international aid and development work, which often has a focus on outcomes and endpoints, can sometimes result in little time and space being available to engage staff adequately in the process and discussions of

non-project management issues such as organisational transformation or addressing ethical concerns. The development of the internal and external response by the leadership team at Oxfam NZ was not directed at creating an ideal, but accentuated the need for taking ethical issues into consideration when making development decisions, enacting values, and building an ability to negotiate through difficult circumstances as they arose. As a result, I would argue that the difficult time that the leadership team and staff experienced in dealing with the Haiti incident became part of their journey of transformation. It was a profound period in that the experience and their response helped reframe their thinking about their development practices and how these can be driven by the enactment of their values. It also brought to the fore the concept of 'care', which, I would argue, is an alternative basis on which to frame transformative actions and development practices. How the concept of 'care' informed the leadership team's internal response to the reporting of the Haiti incident is discussed in the next section.

A practice of care

According to the feminist political theorist Tronto (1993, p. 161, 2013), 'care' is a necessary quality to live together well in a pluralistic society. For Tronto, 'care' is a moral and political concept. All human beings need and receive 'care', and give 'care' to others (Barnes et al., 2016, Tronto, 1993). In this sense humans are interdependent beings and 'care' is a fundamental aspect of this interdependency. My observation of the internal response to the Haiti incident by the leadership team is that this response incorporated a practice of 'care'. I have therefore taken Tronto's concept and arguments and have used them to provide a fuller understanding of Oxfam NZ's internal response.

I have noted that the leadership team and staff had already built a strong cultural foundation based on its whānau and the concept of 'care' is part of the 'be connected/manaakitanga' and 'seek justice/tika' values. The overall essence of the values system suggests standing up for other people and showing care about and for them. This also applied to the internal interconnectedness between the staff and that all should be treated in a respectful and just manner. I have noted previously in this thesis that within Oxfam NZ there was an existing authorising environment which allowed staff to be open and willing to discuss issues and concerns, and to put forward solutions. These factors helped them and the leadership team in developing their response, a response that encompassed not only their values but expressed their care about what had occurred, the individuals concerned, and that incidents such as those which occurred in Haiti should not be repeated. Further, according to Tronto (Fisher and Tronto, 1990, p. 40), caring for each other and respecting each other can provide a process of repair.

An example of this 'care' was that the leadership team expressed a great deal of concern about the impact that the reporting of the Haiti incident had on staff. For example, I had many conversations with individual staff members where they expressed the emotions of anger and shame and questioned the value of what Oxfam was about, particularly if such incidents could happen. As noted above there were numerous meetings to discuss the issue. In one such meeting that I participated in, a member of the leadership team stressed that anyone who was feeling distressed could contact her directly and that the leadership team had an open door policy for anyone who wished to discuss the incident on a one-on-one private basis (fieldnotes, February 2018). The leadership team were quick to see the significance of the impact of the Haiti incident on staff and particularly that it affected people on a personal level. In subsequent meetings and everyday encounters the leadership team also continued to talk about the incident and continued to check-in with staff about how they were coping over the course of the weeks following the media reports. They also highlighted that it was critical that all staff be party to, and involved in, developing and enacting the internal and external responses.

It is notable that there were, at the time of my fieldwork, many feminists and advocates of gender justice who worked in Oxfam NZ and what this specific incident did was damage the trust and confidence that some staff had in the moral economy of the Oxfam Confederation, which was supposed to challenge gender injustices. One staff member described the Haiti incident as a *'fall from grace'* (fieldnotes, March 2018). I understood this to mean that this staff member perceived Oxfam as a well-regarded organisation which had high moral and ethical standards. The failure of its culture to prevent an abuse of power was a systemic failure and it was difficult for staff to comprehend both the incident and the initial reaction of Oxfam GB. This is not to say that staff felt that any of the organisations within the Oxfam Confederation, including Oxfam NZ, could be immune from cases of sexual misconduct and abuse. It was known to have happened within the sector on a number of occasions. However this did not prevent the shock and deeply felt impact when it did occur, and particularly when it was perpetrated by members of one's own organisation.

A practice of 'care' nurtures a sense of responsibility and can lead to a process of reflection on such concepts as power and privilege, and owning one's behaviours and actions. Spivak (as cited in Nagar, 2015) notes that people take on responsibility for/to themselves and for/to others when they respond to a call for action. The reporting of the Haiti incident was such that it required the leadership team and staff to make a response

and to accept a level of responsibility for themselves and their organisation. As noted earlier in this chapter, the leadership team also tried to raise the idea of a shared responsibility amongst other INGOs in the Aotearoa New Zealand sector to respond or to address cases of sexual misconduct and abuse. This was based on their understanding that such incidents were widespread and complex in nature, as was highlighted by the #MeToo movement.

