Incentivising effective NGO collaboration:

Literature review and post-disaster practice

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1. Introduction

"Increasingly, the existence of NGOs is proving to be a necessity rather than a luxury in societies throughout the modern world"

Stephen Heintz (2006)

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are a fundamental part of most communities providing a variety of services that may not otherwise be available. NGOs are synonymous with not-for-profit, often charging little or nothing for their services, and therefore requiring funds from either government, philanthropic funds or public donations in order to fund the provision of those services. There is a limited pool of money available from any of these sources and it is to the benefit of funders, NGOs and service recipients to make the best possible use of the limited resources available. One potential way of increasing efficiency and/or effectiveness of NGOs is through collaboration.

The events of the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury Earthquakes put huge pressure on an already strained NGO sector. This report will investigate the NGO sector and the circumstances of these organisations before during and after these events. Specifically, we look at collaboration between members of the NGO sector in general and then during the response, recovery and rebuild of the Canterbury region. The report will explore how these organisations have worked together in order to continue to deliver their services in an environment where resources are scarce. Furthermore it will explore how these organisations operated in a turbulent environment unique to Canterbury, which produced circumstances and thus, solutions, no one could have foreseen. This research will provide insights into how resilient the NGO sector in Canterbury is and how collaboration has and may enhance this further.

1.1. Definitions

For the purposes of this study, NGOs are defined as organisations independent of the government, not a conventional for-profit business; and operating in the Canterbury region.
Collaboration is defined as:

1) The pooling of appreciations and/or tangible resources, e.g. information, money, labor etc.,
2) By two or more stakeholders
3) To solve a set of problems which neither can solve individually.” (Gray, 1985, p.912)

We found this definition appropriate because it provides a broad yet succinct representation for all forms of collaboration. By considering resources, any number of stakeholders and problem solving, we don’t limit collaboration to any one form. This was important for our study in order to consider a broad range of collaborative ventures.

Furthermore, because of the vast range of activities collaboration may include we further categorized levels of collaboration into four categories:

- Low-level: Referrals, collegial, information sharing
- Medium-level: Shared projects, services
- Medium to high level: Co-location, backroom services,
- High Level: Merger

These levels of collaboration emerged from the data collection and all should be considered when ‘collaboration’ is read.

1.2. Purpose

Our research aims to explore how to incentivise collaboration in the NGO sector by discovering and outlining the benefits and drivers that have already been noted and experienced in the sector and additionally by identifying key enablers to a successful collaboration and common barriers which need to be worked through to ensure an effective, collaborative NGO sector. Whilst the NGO sector is very effective and vital for our community, there is potentially a lot of duplication, a lack of communication and certain inefficiencies that could be overcome with collaboration. While there are important hurdles to overcome, it is important to emphasise that overcoming these hurdles will lead to more effective services and better outcomes for the sector and the clients that it serves.
2. Literature Review

There is a wealth of international literature touching on aspects of this topic but little that looks specifically at collaboration between NGOs post-disaster. In reviewing the literature, strong themes began to emerge within prior research particularly in regards to the structure of previous studies. These structures were easily applied to this research and became headings for the following literature review, which carried on into points of interest during interviews, analysis and presentation. These headings are: drivers and benefits of collaboration, barriers to collaboration, enablers for success and post-disaster trends.

2.1. Drivers and benefits of collaboration

This section outlines both the reasons organisations enter into collaborative working and the benefits they experience from these ventures. It is possible that organisations may enter a collaborative venture for one reason and not end up experiencing this benefit. Alternatively there is the potential that unexpected benefits will arise from working collaboratively. Because of this there was considerable overlap between drivers and benefits of collaboration in the literature.

