Participation for a Better Future:

Communities of action for the environment in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Abstract

Global systems of production and consumption are damaging the biosphere on which human life depends. We offer four vignettes from a variety of allied disciplines aimed at understanding vibrant "communities of action" for the environment in Aotearoa New Zealand. We outline how they help build, and build on, policies and institutions that regenerate people's relationship to the land and protect natural ecosystems; and their struggles to create resilient, reliable social networks in the fractured, mobile world of an industrialised society. Finally, we reflect on the insights the vignettes offer for a community psychology that extends its purview to the biosphere.

Los sistemas globales de producción y consumo están dañando la biósfera, de la que depende la vida humana. Ofrecemos cuatro viñetas de disciplinas afines con el propósito de entender las vibrantes "comunidades de acción" por el medio ambiente presentes en Aotearoa/Nueva Zelanda. Describimos como éstas ayudan a construir y a fortalecer políticas e instituciones que buscan regenerar la relación de las personas con la tierra y proteger los ecosistemas naturales, además de los desafíos que enfrentan para crear redes sociales resistentes y fiables en el mundo móvil y fracturado de la sociedad industrializada. Finalmente, reflexionamos

sobre las perspectivas que las viñetas le ofrecen a una psicología comunitaria que extiende su ámbito de influencia a la biósfera.

Introduction

> *Toitū te whenua, toitū te moana, toitū te tangata*
>
> If the land is well, if the waters are well, the people will thrive

Community psychology is an applied discipline that focuses on wellbeing in context (see Gridley & Breen, 2007; Nelson, Lavoie, & Mitchell, 2007). To date, the emphasis has been on human contexts; primarily "communities". Traditionally, these are disadvantaged communities that hold a common identity and often the core consideration is social justice (see Harré, 2019). Some community psychologists have, however, proposed a broader approach that takes account of the larger biosphere and the way in which people affect and are affected by it (e.g., Moskell & Allred, 2013; Riemer & Harré, 2017); and we take that approach here. This broader understanding is also consistent with indigenous knowledge systems including *Te Ao Māori*, the worldview of the indigenous people of Aotearoa NZ[1] (Marsden, 2003; Roberts, Norman, Minhinnick, Wihongi, & Kirkwood, 1995; Williams, 2019); the country from which we write this chapter.

We have four core assumptions. First, that global systems of production and consumption are damaging the biosphere on which our wellbeing depends. For example, in a review article, Sandra Díaz and colleagues (2019) discuss how 72% of the natural elements identified as important by indigenous people and communities are in decline, largely due to

[1] Aotearoa was originally used by some Māori to refer to New Zealand's North Island. Aotearoa NZ is now commonly used to refer to the whole country; this is how we use it here.

human activity. This includes reduced biodiversity, a decrease in fish stocks, damage to coastal ecosystems, deteriorating air quality, climate change and contamination of freshwater.

Second, we assume a world made up of complex systems that are networked rather than hierarchically nested (see Hawe, 2017; Neal & Neal, 2013); consistent with an Earth Systems science approach (see Bretherton, 1988). We consider these systems, and their problems, to be "messy". As Chapman (2004) has noted, messy problems "are unbounded in scope, time and resources, and enjoy no clear agreement about what a solution would even look like, let alone how it could be achieved" (p. 19). This means that attempts to change a system are subject to *inherent* risk (Capra & Luisi, 2014), and experimentation, observation and flexibility are more suitable than detailed plans (Hassan, 2014). It also means that both change and resistance can come from any part of the social system (see Harré, 2019).

The third assumption is that the natural world is of intrinsic value (Harré, Madden, Brooks, & Goodman, 2017). This, we argue, is an obvious extension for a discipline that values life, diversity, caring for those who are vulnerable, and multiple forms of knowing. For practical purposes we are drawn to meaning-frameworks that emphasise the relations between people and the rest of nature (see Chan et al., 2016; Coope, 2019). *Mātauranga* Māori (Māori knowledge, values, culture and worldview), which is a relational tradition in this sense, emphasises *whakapapa* (ancestral lineage) that connects people to both the human and more-than-human ancestors of their place. Thus all are kin, have *mauri* (holistic health, life force) and are part of the community (Marsden, 2003). Within psychology, the relatively new sub-discipline of ecopsychology is similarly focused on human-nature relationships (Doherty, 2009; Fisher, 2002; Riemer & Harré, 2017).