Heron (2007) looks at this very issue in her analysis of international female development workers in Southern Africa and asks the question: 'What does it mean to be responsible for each other in the context of the global?' (Heron in Lahiri-Dutt, 2017, p. 327). She concludes that there are no easy answers and that people who work in the aid and development sector will always reflect on questions of responsibility and morality. What is important, Heron argues, is to be able to understand one's own power and to confront and discuss how that can influence one's actions. This is a much more difficult path to follow and practice than that of being ambivalent and avoiding issues because of the difficulties associated with finding solutions or facing the reality of those solutions.

Prior to the reporting of the Haiti incident, the leadership team and staff had attempted to increase the awareness of responsibility within the organisation. An example of this was their commitment to te Tiriti and to help staff become more informed about Aotearoa New Zealand's colonial history and to integrate Māori tikanga and kaupapa into the everyday life of Oxfam NZ. In Chapter Five I also discussed the efforts by the leadership team to create space for staff to undertake conversations about power and privilege and the responsibilities associated with possessing these. In a number of ways these experiences provided staff with a framework to help them to deal with, and respond to, the Haiti incident with a much broader perspective and a sense of care.

Another way that the leadership team demonstrated a practice of 'care' was to provide time for reflection. Some staff used this period to try and understand the inherent power within the Oxfam Confederation and how there is a responsibility for members of the organisation to not abuse that power. I participated in meetings where staff also discussed how they could challenge and reform the structures and values of the Oxfam Confederation to mitigate the opportunities to abuse that power.

In this regard what the leadership team at Oxfam NZ, and leaders within the Oxfam Confederation tried to do was frame the Haiti incident, and their response, as an issue about power and the exploitation of power. The relationship between power and care is a

complex one and to practice 'care', I would argue, is to acknowledge the inherent power imbalances in relationships and to work towards negating the abuse of such power imbalances. Framing the Haiti incident in terms of a power issue was expressed in public statements made by Oxfam NZ, Oxfam Australia and Oxfam International (Ball, 2018; CID, 2018; Oxfam International, 2018; Oxfam NZ, 2018a). For example, Rachel Ball, the then head of Public Policy and Advocacy at Oxfam Australia wrote that: 'We must also attack the problem at its source by identifying and challenging unfair distributions of power… if human rights are being sidelined by those in power, we need to respond'. Oxfam NZ (2018a) also wrote the following:

> What happened in Haiti and clearly in other countries we work in was a few privileged men abusing the very people they were meant to protect — and our processes were too weak to stop them. Oxfam gave them power and they used it against powerless women.

Members of the leadership team at Oxfam NZ told me that they were guided by the application of feminist principles in their efforts to frame the Haiti incident as an issue about power (fieldnotes, March 2018). Some of these principles which they referenced included sharing of power, challenging one's own behaviour, no justice without gender justice, valuing safety, providing a supportive environment and eliminating gender-based violence.[23] It is notable that the dominant group within the leadership team at the time of my fieldwork were also feminists and activists and so the application of these principles in framing their response to the Haiti incident was a natural extension and enactment of their personal beliefs and values.

All of the feminist principles noted above suggest a sense of 'care' (Tronto, 1993) and ensuring that one's own actions should take into consideration the rights of others and promote their wellbeing. A member of the leadership team noted that using such principles to frame the response to the Haiti incident also helped staff to understand the interconnectedness between the abuse of power and a range of discriminatory behaviours (fieldnotes, March 2018; CID, 2018). The application of a practice of 'care' was one way by which such behaviours could be negated.

The practice of 'care' undertaken by the leadership team at Oxfam NZ in their response to the Haiti incident also reflected their sense of whānau. It encompassed support, time for

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[23] All eleven of the principles were later formalised in a document entitled 'Feminist Principles' which was released by Oxfam GB (2020).

reflection and open and honest discussion of the incident and its impact on staff. By using feminist principles the leadership team also attempted to help staff understand that the issue was not just an isolated incident but that it had its genesis in the inherent power that existed in relationships and to be cognisant of not abusing that power.

Summary

In this chapter I have focused on the internal and external responses by the Oxfam NZ leadership team and staff to the Haiti incident — cases of sexual misconduct and abuse by Oxfam GB staff which was reported during the time of my fieldwork for this thesis. The incident was highly significant for the Oxfam Confederation and in turn for Oxfam NZ, and responding to it took precedence over all other everyday work and activity at the time.

I argue that the process of developing Oxfam NZ's internal and external response to the reporting of the Haiti incident was an example of ethical negotiation (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Gibson-Graham et al., 2021).The response by the leadership team and staff, and the process that they went through to develop this response, was a clear indication to me of how they had transformed their thinking about their development practices. Rather than responding to the crisis with a marketing 'spin', or a defensive declaration of innocence, the leadership let their decisions be guided by their values and their ethical foundations. This meant grappling with the emotional impacts on staff within the organisation, and taking public responsibility, while recognising that there were no easy answers. Internally the response centred on dealing with the impact that the incident had on staff morale and issues of shame and shared responsibility. Externally, the response involved being open and transparent in the public debate and a demonstration of remorse and commitment to positive action.