As well as being a major driver of collaboration, political effects emerged as a frequently cited benefit for collaboration. Political effects include influence in debates and discussion and higher political standing and protection (Dütting & Sogge, 2010), acquisition of power and influence (Hardy, Phillips, & Lawrence, 2003), stronger united voice, campaigning, lobbying, public awareness and developing a focal point for dealing with governments (Incentivising Collaboration Workshop, 2012; Richards & Heard, 2005; UK Charities Commission, 2009). “NGO coalitions can work together strategically to shape discourses, both internally inside collaborating organizations and externally shaping political and economic outcomes of their advocacy work.” (Dütting & Sogge, 2010, p. 351)

Making optimal use of both physical and human resources was also widely discussed in the literature (Bajpai et al. 2010, Fleishman, 2008; Hardy et al., 2003; Richards & Heard, 2005). Collaboration can enable better utilization of individual’s skills for particular tasks as well as reduce physical space and infrastructure costs. The UK Charities Commission (2009) also note the potential learning and skills sharing that can be gained through greater interaction with others. Hardy et al. (2003, p.340) also argue
that highly involved collaborations are likely to result in the “creation of knowledge”. The value of resource sharing was identified by a range of authors as an important benefit of collaboration. This aspect includes generating benefits from scale and greater fundraising capacity, as well as reduced costs and lower overheads (UK Charities Commission, 2009).

Other common drivers to arise out of past studies were related to effectiveness (Bajpai, Maldonado, Ngamassi, Tapia, & Maitland, 2010; Snively & Tracy, 2000; UK Charities Commission, 2009). Effectiveness in this context refers to an enhanced probability of the NGO achieving its desired results. This could mean delivering a better service or the delivery of services to a greater number of recipients. Improved effectiveness is expected to flow from both resource and political effects. For example, Ferrari (2011) believes effectiveness is improved because collaboration enables NGOs to invest resources in good management or expert research or in establishing credibility with others. Benefits arising from effectiveness comprised of shaping common idiom and a framework for interpretation of issues and solutions (Dütting & Sogge, 2010), synergistic effects from combining different strengths (Richards & Heard, 2005), benefits for service delivery, mission accomplishment and community (Snively & Tracy, 2000; UK Charities Commission, 2009) and reducing duplication/isolation (Waugh & Streib, 2006).

Additionally Hardy found that learning, knowledge sharing, transfer and creation; competitive advantage; strategic benefit and the ability to address social problems more effectively were all potential benefits (Hardy et al., 2003). Finally the NGO workshop suggested that an ability to make the best use of community knowledge and resources, complex problem solving, better coordination of activities, being more well-connected, a cohesive approach, shared responsibility and decision making and management were all positive effects of collaboration (Incentivising Collaboration Workshop, 2012).

External pressure emerged from the literature as an important incentive for collaboration. Aspects such as increasing environmental turbulence or crises (Gray, 1985), current political and economic situations (Dütting & Sogge, 2010), external governmental and social forces and differing administrative and policy climates (Snively & Tracy, 2000) are all identified as external factors. This suggests collaboration can be the result of a necessary response to environmental effects outside of the organisations control.

Reduced competition was a benefit of collaboration identified by Ferrari (2011), Richards & Heard (2005) and in the New Zealand NGO workshop (2012). Instead of NGOs competing for scarce resources, they can instead, team together, using fewer resources to obtain more Ferrari (2011, p.88) suggested:

*There is also evidence that competing NGOs behave like any other organization, including for-profit ones, in a marketplace. While such behaviour can have benefits, it can also have*
significant downsides. Competition for material resources can seriously detract from the organization’s focus on delivering its services. It can also lead to skewed or even deceptive messages to donors, and may interfere with collective action.

There are a number of other drivers mentioned with less frequency in the literature. Firstly, the role that common causes, beliefs or goals has in uniting organisations. (Benedetti, 2006; Fleishman, 2008). Secondly, the important impact that catalytic actors, both leaders within the organisation and network leaders can have in coordinating linkages between potential collaborators (Fleishman, 2008). Thirdly Gray (1985) suggests that organisations are more likely to unite where traditional methods of solving large problems have failed. Lastly, participants at the Incentivising Collaboration Workshop (2010) noted that funding mechanisms had a great influence on organisations actions with siloed funding resulting in siloed organisations (Incentivising Collaboration Workshop, 2012).