Finally, we assume that real world action is essential to restoring the natural world and reintegrating a relational perspective to contemporary worldviews. Action has long been recognised as critical to all forms of social change in community psychology and beyond

(e.g., Freire, 1970/1996; Krause & Montenegro, 2017). Here we discuss four "communities of action" for the environment, some of which are local, and others global, in orientation. They all involve the work of creating community; skills that can be developed through community psychology practice.

We come from different academic orientations: two community psychologists (Niki and Daniel Kelly), an Earth scientist located in a Department of Māori studies (Daniel Hikuroa), a student of landscape architecture (Te Kerekere), and two educators with backgrounds in science and geography respectively (Sally and Karen). We take an interdisciplinary approach here, because, in the words of Perkins and Schensul, we want to "solve a shared problem" (2017, p. 91). Two of us identify as Māori (Te Kerekere and Daniel Hikuroa) and the other four as *Pākehā* (non-indigenous New Zealanders). Importantly, as researchers in the communities we discuss, we have "skin in the game… a compelling sense of personal recognition rather than just wanting to help [a community] with their problems" (Harré, 2019, p. 84). We are participants, allies, supporters, documenters, storytellers; this work matters to us.

Each vignette is written by a different author or authors who position themselves at the beginning of their piece. They therefore reflect that author's voice and disciplinary perspective. At the end of each vignette we use a collective voice to reflect on the insights and questions raised for a community psychology that extends its concerns to the biosphere. In light of the vignettes, the discussion reflects on how community psychology can contribute more fully to work in this sphere. Writing this chapter has given each of us valuable insight into allied disciplines and deepened our understanding of the human/nature interface; we hope other readers are similarly enriched by what we offer.

Note that consistent with the important role of *te reo Māori* (Māori language) in Aotearoa NZ, we use a number of Maori terms, especially in the first vignette. These are

italicised and are translated (with the exception of the traditional *pepeha* – recitations – at the start of the vignette to follow) the first time they are used in a new section.

1. Restoring the mauri of place

Te Kerekere Roycroft and Daniel Hikuroa

As Māori, we start with our *pepeha* (recitation of connections to place and people) that speak of where, and who, we are from and allow others to orient themselves in relation to us. We each refer to key elements relevant to our connections, for example *maunga* (mountains), *waka* (canoe/s our ancestors arrived on) and *iwi* (our tribal affiliations).

Ko Te Ramaroa te maunga, Ko Matariki te rere, Ko Rāhiri te tangata, Ko Whiria te pā
Ko Matahaorua raua ko Ngatokimatawhaorua te waka, Ko Ngāpuhi nui tonu te iwi,
Ko Ngāti Korokoro, Ko Ngāti Whārara, Ko Te Poukā ngā hapū, o te wahapu o Hokianga nui a Kupe, Hokianga whakapau karakia e, Ko Maraeroa te marae, Ko Ro Iho te urupa, Ko Te Kerekere Louise Verneē Roycroft toku ingoa

Ko Owhawhe te maunga, Ko Waitomo te awa, Ko Maniapoto te tangata, Ko Pohatuiri te pā
Ko Tainui raua ko Te Arawa ngā waka, Ko Ngāti Uehaka, ko Ngāti Ruapuha ngā hapū
Ko Ngāti Maniapoto te iwi, Ko Tokikapu te marae, Ko Tionui te urupa, Ko Daniel Carl Henare Hikuroa toku ingoa

Te Kerekere Roycroft is currently studying landscape design at UNITEC in Auckland. Daniel Hikuroa uses Earth Systems Science and Environmental Humanities approaches and methods, and is based in Te Wānanga o Waipapa, at the University of Auckland.