In responding, the leadership team drew on their organisational values of 'be connected/manaakitanga', 'show courage/kaha' and 'seek justice/tika', and feminist principles of 'care' and reflexivity (Tronto, 1993) to navigate the moral and political aspects of the Haiti incident. The leadership team attempted to confront the issues surrounding the incident, to own it collectively as an organisation, and to take responsibility for providing solutions and actions to address the underlying causes of such abuses of power. They also tried to create a comprehensive response from the international development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand as a whole.

This case study provides a different and informative insight into Oxfam NZ's transformation journey. By attempting to respond to the issue in an open and transparent way, it caused the leadership team and staff to undertake reflective thinking about what was core and foundational to their organisational identity and what should guide their development practices. I argue that it is an indication of how the leadership team and the staff put their values and the principles I have associated with those values (the concepts of 'place', identity, relationality and collective action) into practice. In this regard it became part of their transformation journey and as such provides an appropriate closure to my discussion on the journey towards the transformation of Oxfam NZ's development practices.

In the following chapter I present my conclusions. I provide a summary of my findings from each chapter and my overall conclusions from my analysis throughout the thesis.

Chapter Nine
Conclusion

INGOs have played a major role in the provision of international aid and development and have worked towards the eradication of poverty and injustice over the past 70 years. The approaches that they take and the work that they do have been the subject of much debate. On the one hand they have been commended for their work and on the other hand they have been increasingly criticised as being slow to adapt to the contemporary context of change and uncertainty in which they operate. Further, their ability to engage well with the challenges facing the development sector such as a competitive funding environment, maintaining public trust, working in genuine partnership with local communities, delivering on multiple accountability demands and revising their development practices has been questioned. This has been compounded by the fact that INGOS are also contending with many complex and contextual influences. These include but are not limited to issues relating to their ethical foundations, their business models and the challenges presented by continuous social change.

The call for change to INGO development practices has come from numerous sources including academics, development professionals and local partners. However, there are few practical examples of how to engage well with these demands and the challenges inherent therein. What I present in this thesis, using the example of Oxfam NZ, is an exploration of what it could take for a development organisation to change. I was interested in exploring the following questions: How can INGOs transform themselves to engage well with the challenges in a contemporary context of change and uncertainty? How do INGOs bring this about?

The journey of transformation undertaken by Oxfam NZ offers some important insights to finding answers to these questions. The organisation began this journey in 2016 in an effort to transform its development practices. The thesis discusses and analyses this effort; what factors influenced the journey; and what new narratives and insights were gained about development practices and the process of transformation.

The discussion and analysis is based on field notes of my observations of, and conversations with, the leadership team and staff, and my participation in Oxfam NZ's activities over a period of 20 months while I worked in-house as an action researcher. Working with the leadership team and staff was a unique opportunity for me and allowed me to be involved in the day to day practice of organisational change. For Oxfam NZ this

transformation was driven by global pressure from the Oxfam Confederation, the appointment of a new Executive Director, financial sustainability and the need to restructure the organisation. Working within the organisation and with the leadership team and staff allowed me to conduct an in-depth and dynamic analysis of how these pressures and the leadership and staff's responses to them played out in real time.

I used the concept of appreciative inquiry to guide my action research. This consisted of providing constructive advice which supported what was positive and possible, and which assisted in the understanding of how INGOs can transform themselves. The following provides a short summary of Chapters One to Eight.

Chapter summaries

Chapter One of the thesis highlighted the historic and continuing critique of INGO development practices. It also outlined and proposed four key concepts drawing on postdevelopment literature: autonomy, solidarity, plurality and ontology. In addition I outlined three Waypoints from the Wayfinding Leadership Framework: Waypoint 2 (Implementing Values), Waypoint 3 (Human Dynamics) and Waypoint 5 (Exploring and Discovering Destinations). Both of these theoretical frameworks I used to illuminate and understand Oxfam NZ's transformation journey. The postdevelopment ideas of autonomy, solidarity, plurality and ontology were used to explore the steps and new practices that Oxfam NZ were attempting to put in place, while wayfinding, and the language of waypoints, characterised the overall transformation journey and the way in which those practices were able to emerge.

Chapter Two provided background information on Oxfam NZ as an organisation, the cultural and political context of Aotearoa New Zealand, and influential contemporary trends in the aid and international development sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. I presented this information to contextualise the situation in which the leadership team and staff within Oxfam NZ operated and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of what internal and external factors influenced and shaped their transformation journey.

In Chapter Three I outlined my action research and ethnographic methodology, discussed the process through which I negotiated a research partnership with Oxfam NZ and my complex positionality as both insider and outsider. This method was critical to answering the questions I posed as it allowed me to accompany the leadership team and staff on their journey and gain deep insights into the changes from inside the

organisation and as they happened in real time. I was able to be immersed in the organisation in a way that allowed for a rich understanding of the context and enabled me to earn trust and build relationships with the leadership team and staff. And I was able to contribute to the journey of transformation within Oxfam NZ from my analysis of my observations — one of the main drivers for me to embark on this research.