It is important to note that the majority of the research reviewed was conducted outside of New Zealand and there may be significant cultural differences that need to be taken into account. For example, New Zealand’s number one ranking for lack of corruption (Transparency International, 2012), might suggest that political persuasion and lobbying influence would not be as significant in our context.

### 2.2. Barriers to collaboration

This review of the literature found that barriers were the most frequently discussed factor in collaboration between NGOs. A number of strong themes emerged from the literature.

Motivation was a highly cited barrier to collaboration with 80% of sources mentioning some permutation of it. Issues discussed included different goals or objectives (Dütting & Sogge, 2010; NGO Working Group, 2007; Richards & Heard, 2005; Smith, 1989; UK Charities Commission, 2009), health/policy differences (Ferrari, 2011), an unwillingness to compromise on objectives (Richards & Heard, 2005), and not living up to obligations (Snavely & Tracy, 2000). Also mentioned by Richards and Heard (2005, p.28) was that organisations may not wish to “share the limelight with other groups”. Related to motivation was the issue of sacrifice – aspects that organisations were not willing to sacrifice in order to collaborate with other organisations. These were having to “surrender something” as in compromising on
objectives (NGO Working Group, 2007), risks of smaller groups being submerged with, overshadowed, consumed or absorbed by others (Dütting & Sogge, 2010; Richards & Heard, 2005; Smith, 1989), partners “hogging the glory” or claiming accomplishments as their own, which ties in with sharing the limelight (Dütting & Sogge, 2010; Snavely & Tracy, 2000). Smith (1989) provides support to the notion that sacrifices were a barrier:

*The diverse motivations, operational styles, sources of funding of NGOs would seem to make true integration difficult. While the influence of large funding sources such as say USAID or CIDA might force some northern NGOs to collaborate, integration would be rare, likely undesirable since autonomy is thereby lost. (p. 401)*

A number of authors discuss values, philosophies or cultures as a significant barrier to collaboration (Dutting & Sogge, 2010; Snavey & Tracy, 2000; Murphy & Dixon, 2012; UK Charities Commission, 2009). These can include differences in cultural, political, religious, spiritual or ideological values. Framing, both scientific or spiritual, was a huge problem that Ferrari (2011, p.94) found in NGOs operating in sub-Saharan Africa “When different actors, or groups of actors, use competing frames for a single issue, the result may be deep conflict because of the implications of having a frame adopted as politically and socially dominant.”

Operational differences also emerged from the literature as a barrier (Dutting & Sogge, 2010; Smith, 1989; UK Charities Commission, 2009). This touches upon the actual daily running of the organisation and a perceived incompatibility of either leadership or management styles, accountability, administration or IT systems. It was felt that many NGO’s may lack the project planning skills that would assist in overcoming these potential integration issues.

Another minor theme that is discussed by writers on the topic is personality conflicts particularly in smaller organisations with 3-10 people collaborating, where personalities are a lot more integral to the overall business (Murphy and Dixon, 2012; NGO Working Group, 2007; UK Charities Commission, 2009). Snavely & Tracy (2000) suggest that many smaller NGOs may be driven by one strong individual, used to operating on an ‘I’, not a ‘we’ basis

Building effective communication and trust are highlighted as a necessity for successful collaboration by many authors (Dütting & Sogge, 2010; NGO Working Group, 2007; Snavely & Tracy, 2000). Trust building takes a significant investment of time as well as potentially some degree of skill and the capacity
to do this is a another key barrier noted in the literature (NGO Working Group, 2007, Snavely & Tracy, 2000). Dütting et al. (2010, p. 351), in a study exploring why organisations collaborate, suggests, “Linking up in various formations and matching the needs and opportunities of the moment requires sophistication.”