In *Te Ao* Māori (Māori worldview) people are an interconnected element in a larger ancestral schema that includes natural entities. We draw identity from the landmarks of our *rohe* (tribal area); and are linked to our *whenua* (land) by *whakapapa* (ancestral lineage) through the

primal parents Ranginui (Sky-father) and Papatūānuku (Earth-mother). We are the younger siblings of *maunga* (mountains), *awa* (rivers), *ngahere* (forests) and *moana* (seas). It is our responsibility to care for our elders as they care for us, and to offer respect to our *uri* (descendants). *Tikanga* (protocols) have been developed over centuries of layered connections with our *whenua*. One example is *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship responsibility), the practices undertaken to achieve intergenerational sustainability. Flexible refinement of our *tikanga* means that the relationship we have with our place evolves with each generation.

In 1975, the government of Aotearoa NZ passed the Treaty of Waitangi Act and established the Waitangi Tribunal to address historical injustices. The tribunal negotiates settlements between *iwi* and the crown, and to date has entered into negotiations for 117 settlements with 73 of these passed into law (Te Arawhiti, 2020). Many of these settlements reflect the relational values described earlier, and acknowledge the importance of people as place, and place as people. For example, the Te Urewera Act covers 594 hectares of Tūhoe land and gives it legal personhood, acknowledging that "Te Urewera has an identity in and of itself, inspiring people to commit to its care" (Te Urewera Act 2014). Similarly, the Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017 gives customary rights and responsibilities to local *iwi* and declares the river to be "a legal person [with] all the rights, powers, duties and liabilities of a legal person".

These settlements have helped *iwi* to restore the *mauri* (holistic health or life force) of local land and waterscapes. As part of a 2019/20 Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga (Aotearoa NZ's Māori Centre of Research Excellence) internship, Te Kerekere interviewed leaders of restoration projects. One example is Pūniu River Care, a project started in 2015 with a grant funded by *Te Puni Kōkiri* (the Ministry of Māori Development). The Pūniu River is located in the central North Island, beginning in the Pureora Forest and meeting the Waipā River at Pirongia. The main *kaupapa* (purpose) of the project is to enable local *hapū* (kinship

groups/sub-tribes) to be involved in improving water quality within the Pūniu River Catchment. This includes propagating and planting 500,000 native trees each year. In the interview with CEO Shannon Te Huia, he described the project as "an opportunity for the *whānau* (extended family) to participate in the restoration of the *awa*," and that "many people wanted to become involved, we didn't anticipate it getting so big so fast." Shannon further explained that its success involved forming partnerships and understanding the connection between people and place. As he said, "The goal of the project is to restore the *mauri* of the *awa* … but there is a lot of *whanaungatanga* (kinship or a sense of family connection) and strengthening of relationships with people and organisations who have similar goals."

Pūniu River Care pays the core people involved in restoration (these are members of the local *hapū*), which Shannon described as a "sustainable" model. Nevertheless, the vision he said, is something you "constantly have to work at. By holding fast to the *whakataukī* (proverbs encapsulating ancestral wisdom) of our *tupuna* (ancestors) and evolving in an ever changing world we are able to provide fruits for our people through employment." The project's experience with volunteers from the hapū has been variable, as they do not live on the land and are often drawn away by other commitments. This echoes issues raised by Daniel Kelly in his piece on urban food production to follow.

Summary and reflection. In *Te Ao* Māori people and place are entwined. Consistent with this worldview, recent legislation has acknowledged large areas of *iwi* land, and provided financial settlements that enable restoration projects. Pūniu River Care is one such project run by the local *hapū*. The project must nevertheless constantly work to keep people involved and reassert its underlying purpose and associated practices. This raises two key questions. Can we tell stories of relationship between people and place that generate restorative, sustainable

practices? How does a historically continuous and localised approach to environmental protection sit within a fractured, contemporary world where land is privately owned and people are mobile?

2. Urban food production

Daniel Kelly

My gardening interests (and history of volunteering) inform my PhD research in community psychology: working as a researcher-participant within Auckland's urban agriculture movement, collaborating across diverse projects to try to increase volunteer participation.