I suggest that there are a number of contributions that an action researcher can make to a transformation process of this type. I found that as an embedded action researcher I could provide a different perspective for the leadership team and staff in respect to their efforts. I was also able to act as a 'critical friend', and provide a link to knowledge, patterns, people and systems that they normally would not have had access to. As one staff member noted, change is a long and lonely journey and it is helpful to share your ambitions and challenges. These comments suggest that a valuable collaboration can be developed between researchers and practitioners and that there is knowledge and lessons to be gained from research both with and on organisations which are mutually beneficial.

Chapter Four focused on Oxfam NZ's organisational values which the leadership team and staff had developed just prior to my fieldwork time. These were 'be connected/manaakitanga', 'show courage/kaha' and 'seek justice/tika'. It was believed by the new Executive Director that the previous set of eight statements which were in the organisation's Strategic Plan and which provided guiding principles were not widely known and did not '*speak from the heart*'. Further, the new values took precedence over the values of the Oxfam Confederation (empowerment, accountability, inclusiveness) and reflected te ao Māori.

I argue that the leadership team and staff took a conscious step to ground their values in 'place', that is, the historical, cultural, social and political influences that give identity to a geographical area and its people (Underhill-Sem, 2002). The values reflected Oxfam NZ's identity as an Aotearoa New Zealand based organisation, the beliefs of the leadership team and staff, and the importance of the collective as an orienting concern and a focus of practice both within the organisation and with its partners. Informed by a postdevelopment engagement with ontology, and in particular Escobar's (2018) concept of taking an 'ontological turn', I explain how the new values were not only an important step in the organisation's transformation journey but also provided a basis from which the leadership and staff could explore and support a new narrative around being 'place' based. I also draw on Spiller et al. 's Waypoint 2 (Implementing Values) to support these findings and to illustrate how the leadership team and staff attempted to embed the

values within the organisation and its kaupapa, and argue that this was a strength of their transformation journey.

In Chapter Four I also discussed the attempts that the leadership team and staff made to diversify their income base by offering a commercial fundraising service to other organisations. This action was undertaken to create more financial independence. They used their values to support the activity and I argue that as such it provided an example of enacting their values. While the activity was unable to fully replace traditional funding sources, it provided a new narrative for their development practices based on the idea of 'profit-for-good'. In this chapter I showed the importance of contextualised values as a basis for a process of transformation and how they can support wayfinding towards finding new narratives around development practices. It also highlighted the difficult and ongoing negotiations that occur as values begin to be embedded and enacted in an organisation. In this sense this chapter provided the foundation for the thesis and the analysis provided in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter Five focused on the value of 'be connected/manaakitanga' and how the leadership team and staff put this value into practice through exploring the links between their identity as an Aotearoa New Zealand based organisation and an engagement with te ao Māori. An engagement with te ao Māori had already begun when the values were constructed and agreed upon. This continued through policies and practices that ensured their embedding into everyday organisational life. In this chapter I focused on four specific practices which demonstrated this engagement and in particular how these are linked to the value of 'be connected/manaakitanga'. These were rituals of collectively singing Māori songs, using te Reo Māori and cultural Māori metaphors, and making a commitment to te Tiriti. Drawing on Spiller at al. 's Waypoint 3 (Human Dynamics), I argue that these practices helped strengthen the importance of human development and dynamics including individual and collective self-knowledge and reflexivity, and influenced how everyday interactions occurred between staff in the organisation. Building on my discussion in Chapter Four, I demonstrate how their efforts to engage with te ao Māori and the notion of 'place' were very much interlinked and became part of the organisation's identity and transformation journey. Drawing on the postdevelopment idea of plurality I was able to understand the significance of what took place and the attempts being made by the leadership team and staff to value the knowledge and practices of te ao Māori. Connecting to 'place' and an engagement with te ao Māori was, I suggest, another example of Escobar 's (2018) concept of taking an 'ontological turn'. The practices I discussed provided a 'place' based and identity narrative from which the

leadership team and staff could reframe their thinking about how to transform their development practices.

In Chapter Six I discuss and analyse the Oxfam NZ Partnerships Strategy. The Strategy was developed by the Partnerships Directorate to reframe how staff interacted with their partners and to transition away from project management and transactional contract models of partnership. The Strategy proposed a relational approach to partnerships and emphasised 'be connected/manaakitanga', one of Oxfam NZ's three values. I used the work of Eyben (2006, 2010) to explore the reflexive process undertaken by staff in designing the Strategy. This reflective process and the Strategy was guided by a recognition of a shared Pacific culture and an engagement with te ao Māori. The Strategy proposed a new basis from which partnerships could be built — relationships that were strong, respectful and inclusive. The Strategy used the metaphor of the whāriki to highlight the complex nature and support required to build partnerships, partnerships which would require both trust and power sharing. This also signalled the importance of the postdevelopment idea of autonomy for Oxfam NZ's partners, particularly those in the Pacific. I argue that the Strategy provided a new narrative around the importance of building and maintaining relationships. It also provided insights into how the leadership team and staff could interact with their partners, how they could better support partnerships and how this could help transform Oxfam NZ's development practices to better support partners.