Snavely and Tracy (2000) found in their study of rural non-profit organisations that a fundamental barrier to collaboration was the restrictions of access to funding. In particular what we term siloed funding mechanisms:

*building up more intensive, organization boundary-spanning collaborations is in part made difficult because government grants, on which many rural non-profits rely, remain compartmentalized. Each grant programme imposes its own specific budgeting, accounting, and performance requirements. A non-profit that is receiving several separate grants and is responsible for satisfying the distinct documentary requirements of those separate grants will find it difficult to break down organization boundaries through inter-organisation budgeting, accounting, and evaluation. Until this changes priority in policymaking should be placed on multi-organization case management and information sharing (p. 161-162).*

### 2.3. Enablers

There was considerable variation in the literature with regard to enablers of successful collaboration. External factors emerge as the most common enabler to success for collaboration. The external factors identified included the specific socio-political settings and events which drive interaction (Dütting & Sogge, 2010), a positive political climate, specifically community and networks (Molloy, 2012), and the availability of government assistance or support with training donors providing large scale research and demonstration efforts towards collaboration (NGO Working Group, 2007; Smith, 1989; Snavely & Tracy, 2000). A key area discussed by Snavely & Tracy and the New Zealand NGO working group was the role of best practice sharing and role modelling. Snavely and Tracy (200) believe that: “government can assist in making collaborations more intentional by providing incentives, leadership, guidance, and mandates. Whatever means are used, it is essential to recognize that existing collaborative practices and supportive attitudes are significant resources to employ.” (p. 161)
Another frequently identified enabler was the importance of having clear focus, objectives and vision, (CHIAPP, 2012; Hardy et al., 2003; Molly, 2012; Richards & Heard, 2005; UK Charities Commission, 2009). The UK Charities Commission, (2009, p.5) states it succinctly:

*Charities should invest time and effort in the early stages to identify clear shared objectives for the collaboration. As a starting point, charities should take time to identify and agree on the common issue that the collaboration is addressing and the desired outcomes. The issue, and the desired outcomes, should be kept central to discussions and at the forefront of planning for the duration of the collaboration.*

Clear communication was another prevalent theme referred to by several authors (Aikman, 2010; Molloy, 2012; UK Charities Commission, 2009; Waugh & Streib, 2006). The CHIAPP (2012) expand on this by emphasising the importance of ensuring all communication is written down and confirmed by all parties. The importance of effective communication is referred to by Aikman (2010, p. 508) who states that collaboration “demands good communication and nimble structures for collaborative programme development so that individuals with diverse aims, perspectives, skills, and expertise can understand not only their own but also each other’s contributions to the whole.”

The influence of structural factors such as compatibility (objectives, culture, governance, funding) common objectives (UK Charities Commission, 2009), having nimble structures (Aikman, 2010), letting form follow function (CHIAPP, 2012) and cultural sensitivity (Waugh & Streib, 2006) are all discussed in the literature. “When approaching partners, charities should consider compatibility with them in terms of charitable objects, culture, governance arrangements, funding, organisational structures and decision making processes. Where there is compatibility, the process will be much more straightforward.” (UK Charities Commission, 2009, p. 4)

Other enablers less pervasive in the literature were having strong levels of personal trust between members (Dütting & Sogge, 2010), having effective leadership directing the change (CHIAPP, 2012; Molloy, 2012), having an exit strategy considering how whether and when organisations can leave the collaboration (Hardy et al., 2003; UK Charities Commission, 2009), having patience for progressing through the collaboration (CHIAPP, 2012), always focusing on whether collaboration is best for clients
(UK Charities Commission, 2009), and having strong evaluation mechanisms in place for assessing success of collaboration (CHIAPP, 2012; Hardy et al., 2003; UK Charities Commission, 2009).

