

## Otangarei Basketball Court Redevelopment

This case study provides Sport Northland and community partners an overview of the Otangarei basketball court initiative. We developed the case study as part of Sport New Zealand's (Sport NZ) evaluation of the Locally Led Approach (the Approach).

### What is the Locally Led Approach and its evaluation?

#### **Sport NZ adopted the approach due to declining participation in sport and recreation**

New Zealand is following a worldwide trend of declining participation in sport and active recreation. Sport NZ's Community Sport Strategy 2015-2020 challenges conventional thinking on the delivery of sport and active recreation by focusing on what participants and communities want. The strategy aims to increase participation amongst target participant groups of young girls (10-18), and young people in lower socio-economic urban areas (including Māori, Indians, and Samoans). The strategy identifies the Locally Led Approach as a way to achieve this.

#### **The Approach is based on community-led principles**

In 2016, the Locally Led Approach commenced. The Locally Led Approach is an adaptive approach, responsive to communities. The approach works across Regional Sports Trusts (RSTs), existing partners of schools and clubs, and wider with the community, home, and workplace/businesses. The Locally Led Approach has five guiding principles:

- Understanding your community
- Work with others in partnership
- Focus on strengths and assets
- Learn as you go
- Enable leadership.

#### **Sport NZ asked Litmus to evaluate the Approach to determine its value**

The evaluation purpose is to assess the value of the Locally Led Approach for Sport NZ, RSTs and communities with low participation in sport and active recreation. In-depth case-studies were one of the data collection methods used in the evaluation. In July 2018, we conducted case studies to gain a deep insight into how the Locally Led Approach is working from RSTs, community partners (e.g., council, local iwi, schools, NGOs), and community members' perspectives.

## **Why the focus on the Otangarei community?**

Sport Northland used data to identify regions where participation in sport and active recreation was low. The Otangarei suburb in Whangarei was one of the areas identified where Sport Northland could support local communities. Sport Northland knew Otangarei has the largest Māori populations in Whangarei. Otangarei is also characterised by a high socio-economic deprivation (NZDep2013 decile 10).

## **How was the need for the basketball court initiative identified?**

In 2017, Sport Northland spent time consulting with the Otangarei community to understand the aspirations of the community. Through this consultation Sport Northland learned the community wanted safe play options for tamariki and rangatahi. The consistent themes expressed by the community were to build a playground and redevelop the basketball court. Building a playground was already underway. Sport Northland decided to help the community redevelop the basketball court.

## **How did the initiative get started?**

The redevelopment of the basketball court forms part of a much larger initiative - Te Kāinga Ora o Otangarei, which builds on the 2014 Otangarei Village Plan. The Village Plan was developed by the Otangarei Neighbourhood Safety Panel (ONSP), a volunteer community group, and the Whangarei District Council. Te Kāinga Ora o Otangarei is led out by Te Hau Āwhiowhio o Otangarei Trust and by a core group of strategic partners. Sport Northland was invited to become a part of this initiative through the Healthy Lifestyles arm.

The basketball court is located on the Otangarei Central Reserve. Te Hau Āwhiowhio o Otangarei Trust convened a steering group made up of agencies and community partners in the health and wellness sector interested in offering support to redevelop the reserve. After their community consultation in 2017, Sport Northland shared their findings with the steering group and their idea to support the community to redevelop the court. The steering group supported this initiative.

## **How did the community partners work together?**

Sport Northland meets regularly with the steering group to provide updates on the progress of the initiative. As of July 2018, feedback on the court design was being collected and fundraising was ongoing. A number of key stakeholders were involved in the initiative, including:

- Otangarei rangatahi, tamariki, and whānau were involved in designing the basketball court

- ĀKAU architectural and design studio facilitated the co-design workshops, developed the community concepts & provided design documentation for the basketball court and surrounding area upgrade
- Northland District Health Board provided funding and advice for the basketball court and is on the steering group
- Sport Northland coordinates the initiative and is on the steering group
- Te Hau Āwhiowhio ō Otangarei Trust leads the overall redevelopment of Otangarei central reserve through Te Kāinga Ora o Otangarei and provides oversight through governance and steering groups
- Te Puawaitanga Marae Otangarei hosted the workshops and connected the community partners with rangatahi
- Whangarei District Council is sponsoring a basketball hoop for the court and is on the steering group.

### **Rangatahi collaborated with community partners on designing the initiative**

Rangatahi participated in two co-design workshops around developing the basketball court site. The workshops were facilitated by ĀKAU and held at Te Puawaitanga Marae Otangarei. The purpose of the first workshop was to understand rangatahi's aspirations around developing the site and the second was to co-design concepts. The design concepts included:

- development of the basketball court
- shade elements
- seating areas
- rubbish solutions
- memorial space to a much-loved local educator, Matua Alex Henare.