This chapter also looked at the challenges that staff within the Partnerships Directorate faced in their efforts to implement the Strategy. These included navigating the power dynamics that were inherent in their existing relationships with, for example, other Oxfam offices and MFAT, and the financial practices that were used in the organisation to fund the work of the Partnerships Directorate. Due to the pervasive nature of previous approaches and the broader structural nature of the sector, this proved to be a multifaceted and political process which required much negotiation and contestation. The leadership team and staff had to think through what a relational approach to partnerships would mean in terms of power sharing, decision making and accountability, and develop the infrastructure to support this new partnership model (Eyben, 2006; Roche and Madvig, 2016).

Despite the challenges, I argue that the development of the Strategy was a strength of the Oxfam NZ transformation journey. It proposed ideas about how INGOs could engage well in partnerships and work towards greater autonomy in the sense of a

postdevelopment idea of autonomy. However, the discussion also raised the challenges associated with taking such an approach to partnerships and the ramifications for sector and organisational processes and structures.

In Chapter Seven I discuss how the participation in and co-leadership by the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate within Oxfam NZ in the 'Back the Plan: Back to Zero' campaign added a new dimension to their development practices. This advocacy coalition was formed in the lead up to the 2017 Aotearoa New Zealand national election. It brought together 14 INGOs and advocated for the introduction of domestic legislation on climate change in Aotearoa New Zealand. Drawing on the scholarship of de Waal (2015), I outline the historical changes in advocacy practices within INGOs. The advocacy coalition was another example of how advocacy within INGOs is evolving. While the advocacy coalition was a deviation from de Waal 's (2015) model of transnational collective action it showed how the crafting of a domestic campaign strategy needed to be context-specific and required trade-offs. I discussed, based on conversations and interviews with advocacy coalition members, the inner workings of the coalition including its operation, how Oxfam NZ and CID went about making climate change a legitimate campaign issue, the need to manage external influences and the important role of leadership. I argue that the advocacy coalition is an example of how power was nuanced and utilised. Oxfam NZ and CID used their individual and collective power and the advocacy coalition itself had a power inherent in its solidarity which influenced decision makers and the respective supporter bases of the members of the coalition.

The new dimension that was added to the development practices of Oxfam NZ was to bring a postdevelopment idea of solidarity to the fore and the leadership team and staff did this by framing climate change as an issue of global concern, an issue of equity and of shared responsibility. This demonstrated an enactment of the value of 'seek justice/tika'. The involvement and co-leadership of the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate in the advocacy coalition also demonstrated the value of 'be connected/manaakitanga' in terms of working with others in the sector.

There were many lessons learnt by the Advocacy and Campaigns Directorate in terms of enhancing domestic engagement, promoting collective action, engaging with politics and contributing to a 'beyond aid' narrative. These lessons added new knowledge and by doing so strengthened and progressed Oxfam NZ's transformation journey. Further it showed that advocacy through collective action can give INGOs the potential to engage well in a contemporary context of change and uncertainty.

In Chapter Eight, I analysed the leadership team and staff responses to global media reports of sexual misconduct and abuse by Oxfam GB staff which dated back to 2010 and 2011. This proved to be a very difficult time for the organisation and caused much reflection. I explore how the leadership team and staff went through a process of acceptance, understanding responsibility and ethical negotiation. I argue that their internal and external response was guided by Oxfam NZ's values, reflexivity, and a feminist concept of care, and was an example of Gibson-Graham's (2006; Gibson-Graham et al., 2021) concept of 'becoming an ethical subject'. I argue that the process became an example of the leadership team and staff enacting their values and this reinforced the importance of their kaupapa. This was both in terms of how they dealt with the impact that it had on staff and how they were open and transparent in discussing the issue in the public space. They also attempted to create a collective response in the sector to the underlying issues associated with the Haiti incident. I suggest that their response became an important part of their transformation journey as it provided new insights about the importance of values and their enactment in a crisis and a new narrative about how development practices could be based on the concept of 'care' (Tronto, 1993).

Overall insights

My overall insights of the transformation journey attempted by Oxfam NZ are outlined below. These insights were gained through answers to the questions which framed the analysis proved in this thesis.

The first question I sought to answer was: **How did the leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ attempt to transform their development practices?** The leadership team and staff at Oxfam NZ established the groundwork for their transformation by developing a new set of values which were different from those of the Oxfam Confederation and which were connected to 'place', the layered context in which Oxfam NZ existed. The leadership team also established an identity which was connected to 'place' and included an engagement with te ao Māori. Staff developed a strategy which proposed a relational approach to partnerships and they extended their advocacy practices by co-leading and being involved in a large collective action and solidarity based advocacy coalition. Finally, when Oxfam NZ was tainted by a crisis not of its own making, the leadership team and staff used the Oxfam NZ values and the concept of 'care' to guide their response. In all of the above efforts there was a strong influence of values and an

enactment of values, which played a crucial role in the efforts to transform development practices in the organisation.