### 2.4. Post-Disaster Practice

As already noted, there is a limited literature focusing specifically on inter-NGO collaboration in a post disaster environment. The key issues discussed in the few studies found include leadership styles and multi sector responses. Leadership style refers to the tendency to rely on top-down hierarchy during times of crises. Waugh & Streib (2006) suggest that the enormous difficulties created by disaster require all sectors of the community to work effectively together and that a command and control style of leadership is not the most likely to achieve this. The tendency for NGOs involved in disaster response and recovery to work together under umbrella organisations is also discussed by these same authors although it is noted that there can be significant difficulties in agreeing goals and approaches. Similarly, Simo & Bies (2007) emphasise a need in disaster situations for cross-sector collaboration between both NGOs, for profits and governments stating that this is necessary to compensate for weaknesses in any one of the sectors. There are multiple examples of this occurring in Canterbury, for example the provision and transport by for-profits of water and other essential supplies in conjunction with NGO and government relief efforts.
3. Methods/Procedure

3.1. Data Collection

The NGO sector in Canterbury is extensive and given the time constraints of this project, conventional sampling techniques were deemed too time consuming. For convenience, NGOs were selected from a list of 25 organisations that had representatives attending a resilience workshop provided by The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) as well as additional organisations listed on the NGO Updater website. Secondary sources such as media and websites were used to establish an overview of these organisations including their contact details, what the organisation does, and any evidence of collaborative activity. After approval was obtained for the project through the University of Canterbury low risk ethics procedure, contact was initiated via telephone or email asking two simple questions:

- Did you enter into any collaborative ventures after the earthquake?
- If so what were your reasons? Or If not, why not?

Some of this correspondence led to succinct yet helpful answers such as “no, the opportunity never arose” and others led to in-depth discussions resulting in rich, detailed data. Consent forms were sent to all organisations that participated in any sort of correspondence.

This initial investigation allowed us to construct a preliminary overview of the general level of collaboration in the sector. This also gave us a quantitative aspect to our data collection. The second stage of data collection was to select organisations to follow up with a more detailed in person semi-structured interview. The rationale for selection of organisations for in depth data collection was firstly those who had entered into medium or high level collaborations (rather than the common low level co-location norms) and who were willing to participate in the research. We chose not to include one example of a very successful collaboration between a number of agencies who provided victim support to families, due to the sensitive nature of the services provided.

The interviews were semi-structured with questions attached in Appendix 1. Interviews were recorded for further analysis and transcribed, to ensure all data were captured. Many strong themes emerged during the interviews and these were generally followed up in future interviews. Interesting ideas and issues were pursued beyond the semi-structured questions.

The organisations we interviewed were:
**Mental Health Advocacy and Peer Support (MHAPS)**

MHAPS has evolved out of a full merger of 3 pre-existing organisations. They are a peer-led Christchurch based charitable trust working in the area of mental health and addictions. The three original managers (now service delivery managers) and current general manager were all interviewed separately.

**Working Together More Fund (WTMF)**

WTMF is a fund that provides seeding money and expertise to develop collaborative arrangements. Their objective is “to assist community groups to make a greater difference for the people and communities they serve, through working together more closely with other organisations.” (The Working Together More Fund, 2012) We felt it necessary to contact this organisation for a broad overarching perspective on collaboration and how they feel it works from a funder’s perspective with a strong theoretical understanding as well as practical experience. The fund’s current administrator, Bede Martin, is based in Christchurch and had only been in the role of administrator for 3 months when he talked to us. These ideas are representative of his personal experience in the NGO sector rather than the views of his current organisation.

**Families for Families**

Families for Families is a small, 100% volunteer organisation set up by a group of four as a response to the earthquakes and, in particular, inequalities between families in Christchurch. They had a strong vision and effective networks but little experience in the NGO sector so entered an informal arrangement with the Salvation Army for various reasons. We thought this would give a clear contrast to MHAPS, which was a high level collaboration.