Community partners were also involved in the design workshops. OPUS (an architectural firm) shared their work on a similar initiative at the second workshop and drafted the designs for the site plan. Sport Northland organised and attended the workshops.

### **Was a Locally Led approach used in the initiative?**

Sport Northland working with their community partners used the Locally Led Approach. Time was spent understanding community, working with community partners, and coordinating the development of the court.

### **The community was involved in identifying and designing the initiative**

Sport Northland consulted with the community to identify their aspirations. The idea to redevelop the basketball court came from the community during Sport Northland's consultation. Sport Northland has also used an iterative process to ensure the voice of the community is continually represented in the design. For example, Sport Northland has

shared the design plans with the community for additional feedback at community events and through the community Facebook page.

### **Community partners provided funding and advice**

Northland District Health Board and Whangarei District Council provided funding for the redevelopment of the basketball court. ĀKAU provided in-kind support (donated their time to facilitate the workshops and drafted the design proposal). Funders and Te Hau Āwhiwhio ō Otangarei Trust provided technical advice on the design.

### **Sport Northland's role is connecting, information sharing, and coordinating**

Community partners appreciate Sport Northland's ability to engage with the community, especially through the co-design workshops. Another part of Sport Northland's role is sharing updates and learnings with the steering group on the development of the initiative. As of July 2018, Sport Northland was actively seeking out leaders from the community to drive and lead the initiative.

### **What next for the Otangarei community around the initiative?**

- Finalise the design of the basketball court
- Fundraise and develop a plan of action to build the court and developing surrounding areas
- Communicate progress and plan of action with all stakeholders, including community
- Continue to seek and support community leaders
- Continue to engage and involve community throughout the process.

### **What has changed for the community?**

The work of the Otangarei rangatahi and community partners has created an opportunity to provide the community with a unique basketball court designed by locals. While it's too early to assess changes in safety and health, positive changes were observed. Positive changes included empowering rangatahi, new relationships, and improved communication among some partners.

### **The community is involved in decision-making around design**

Sport Northland has worked directly with the community throughout the initiative. Through this process, Sport Northland and community partners have consulted and engaged community to ensure their concerns and aspirations are understood and reflected in the design of the initiative. Additionally, rangatahi recognised their input was reflected in the design plans.

## **New connections with community and community partners**

Sport Northland has built new relationships with community and facilitated new connections between community and community partners (i.e., connecting community with design contractors). Community partners observed an increased presence of Sport Northland in the area, especially by the community. Some community partners expressed their communication with Sport Northland has improved in working together. In turn, Sport Northland believes it is more connected and engaged with the community.

## **What is the value of Locally Led Approach for the community?**

### **Community partners value the Approach**

Community partners agree with Sport Northland's use of the approach to empower the community and increase opportunities for rangatahi. Specifically, they applaud Sport Northland's co-design approach in bringing the community closer to decision-making and their ability to connect the community with experienced contractors.

I compliment Sport Northland for being focusing on **delivering the youth vision**. A great part of this project is a contractor [ĀKAU] who has good experience working with youth on co-designed projects (Community Partner)

### **Community consultation validated the work of community partners**

Sport Northland's consultation with community found the community wanted safe opportunities around improving the wellbeing of their tamariki and rangatahi. These findings reinforced the work set out in the 2014 Village Plan.

Sport Northland set up a table outside Otangarei shops and did street research. Input came back there from the community. I think it **reinforced the same thing that came back in the first report**. There was consistent messaging [from the community]. It is clear about what people want. Stuff for their children to do... a playground and activities for youth (Community Partner)

### **Community partners are concerned about delivery of promises made**

Historically, Otangarei has had agencies coming into the community making promises but not delivering. Rangatahi have invested their time in the design of the initiative. Some community partners worry what message is sent if the initiative is stalled or if it is not completed. Sport Northland is aware of these concerns and is exploring ways to support community leaders and to improve their communication strategy.

## **What are the key lessons in using the Locally Led approach?**

In using the Locally Led Approach Sport Northland gained some key insights:

- Learning through the use of the Locally Led Approach
- Investing time in connecting with community partners and the community to understand their aspirations, the different roles and strengths of partners, and to identify where best Sport Northland can assist
- Working towards improving their communication strategy with community and community partners
- Learning to balance working at the pace of the community and the pace of community partners and agencies
- Exploring ways to identify and build leadership capacity in the community
- Challenges in monitoring and measuring success in this space.