The second question I explored in this thesis is: **What influenced this transformation journey?** While the initial drivers of the transformation journey were embedded in the 'Oxfam 2020' goals (a response to the broad critique of INGOs), other factors such as the appointment of a new Executive Director, the need for financial sustainability and an associated restructure of the organisation were also important influences. I also observed that there was a sentiment within Oxfam NZ to affirm its identity as an Aotearoa New Zealand based organisation and that this involved a commitment to te Tiriti and being connected to 'place', both of which involved an engagement with te ao Māori. There was also discontent with the transactional model of managing partnerships. The general election of 2017 in Aotearoa New Zealand provided an opportunity for Oxfam NZ to engage in an advocacy campaign and an opportunity to work together with other INGOs in the sector to change government policy on its response to climate change. Finally, media scrutiny of Oxfam GB following the Haiti media reports required Oxfam NZ to deal with the internal and external impacts of these reports. Thus, internal political dynamics, external shifts in the industry, along with place-based contextual factors and debates in the media have all been important factors in Oxfam NZ's process of change.

Finally, this thesis asked: **What new narratives and insights about development practices emerged from Oxfam NZ's experiences?** The new narratives that emerged about development practices were the importance of Oxfam NZ's values and having an understanding of identity and connection to 'place' as strengths on which to ground its development practices. Further, an enactment of values and the implementation of the knowledge gained from a connection to 'place' also occurred. The Partnerships Strategy, the advocacy coalition and the practice of 'care' were all examples of development practices which were empowered by the narratives of values, identity and connection to 'place'. What also emerged for Oxfam NZ were narratives based on 'profit-for-good' and involvement in issues that were considered 'beyond aid' and issues which required a shared responsibility and response.

From the findings to the research questions, it is possible to extrapolate some overall insights about Oxfam NZ's process of transformation. Below I offer five key insights in response to the final empirical question of my thesis: **What new insights about the process of transformation emerged?** In these I draw on Spiller et al. 's (2015)

Waypoint 5 (Exploring and Discovering Destinations), which highlights the importance of having an exploring and discovering mindset, and being open to possibilities, potential and new realities rather than being focused on a future state.

Insight 1: The process was an emergent one in that there was progressive learning and a commitment to learning and responding to change.

I found that the process of transformation which occurred within Oxfam NZ was based on an emergent learning process that grew from the grass roots. Once the intuitive seeds for change started to take root, the process followed a journey of discovery particularly in relation to defining the organisation's values, identity and kaupapa. The process did not attempt to reach a prescribed outcome but emphasis was put on learning and adaptation based on enacting clear and embedded values rather than following top-down plans and change management strategies. This, I argue, allowed an ability to learn and respond to change to be developed. The value of such an approach, as argued by Spiller et al. (2015), is that it opens up new possibilities for organisations and a realisation of potential to explore and discover new narratives rather than being focused on a predetermined destination.

Insight 2: The process of transformation was multifaceted, taking place alongside concurrent organisational-wide changes and changes to specific development practices.

Oxfam NZ's process of transformation took place alongside organisational-wide changes demonstrated by the new set of values, the engagement with te ao Māori, the reaffirmation of its identity and kaupapa, and the attempts to change its business model. These multifaceted changes were complementary and supportive of the work of staff within three of the four Directorates within Oxfam NZ who explored and tried to develop new strategies and models on which to undertake their development practices (partnerships, advocacy and income generation). These simultaneous attempts to bring about change across the organisation demonstrated a commitment by the leadership team and staff to the journey of transformation they were on.

Insight 3: Living the values and grounding this in the everyday created an environment which encouraged the emergent process.

The concurrent nature of the changes that were occurring in Oxfam NZ reflected that the process was grounded in the everyday. This was evidenced by rituals, everyday

conversations and continuous reflective discussions about the organisations' purpose, values, identity, kaupapa and the importance of the collective. This was supported by an engagement with te ao Māori through song, dance, language and the use of Māori metaphors. By using the metaphor of the waka and the need for all to play a part in sailing the vessel, this helped to create a focus on the everyday and the collective rather than outcomes and endpoints. Many of the everyday activities were undertaken as a collective but it was also important that the collective lived out the values in those everyday activities. What occurred and is ongoing at Oxfam NZ is reflective of Spiller et al.'s call for organisations to be committed to learning and responding to change, and embedding these two capabilities in the everyday routines and practices of organisational life.

Insight 4: The process was shaped by the leadership team creating space and opportunity to put the values into practice.

I observed that the leadership team acknowledged that the journey they were undertaking would be filled with challenges and uncertainty and therefore there was no specific timeline for change to occur nor were they intent on reaching a defined future point. In this sense they created space and time for staff to discuss and debate the many complex factors which influence development practices and to gain an understanding and respect of the perspectives of others within and external to the organisation. This promoted a sense of connection and care which came to the fore in the response to the Haiti incident.

Insight 5: The process allowed for the absorption of the broader cultural, historical and political context in which Oxfam NZ operated.