Additional secondary data was obtained from a report discussing the experiences of the Migrant Inter-Agency collaboration. The Migrant Inter-Agency group was established immediately following the 22nd of Feb earthquake. It was set up by Settling-in co-coordinator, George Clarke, and involved up to sixty different agencies and migrant associations.
3.2. Data Analysis

A spreadsheet was created with interviewees in rows and the initial questions in columns. We answered the initial questions with key points from the respondents and any new questions that came up were included as emergent themes in a new column. Generally all of these emerged in almost all the interviews, which was an indication of consistency. After all the data had been analysed and placed under headings and categories, we attempted to further categorise them into stronger but more general themes. These themes were consistent with the literature and include drivers of collaboration, benefits, barriers, enablers for success and post-disaster specifics. From there we had a clear outline to produce a report and compare and contrast literature from practice in Christchurch.

3.3. Limitations of study

The most obvious and restraining limitation to our study is the time constraint. Because it was a 10-week window over the holiday season, we felt it important to try and organise interviews as soon as possible before NGOs got into the busy/holiday season. Because of this the literature review was written simultaneously with the data collection. The data collection was also fragmented in that the initial phone and email contact was performed over the entire 10 weeks.

Interviewees identified a number of other organisations, particularly those who had chosen not to enter into collaborations and who would therefore have offered an alternative perspective. Unfortunately although multiple attempts were made, these organisations declined to participate in this project.
4. Results/Findings

It was clear from our findings that there were many examples of successful collaboration in the NGO sector in Christchurch post-earthquake. Among the NGOs we interviewed, information sharing, co-location, co-operation at the service delivery level, and shared volunteers, board members and administrators were all features of collaboration evident in post-earthquake Christchurch. As we did not investigate the level of collaboration before the earthquakes, we were unable to make valid comparisons, but many of the people we interviewed intimated that the earthquakes actually precipitated collaboration in the NGO sector, particularly at the level of service delivery and funding allocation. Out of all the service delivery NGOs contacted, few said that they didn’t collaborate with another organisation at some level. One such response was:

“Can’t collaborate now, in the middle of a crisis.”

Figure 1 gives an overview of the level of collaboration determined by the data from our preliminary contact with the 22 organisations we received responses from.

Figure 1 - Overview of NGO Collaboration Post Earthquake
With regards to funding, one respondent said that the administrators of funds had been a lot more collaborative since the disasters, originally meeting quarterly and now every four months to look at what is coming out of government agencies, what funders are finding and to share information. There is also a movement within the philanthropic trusts to actively encourage collaboration by providing various incentives. An example would be the Working Together More Fund. This is funded by four major family trusts and provides funding specifically to meet the costs of collaborating. The government funding agencies, particularly the Ministry of Health and specifically the CDHB, as well as the MSD, were also actively encouraging collaboration in NGOs by either providing funding incentives or adjusting their contracting process to incentivise partnerships. The members of the NGO sector have responded differently to these sorts of measures.

Three of the interviewees had knowledge of NGOs, who had resisted collaborating and folded either since the CDHB contracting changes or the earthquake as a result of not having access to resources required to survive in a turbulent environment.

“One of the things that went down with the Securities House ship was the long list of organisations and contracts that were lost. They were organisations that didn’t want to follow the CDHB’s expectations and the contracts weren’t renewed. And that was it, that was the huge risk.” (Beth, MHAPS)

4.1. MHAPS

![MHAPS antecedents]

MHAPS Manager: Sue Ricketts

PCT SD Manager: Beth Nobes

ASC SD Manager: Ian Johnson

BSC SD Manager: Frances Caldwell

Figure 2 - MHAPS antecedents
In 2010 the three organisations that merged to form MHAPS each received a letter from the Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB) making statements such as “you’re too small to be sustainable” or just “you’re not sustainable”. Interviewees assumed that in order to continue to get funding they would need to consider partnering with another organisation. One manager approached the CHHB and asked what too small to be sustainable meant and their reply was “if you’re under 4 FTEs.”