Much like the Māori groups discussed in the previous vignette, urban residents are seeking to connect with and care for the places in which they live, starting not with ancestral connection, but the food they eat. Participation in this space is inescapably collaborative, catalysing the cooperation at the heart of community transformation, sketching new, solidarity-based worlds amidst a mainstream of social decay. In the following vignette, I explore issues with contemporary food production and the transformative potential of community gardening.

For urban residents, food is ubiquitous: from greasy take-outs to stacked supermarket shelves, nature's bounty is never far away. However, this proximity masks a hugely fragile, globalised network (Steel, 2008), dependent on fossil fuels and implicated in a number of interlinked social, economic and environmental issues. These include biodiversity loss (Martin, 2019), the decimation of local economies (Patel & Moore, 2018), and the food insecurity experienced by our most vulnerable (Robson, 2019). In the words of Rose (2013), the rise of this global food system supports an "ontology of alienation" (p. 2) in which urban consumers are disconnected from the source of their food.

In response, advocates for food system change utilise a variety of framings from food justice to food sovereignty (Swords, Frith & Lap, 2018), prioritising locally-owned, environmentally-sustainable and socially-just forms of production (Patel, 2009). In contrast to the alienation of industrial food systems, Rose (2013) describes these approaches as supporting an "ontology of connectedness" (p. 2), providing the means for people to connect with both the source of their food and each other.

One way in which this connection is facilitated in an urban setting is via community gardening. Community gardening encompasses "a variety of horticultural activities that either have a community component or are located on public land" (Earle, 2011, p. iii). Like projects overseas (e.g., Pudup, 2008), community gardens in New Zealand are diverse and include individual allotments, communal growing spaces, and *marae* gardens (gardens located on Māori land; Earle, 2011). Despite the historical decline in gardening associated with urbanisation, community gardens have been increasing since the 1980s, with their rise linked to the environmental movement, rising food prices, and economic precarity (Dawson, 2010).

As a result of this diversity, different community gardens in New Zealand emphasise different, often overlapping, objectives. For example, while Auckland's *Kelmarna City Organic Gardens* promotes educational outreach and organic farming (Little, 2010), Wellington's *Operation Green Thumb* sets up gardens so people "can grow low-cost food" (Earle, 2011, p.22). More recent projects expand this scope, with the central Auckland *OMG – Organic Market Garden* forming part of a nascent Urban Farmers' Alliance that aims to deliver 11 key outcomes from carbon sequestration to food security, local jobs, and increased community (Urban Farmers' Alliance, 2020).

While such "silver bullet" claims have their critics (e.g., Daftary-Steel, Herrera, & Porter, 2015), the international literature is replete with research linking community

gardening to a range of positive outcomes (Porter, 2018). These include improvements in physical and mental health (Soga, Gaston, & Yamaura, 2017), community cohesion (Alaimo et al., 2010), increased biodiversity (Taylor & Lovell, 2014) and economic revival (Kaufman & Bailkey, 2000). Viability, however, is often tenuous. Security of tenure (Fox-Kämper et al., 2017), funding (Firth, Maye, & Pearson, 2011), community buy-in and volunteer support (Earle, 2011) are among the issues gardens struggle with. While research by Fox-Kämper et al. (2017) suggests that help from paid professionals is a key enabler, many projects exist outside the formal economy and must do without (Drake & Lawson, 2015).

For gardens that do succeed, a common outcome is increased community cohesion (Alaimo et al., 2010). Firth et al. (2011) link this cohesion to community gardens' status as "third spaces" distinct from work and home, in which participants can interact on a regular basis, contribute to shared projects, and engage in networks of mutual aid. Such relationship-building is central to the success of Auckland's *OMG* with semi-regular social gatherings helping to support the 70-100 hours of volunteer participation recorded each week (Urban Farmers' Alliance, 2020).

Other research emphasises how the relationships nurtured by urban food production can catalyse deeper shifts amongst the wider community (Armstrong, 2000). For example, a study of food sovereignty initiatives in Whaingaroa (a coastal town in Aotearoa NZ), shows how community gardening can build shared identity and support a network of active, mutually-supportive citizens participating in other community work (Ritchie, 2016).