The process of transformation occurred at a unique turning point within Aotearoa New Zealand. The period saw a change in political outlook and a continuation of the movement to recognise and implement the responsibilities of te Tiriti. The unique nature of engaging with te ao Māori had a significant influence on the process itself and a focus on the importance of understanding the perspectives and knowledge offered by other cultures. It also allowed for the exploration of how being an Aotearoa New Zealand based organisation can be pivotal and allowed them to identify elements of their development practices and activities in the Pacific region.

Before I began my action research journey within Oxfam NZ I anticipated that the organisation's process of transformation would be based on the application of adaptive management techniques and strategies and that these would be already in place. However, what became clear when I took up my position as an action researcher was that the leadership team and staff were at a stage where they were building the foundations of their journey and they were learning and understanding how to sail their waka on the ocean.

It is acknowledged that many INGOs, in response to the criticism of their development practices, are attempting to change the way they undertake these practices. Further, it is also acknowledged that INGOs face a number of challenges in the contemporary context of change and uncertainty. How they go about such transformation and how they engage well with the challenges is still an open question. My research provides insights into how INGOs can engage well with these challenges by considering how to:

- connect more strongly to 'place' and the cultural specificities of local contexts;
- develop values which are meaningful for staff, and can be applied in their relationships with partners; and
- undertake a change process that is imbued with their values and is emergent and open-ended.

Attention to these kinds of processes might enable INGOs to, as postdevelopment scholars McKinnon et al. (as cited in Klein and Morreo, 2019) argue, stay in the transition and continue to reshape their practice.

It is also acknowledged that Oxfam NZ is a small organisation and therefore it is reasonable to ask whether the findings, insights and the transformation process that I have analysed in this thesis would be applicable in a larger organisation. This is a very complex question to answer and would require an understanding of, and more research to reveal, whether such an organisation could partially or fully replicate the foundations of Oxfam NZ's journey, that is, a connection to 'place', having values that can be lived and enacted in their development practices, and creating conditions for knowledge and learning to emerge. This may be much more difficult to achieve in a larger organisation because of the increase in the number and complexity of its activities, the number of staff and the number of internal and external relationships involved. Further, and as indicated by my analysis, undertaking such a transformation, as occurred in Oxfam NZ, requires time and space for learning. It also requires organisational-wide changes and/or changes on specific levels, and these to be implemented at the same time as business-as-usual. It would also face the same operational difficulties as those encountered by Oxfam NZ —

difficulties in challenging and changing funding structures and risking income that is tied to current practices and transactional models of project management, and developing structures to support new practices. Oxfam NZ are still attempting to resolve these challenges. Further, many INGOs, like Oxfam NZ, also belong to Confederations, which adds an additional layer of complexity to bringing about change. However, as the Oxfam NZ example has shown, having a strong values-based approach which the organisation is committed to and which is embedded in its culture, can provide a platform to engage well in a contemporary context of change and uncertainty, and bring about change. In fact, in large organisations there may be potential for individual sections of the organisation to start thinking about and implementing alternatives approaches to their particular development practices.

I demonstrate in this thesis that postdevelopment thinking, especially around autonomy, solidarity, plurality and ontology can be useful in understanding and supporting change in INGO development practices. The efforts to change Oxfam NZ's development practices oriented the organisation's development thinking towards addressing power structures (so as to give regional offices more autonomy) and move away from the narrative of 'us and them' by introducing inclusive and respectful partnerships. The efforts also brought about a working on issues of shared concern with other INGOs and leading a collective action based solidarity in the local development sector. Space was offered to consider and legitimise other cultures and perspectives through a valuing of plurality and an engagement with te ao Māori. Finally there was a recognition of the importance of ontology in the sense that the leadership team and staff made a conscious effort to rethink and reaffirm their individual and organisational identities.

The thesis also contributes to wayfinding scholarship by providing an example of wayfinding within an INGO and demonstrates the importance of Waypoint 2 (Implementing Values), Waypoint 3 (Human Dynamics) and Waypoint 5 (Exploring and Discovering Destinations) in a context where INGOs are looking to change their development practices.

The exploratory journey that the leadership team and staff within Oxfam NZ are on means that they will continue to make changes to their development practices as they also learn from what they have developed and enacted. Oxfam NZ needs to continue to sustain the journey of transformation it has begun, ensure it holds onto and learns from its experience, and create more change within the organisation and the sector. It is acknowledged that further change may be even more difficult than what it has already

been able to achieve because of the broader political and systematic constraints within the development sector. While the changes that have been put in place by Oxfam NZ are significant in terms of its understanding of the organisation's identity, its connection to 'place', its values, and the influences that these have on its development practices, there is opportunity for more to be achieved. These opportunities could include creating greater autonomy for local partners and learning how to protect and support the development of their partners' mana; participating in more collective action in the sector; continuing to implement its Partnerships Strategy and developing the support infrastructure for it; expanding its profit-for-good income generation; and progressing the engagement with te ao Māori and its commitment to te Tiriti.

The Executive Director aptly gave a sense of what there is still to do by making the following comment '*we have just pushed the waka off the beach*' (informal conversation, December 2020).