4.1.1 Drivers

There was a consensus within MHAPS that the key driver to the collaboration was external pressure. Specifically, this pressure came from the CDHB contracting changes. However the reactions to these changes varied. One manager felt it was “the right thing to do.” Another felt it was “an axe over their heads” but “there was a need for something to be done.” Whereas another said “they weren’t trying to be prescriptive… however we knew whatever we came up with had to meet their approval.” One respondent stated, “it was like, we either merge or we fall over.”

Beth from PCT, which was large enough to continue to contract with the CDHB, still entered the collaboration for future protection:

“It didn’t make any sense for us to sit back and say we were alright... when all the CDHB had to do was change their mind about whether four was safe or six was safe. So we weren’t really safe. That was it; future sustainability.”

4.1.2 Benefits

The most commonly mentioned benefit was effectiveness, which included having a ‘one stop shop for clients’, opportunities between the services, wider services as well as synergy created between organisations, learning and greater understanding. There was a general consensus in MHAPS between the service delivery managers (previously managers of the separate organisations) that the merger enabled them to focus more directly on service delivery without distractions such as administration and budgeting.
Accessibility to funding was another important benefit articulated by the participants. Because of the increased effectiveness, and the greater critical mass, they were better resourced and now had a dedicated financial manager enabling them to strategize and dedicate more time to accessing funding. This lead to them having more flexibility in their role as, by developing a strong relationship with their key funder, the CDHB, they had more certainty of funding and increased stability and safety that was admired and envied within the sector.

There was also the potential for more collaboration within the organisation between the various services at MHAPS and also collaboration outside of the organisation because now they were bigger they had more clout and had increased recognition within the sector.

4.1.3 Barriers

There were a range of barriers discussed in interviews; in fact some interviewees presented more barriers than benefits or drivers. Identifying and overcoming barriers is a fundamental part of a successful collaboration. As Sue stated:

“You have to see those hurdles as the quality measures for your organisation...so if you can meet those hurdles and sort them out, they literally dissolve and they become part of that organisation’s way of doing things. I think this will make the organisation stronger.”

The most common barrier that arose in interviews was that of values. Differences in values, culture, integrity and framing were repeatedly referred to in interviews. As one respondent put it “what we missed at that point was what are the values of this organisation! So we did have some quite strong umm emotional tensions within the organisations.”

Another barrier, which came from a wider variety of participants, was the time or resources involved in executing collaboration. We’ve categorized this as capacity. These included rushing in as being a huge issue for one respondent. Additionally differences in service delivery objectives were a prevalent theme, for example “what it is we do?”

Loss of autonomy and management tensions were big barriers within MHAPS at first but, once managers started to see the benefits that were occurring to their own services and, after reminding themselves it
wasn’t their job anymore, this became less of an issue. One respondent said trying to implement outside management policies was like “throwing fat on the fire, it was just dire.”

Commitment was also a commonly discussed barrier as well as an enabler to success. If all parties were not 100% committed to the collaboration, there would inevitably be difficulties, particularly if there was a saboteur or some felt they were being coerced by the management of the organisation.

4.1.4 Enablers

All four interviewees brought up one or two of the same enablers and these were: having an external, neutral third party facilitating the collaboration and having a strong, competent board. Some respondents cited this as the key enabler for success and emphasised the importance. Sue suggested “you can’t collaborate without some sort of oversight or vision as to where things are going and that has to be slightly disconnected from the service delivery but connected to it in that it knows what’s going on.” There was also a general consensus that everyone involved needed to be absolutely 100% committed to the collaboration or it wouldn’t work. Communication and the need to clarify wants and needs before the event, was an important enabler to some respondents