Summary and reflection. As a site of community action, urban agriculture has the potential to create productive zones where values are lived, social bonds forged, and further change is ignited; all core features of vibrant communities. As we saw with Pūniu River Care, funding is extremely helpful, as is access to land. Volunteers come and go; indeed, how to recruit and

retain volunteers in this space is a central question of Daniel Kelly's PhD research. Along similar lines to the previous vignette, we are left wondering about how to encourage commitment to local food production in the geographically mobile world in which we live.

3. A secondary (high) school with a sustainability culture

Niki Harré

Before beginning a PhD in 1993, I was a secondary school teacher and I am still drawn to working alongside young people to promote flourishing people and thriving ecosystems. I identify as a community psychologist and teach both psychology and sustainability courses at the University of Auckland.

Both the preceding vignettes discuss people working directly with the land. For many participants in these projects, they are a relatively small part of their daily lives, and sit within a "third space" as Daniel Kelly described. Here I discuss a community of action for the environment located within a secondary school, and hence a place that participants occupy on a daily basis (see Harré, Blythe, McLean, & Khan, submitted).

Western Springs College/Ngā Puna O Waiōrea (WSCW) is located in central Auckland, a city of 1.6 million people. WSCW has a co-governance model, with a larger English-medium college (Western Springs College) and a smaller Māori-medium college (Ngā Puna O Waiōrea) working in partnership. In 2008 the school's governance board invited me, as an outgoing member of the board and parent at the school, to establish and chair a Sustainability Panel that would "work towards environmental sustainability in all areas of school life". The panel acted as a "bridging" structure (Lawlor & Neal, 2016; Todd, 2012) that brought together members of the school community interested in environmental sustainability. It is still in operation and its members include student leaders with

sustainability-related portfolios and their liaison teachers, a representative of the school's governance board, and external advisors from Auckland City Council and the nationwide Enviroschools programme (see Eames, Cowie, & Bolstad, 2008). I chaired the panel for 11 years; during this time it included graduate students in psychology who worked on an action research project to support and document the school's progress toward sustainability.

The project was based on three theoretical frameworks. One was complex soft systems theory (Chapman, 2004; Checkland & Scholes, 1990). This has the assumptions of complex systems thinking outlined in the introduction to this chapter, including the importance of experimentation and flexibility. Second it drew on core principles of community psychology, such as empowerment and focusing on strengths, to help panel members, particularly the students, identify and manage initiatives (Blythe et al., 2013); and third it incorporated action competence and the iterative, collective, learning cycles that are part of environmental education (Wals & Dillon, 2013).

Since 2008, sustainability has increasingly become part of how WSCW operates. The school now has a fully separated waste system and a large worm farm, and a recent building project has several green features. There are nine sustainability-related student leadership roles with three associated student teams. These teams lead regular sustainability events including eco-weeks, clothes swaps, bike expos, riparian planting and an interschool Green Jam. Environmental science is offered to senior students and involves practical projects as well as theory; junior students create and sell products in a biannual sustainability market and help maintain the local streams (these teaching initiatives are enabled by the principles of the national curriculum, discussed further in the next vignette); and there have been several school-wide fundraising efforts to preserve endangered species (e.g., Townrow, Laurence, Blythe, Long, & Harré, 2016). WSCW students were also amongst the leaders of School Strike 4 Climate in Auckland.

WSCW is by no means “sustainable” in an objective sense. It still uses more resources than is feasible long-term and progress towards sustainability is often compromised by competing values. However, it has something resembling a sustainability culture. As a student leader, interviewed as part of the research component of the project, said, “[there is] this *personality* for our school that we are sustainable” (Harré et al., submitted). As with any complex system, this culture appears to have *emerged* from the interaction of numerous elements, including those outlined in the previous paragraph, that have amplified each other in positive feedback loops. The presence of the Māori-medium college that enacts the language and practices of *Te Ao* Māori, was also described in the research interviews as a key contributor to the growth of environmental sustainability at WSWC.