EPILOGUE:

We are Oxfam Aotearoa

Image 7: Luella Linaker and a member of the Papatuanuku kokiri marae
Source: Oxfam Aotearoa website

It had been some months since I had contact with Oxfam NZ. I had moved out of Auckland and due to the COVID-19 pandemic I had been unable to visit or see any of the staff I had worked with in person. I was talking to a member of the Partnerships Directorate on the phone and she told me that the pandemic had reduced their funding and therefore the organisation's ability to maintain its operations.

Around nine months following this conversation, the Executive Director contacted me and asked if I would present the findings from my doctoral thesis. This was an opportune time as the leadership team and staff had just taken a significant and exciting step in their journey of transformation. The organisation had changed its name from Oxfam NZ to Oxfam Aotearoa. They launched the new name at the Papatuanuku kokiri marae in Mangere, Auckland. The above image shows Luella Linaker, the Co-Chair of the Oxfam Aotearoa Board and a member of the Papatuanuku kokiri marae performing a hongi. This was a night, the Executive Director described to me, of singing, dancing and living their values. The intentions and sentiments behind the name change were captured in a statement published on the website:

> As an international development agency, we recognise that we can only support and partner with communities across the world if we also support the self-determination of tangata whenua [people of the land] here in Aotearoa.

> In supporting self-determination of tangata whenua, we want a meaningful and committed relationship that better informs how we work together with partners and colleagues elsewhere in the world on their own mana motuhake [self-determination] journey. That means supporting the tino rangatiratanga

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[self-determination] of Māori as enshrined and protected in te Tiriti o Waitangi. The work Oxfam Aotearoa supports in the Pacific and around the world is enabled by virtue of the place that te Tiriti o Waitangi gives us in this land.

We acknowledge how various forms of discrimination intertwine with each other, and know that racism often comes attached to other injustices, and we commit to challenge them all.

We recognise the complex ways in which, historically and currently, international aid and development has perpetuated power imbalances and neo-colonial relationships, and we seek to transform global development from a model of 'charity' to one of justice.

Our core values — tika/justice, māia/courage and manaaki/connections — shape our kaupapa and our commitment to it. These values are not just outward-facing, our staff live them and use them as a compass to guide our journey as individuals and as an organisation.

We commit to doing the work required of us to better understand and respond to the historical and current racism and colonisation of Aotearoa, and other intersecting injustices. This will help our team walk with authenticity alongside those who are experiencing neo-colonialism and injustice around the world today. We want to contribute constructively to conversations about the future of Aotearoa, and the political and constitutional systems that need to be transformed to live up to the promise of te Tiriti o Waitangi.

This is only possible alongside a stronger understanding of te ao Māori, which brings a more holistic, relationship-centred approach, which is central to our kaupapa.

We acknowledge that it is an ongoing organisational journey to deepen our knowledge and response to the history, impacts, and contemporary importance of te Tiriti o Waitangi. We are committed to this journey. (Our commitment to te Tiriti o Waitangi, Oxfam Aotearoa, 2021)

I visited the leadership team, staff and the Board and team the following week in the Auckland office and learnt about the future direction that the staff had expressed in

terms of further engaging with te ao Māori and building upon what had transpired during my time at the organisation. New ideas included developing a core programme for current and new staff which centred on learning about te Tiriti, and developing branding and communications which reflected te ao Māori. It was inspiring to hear about this next step in their journey of transformation, particularly in light of the challenges they had faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It confirmed for me how their journey was grounded in their connection to 'place' and the importance of enacting their values.

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Appendix — Semi-structured interview guide

The areas of questioning below will be adapted as the interview process evolves. This will mean varying the questions depending on what stage the process is at and what important missing information has been identified either by the researcher or partner as per the action research process.

1. In thinking about the initiatives that you have been involved with, how do you characterise them?
2. Is there readiness in the organisation?
3. What are the critical elements which are enabling (or disabling) or provide an authorising environment for these activities?
4. What are the opportunities and threats?
5. How do these elements affect the process?
6. In thinking about the people involved in this initiative, how do they respond and relate to each other?
7. Who are the key players in these initiatives and activities?
8. How is leadership or lack of leadership helping or hindering the process?
9. Would you involve anyone else in the process?
10. Are you involved in decision making processes and action?
11. How is this initiative impacting your individual work? The work of your team?
12. Are there ripple effects within the organisation or with external stakeholders?
13. Is this change process challenging the way you think about development work and impact?
14. Do you think that you think or act differently in any way? If so, how?
15. Have you learnt what change is needed and what change might be possible?
16. What differences do you see as the process progresses?
    a. Is there momentum?
    b. Are the success criteria the same as they were? (last time we spoke)
    c. Do the theories of change that informed the last actions still hold?
    d. Do you feel that you have all the information that is needed?
    e. What new actions do you feel need to be taken?
    f. What practices and methods do you feel need to be used at this stage?
17. What, if any, outputs or feedback do you see as a result?
18. How are they received and/or dealt with?
19. Is learning taking place to inspire new action?
20. Are ideas being spread?