Summary and reflection. WSCW shows the transformative potential of communities for the environment situated within sites inhabited by the participants as part of their everyday lives, in this case within a school. A soft systems approach combined with community psychology and environmental education principles helped build a community of action which has become more elaborated and resilient over time. We ask: what does this project teach us about working in partnership with communities located inside schools and other organisations?

4. Young people’s action for climate change

Sally Birdsall and Karen Nairn

Sally Birdsall

After teaching in primary schools, I now educate teachers how to teach science and sustainability in their classrooms. My research focuses on pedagogy; exploring ways of learning that lead to both people and other living organisms thriving together.

Karen Nairn

I worked with rangatahi (young people) as a high school geography teacher. Now, as an academic in the College of Education at the University of Otago, my curiosity about young people's activism for the environment has led to research with Generation Zero whose vision is a carbon neutral Aotearoa NZ. Here I'm reporting research done in collaboration with Carisa Showden, Kyle Matthews, Judith Sligo and Amee Parker.

Thanks to Greta Thunberg and *School Strike 4 Climate*, youth are now associated with climate action worldwide. Aotearoa NZ youth are no exception. Not only did our *rangatahi* (young people) organise three school strikes (SS4C NZ); Generation Zero, a youth-led climate action group, were a driving force behind the country's 2019 Zero Carbon Act legislation. In this vignette we briefly describe the achievements of each movement, and then focus on the collective emotional landscape that underpins them. We ask if, and how, such movements can be supported by teachers, community psychologists and other adult allies.

Generation Zero was established in 2011 and most members are in their twenties. Their aim is a "zero carbon Aotearoa" (https://www.generationzero.org) and they have been remarkably successful. They have pushed for policy change through producing and promoting a *Blueprint* for the Zero Carbon Act, creating communities of action in local centres, and developing their skills for navigating and influencing politics within central and local government. In Auckland Generation Zero is well known for its score-cards rating political candidates based on their policies for addressing climate change.

School Strike 4 Climate New Zealand (SS4C NZ) is led by high school students. They have organised three national strikes; the third attracted 170,000 people in over 40 events (RNZ, 2020). SS4C NZ's vision includes "plentiful native forests, clean rivers and thriving

ecosystems" along with acknowledging that people's "wellbeing is inextricably linked" to that of their environment (https://our.actionstation.org.nz/petitions/climate-declaration-from-the-youth-of-aotearoa). Like Generation Zero, SS4C have a strong focus on legislation that aligns with a zero carbon future and the Paris Agreement 1.5. Both groups then, are focused primarily on macro-level change. And both groups are embedded in the complex, shared emotions that have been shown to accompany the climate catastrophe and climate activism (Bryan, 2020; Holmberg & Alvinius, 2020; Nairn, 2019).

Karen's research asked Generation Zero activists in Auckland to reflect on their experiences and how hopeful they were that the Zero Carbon Act (ZCA) would make a difference. What sustained many was their sense of being part of a community concerned about urgently addressing climate change. Olivia[2] explained how "shared experiences and solidarity and also shared emotions [and]…understanding" were "key to keeping us moving forward together" and at the same time, helped her cope with the distress of reading the IPCC report about what a climate-altered future will look like. "[I knew] if I went to people in Generation Zero and said I had to read the IPCC 2018 Report, they'd be like, "oh, man, are you OK? Can I buy you a coffee? How are you feeling?" (interview, 2019).

Despite the emotional support provided by Generation Zero, members found it an ongoing challenge to sustain community. A number of people left after the ZCA was passed, which they called "ageing out". The ZCA was described as carrying Generation Zero's "organisational energy for so long" (Avery, interview, 2019) and while its passing was considered a significant achievement, some participants expressed disappointment and anger because politicians "water[ed] down some of the most important parts of the Act" (Dewy, interview, 2019). The ZCA work was described by many as all-consuming and although

[2] Some participants' real names are used (with their permission) while others have code names or are not named if there is a risk of identification; we do not distinguish between these approaches to ensure confidentiality of those who chose the latter option.

some were focused on the next steps, others were relieved it was over: “I am looking forward to not having to lobby for the ZCA anymore” (Jai, interview, 2019).

Youth leaders of the Auckland SS4C articulated their educational needs during a panel discussion with teachers organised by the NZ Association for Environmental Education and documented by Sally. The leaders focused largely on accessible resources that would help them, and their teachers, learn about climate change and develop action-taking skills (Birdsall, 2019). They also discussed their anxiety and despair at the lack of progress on climate change, echoing the distress and plea for action articulated by some of Karen’s Generation Zero interviewees (see also Nairn, 2019). As Steven, one of Karen’s participants, said, the zero carbon goal actually belongs to “the larger community…who are part of this broader movement… towards… a more progressive and just society” (interview, 2019). So how can we, as teachers and allies, support young people’s climate activism?

The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) directs learning in the nation’s schools and reveals opportunities for classroom teaching. For example, the document provides a set of principles to underpin curriculum decision-making, one of which is “Future Focus”. This principle encourages students to look to the future through the lenses of sustainability, citizenship and globalisation. There is even a mandate for students to work alongside people in their community aiming to ensure sustainable “social, cultural, physical and economic environments” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 13).

A scant handful of formal resources are available, such as the *Climate Change Learning Programme,* where students learn about the science of climate change and explore ways of taking action and preserving wellbeing (Ministry of Education, 2020a; 2020b). While these resources have been welcomed by educators, they have a strong emphasis on individual responses, like choosing to walk or ride a bike, and eating less meat.

They also fail to address the emotional landscape that accompanies climate politics. As well as despair and anxiety, this includes the hostility and anger directed at activists such as Greta Thunberg, along with ecological guilt about one's impact on the planet (Bryan, 2020; Holmberg & Alvinius, 2020; Nairn, 2019). If teachers and students explore this emotional landscape, they may be able to see a way forward that works with people's feelings, concerns and contexts rather than overlooking or judging them. Such a process also builds solidarity as articulated in Olivia's earlier quotation (see also Bryan, 2020). Schools are in many ways ideal sites for the extended learning needed, as students and teachers meet regularly and over long periods.

A core part of this process should be the fostering of hope. As we imagine possible futures, hope, as both a cognitive and affective construct (Snyder, 1995), enables people to plan and motivate themselves to take appropriate action (Li & Monroe, 2017). Action also fosters hope in a cycle articulated by Generation Zero interviewees. For Rhys: "if you're in a wider community that's working together then it can build that sense of hope or that sense of optimism, and a vision for the future that is achievable" (interview, 2018; see also Nairn, 2019).

The educative approach briefly outlined here is built from listening to young climate activists, and could be a valuable part of society's response to the climate emergency. Schools serve *all* young people and so have considerable reach, providing a training ground for active citizenship. Groups comprised largely of young adults, such as Generation Zero, may then be more readily be refreshed by new members. However, the international call of SS4C remains: adults must take decisive, legislative action.

Summary and reflection. As educational scholars, Sally and Karen show how the formal NZ school curriculum can help create solidarity for collective action and be a training ground for

active citizenship, as demonstrated by Generation Zero. Moving into the discussion, we take with us the question: as a discipline focused on understanding and working with people in their full psychological depth, what can community psychology contribute to, and learn from, research on youth activism from allied disciplines?

Discussion

The four vignettes offered here showcase work based in Aotearoa NZ from a variety of disciplines, each aimed at understanding and facilitating vibrant "communities of action" for the environment. All are experimenting with, and advocating for, different ways of living that must be negotiated alongside the myriad of other values, assumptions and practices that underpin contemporary life. Success is unpredictable and always partial. For example, Pūniu River Care saw an explosion of interest but struggles with volunteer commitment (as do many community gardens, see also Drake & Lawson, 2015); Generation Zero helped achieve Aotearoa NZ's Zero Carbon Act but some members were disappointed with the compromises involved.

In one sense these communities are driven from the bottom by people committed to action for the environment. But they have also been supported by high level structures including a mandate from the school's governance board in the case of WSCW's sustainability culture, and government legislation that has enabled environmental restoration driven by Māori. The opportunities Sally and Karen outlined for teachers to support young climate activists through the formal school curriculum also provide an intriguing example of working with macro-level structures to change the priorities of the system as a whole.

Community psychologists are experienced at drawing from all levels of the social-ecological system to facilitate the wellbeing of the communities they serve (e.g., Christens & Perkins, 2008; Riemer et al., 2016) and place considerable emphasis on power. However, the

communities of action discussed here go beyond a focus on human power relations and insist on coming back to the tangible and shared foundation of all life. For some the importance of nature is explicitly woven into the community's story of itself, for example in Te Kerekere and Daniel Hikuroa's vignette on the work of Māori to restore the *mauri* (holistic health, life force) of their ancestral places. But no matter their foundational narrative, all the vignettes reflect that Papatūānuku (Earth-mother) responds only to how we as people interact with her; not to how we interact with each other.

Having said that, the communities discussed recognise both the importance of robust human relationships to effective action *and* that action for the environment builds relationships. In relation to the first two vignettes we ended by asking how to encourage commitment to environmental protection and/or food production in a fractured, contemporary world. Can community psychology help with this process of engagement?

By using and sharing our skills, values and experience as people who pay close attention to community building (see Krause & Montenegro, 2017; Lazarus, Seedat, & Naidoo, 2017), the answer may be a tentative yes. This work is not intuitive or straightforward and activist groups often implode due to destructive interpersonal dynamics (see Harré, Tepavac, & Bullen, 2009; Smucker, 2017). Community building is assisted by semi-formal practices that consciously shape these processes (Block, 2008; Harré, 2018). Notably, collective practices of welcoming new people and ideas, holding regular meetings and providing food, and listening and support were a key part of the WSCW project and may have contributed to its resilience (Blythe et al., 2013; Harré et al., submitted).

But no matter how good communities of action for the environment are at managing interpersonal dynamics (or community psychologists are at assisting with this), voluntary work with the land is always accompanied by issues of mobility and ownership (Lacey & Christine, 2018). The WSCW project overcame this to some extent by focusing on a locality

the students and staff inhabit daily. Many successful community gardens are also tended by local residents (Fox-Kämper et al., 2017; Ritchie, 2017; Firth et al., 2011).

Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview) encourages commitment to collectively owned land that is storied with ancestral links, in keeping with the relational stories of place common to indigenous people (Coope, 2019; Marsden, 2003; Williams, 2019). However, these stories do not easily align with most people's lives in industrialised societies. In their emphasis on historical continuity of kinship with a particular place, these stories also cannot work in their original form for non-indigenous people who are more recent arrivals (see e.g., Roberts et al., 1995). We are then, left with the possibility of an ethic that calls us all to be guardians of the land *we occupy* and to recognise the interconnection between *all* living systems on Earth. This ethic is already at the heart of ecopsychology (Fisher, 2002) and, we argue, could help inform a community psychology that extends to the biosphere. It is also an ethic that makes sense of nationally and globally focused climate activism.

The final insight from our communities of action that we wish to draw attention to, is the deeply psychological nature of this work, shown especially in the intense emotionality outlined in the vignette on youth climate activism (see also Clayton & Karazsia, 2020). Disappointment, anger, despair, guilt and distress are some of the emotions described. Generation Zero, while highly focused on legislative change, was also recognised by participants as a space in which they could express these feelings and be understood. In this way the community is therapeutic, helping members make collective sense of the threatened world they inhabit. "Hope" was described as a key motivator for continued climate change action, due to its link to the future (Hicks, 2014; Nairn, 2019), and we add, to the human story more generally. That communities all over the world are doing this work is in large part what makes local efforts worthwhile, especially in relation to global issues. Community psychology as a discipline that aims to understand and work alongside people in context,

must surely pay attention to the struggle for hope in communities focused on protecting the biosphere.

In closing, we see this work as based on identifying and working with possibilities throughout the social system, rather than emphasising resistance and critique. While the particulars of our communities are specific to Aotearoa NZ, we suggest their struggles and successes resonate with similarly focused communities in other parts of the globe; and that community psychology's values and skills in supporting people and community building have much to contribute. Ultimately, we offer our chapter as a contribution to the global effort to protect and regenerate the natural world and hence ourselves as part of it.

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