4.1.5 Big vs. Small trade-off

One interesting theme which came up frequently across various interviews was the pros and cons of being big or small. Prior to, and immediately after, the February earthquake, while planning the full merger, the member organisations of MHAPS had also been in co-location agreements with several other organisations all of who had been occupying Securities House and who planned to sign the lease for the bottom floor of the CTV building on the 22nd of February. However, they found immediately after the earthquake that there was actually strength in smaller numbers as now there were no buildings big enough to take all of them “I think if it had been, for example, a calamity that didn’t get rid of the buildings, in a different situation I think we would have continued on with a strength in numbers approach but because there were no buildings it was actually a strength in… smaller groups,” (Sue).
Another advantage to being small, or perhaps a disadvantage to being big, is that, although they have more clout and better access to resources there are some funders that now say MHAPS are too big to contract with. Where previously all three organisations would get around $4000 from one fund, Sue applied this year and they said: “Sorry you’re too big.” Consequently they have missed out on $12000 of funding. Additionally, MHAPS are wary of becoming larger and losing the personal, comfortable feel they provide clients and staff. They always want to maintain that, as Sue states: “We are a people based organisation with systems to help us do that. We don’t want to be a systems based organisation where people get in the way.” Finally small organisations are wary of collaborating with big ones in case they lose their identity or just get completely consumed and don’t want to lose their all-important small size and the benefits that come with that. “We got a lot of interest from some big scary NGOs… we would have been sucked up and we didn’t want to go down that track because we didn’t want to lose what was a very valuable aspect of our organisation” one respondent replied.

However there are also great benefits with being a large organisation including ones discussed previously such as more clout, synergy, the ‘one stop shop’ and strength in numbers. For example in MHAPS, with the merger, they’ve now been able to “leap up to the next step” by hiring a financial manager to do some “heavy duty stuff” giving much better commitment and access to greater funding as opposed to just “plodding away,” as Sue puts it.

### 4.1.6 Survival Mode

Another theme that appeared out of the interview process with specific post-disaster connotations was what we have termed survival mode. This came about after the earthquakes and occurs at two levels. At one level, MHAPS, and allegedly even the CDHB, found that, immediately after the Feb 22nd disaster, demand for services actually decreased despite the CDHB according to Beth “pulling out all the stops… But it wasn’t taken up as much as anybody expected.”

There were various theories from several respondents suggesting why this occurred:

> “The theory that isn’t tested is that our clientele who are used to anxiety, depression and chaos had resources.”
“Well my guess is that although earthquakes stimulate anxious reactions in people, their ways of dealing with what they’re experiencing are very practical, very hands on, very responsive to an emergency”

“When you’re worried about survival at that level you’re not going to be wanting to sit down and talk about your feelings.”

Whatever the reason, the decrease in service delivery pressure for MHAPS meant they had some time to sit back and re-establish their operations, relocate, rebuild etc. As Sue explained “wwe could actually create the infrastructure, the phones and the computers, those were the things that really took the time. We could do that and make some really good choices before the services started to be back in demand again.”

At another level, more detrimental to the phenomenon of collaboration, is survival mode at NGO level. Many NGOs lost their buildings, their data, their funding streams and staff. This put a lot of pressure on existing staff and made it especially difficult to even consider collaborating while focusing so much on recovering. One respondent suggested, “Trying to merge three organisations at the same time as… trying to resuscitate services and support clients was too much to ask.” But it seems that those that did take the time or have the time to collaborate have come out better off than those that didn’t. For example, one respondent suggested another organisation that “freaked and refused to hear it (CDHB contracting changes) and is still fighting the CDHB to retain its sovereignty.” This organisation was too busy to respond to our calls or emails.

4.1.7 Silo Mentality

All but one interviewee brought up issues with the silo mentality of funding bodies and the difficulties this creates. Within MHAPS, the three service delivery managers all expressed a desire, even before the merger, to get into a seemingly related area but a major hurdle to this was the need to build a relationship with a new agency, either regional or ministerial, and go through their funding processes, basically starting again. One respondent expressed frustration with

“We’ve thought about trying to contract for MSD and Ministry of Justice because we’d love to go into the prisons for example. We’d love to do work out there, but at the moment there is
still this silo stuff, and it’s going to take some time to break through that……..all of the different ministries have different systems that don’t actually talk to each other. Just unbelievable!”

These artificial silo boundaries make expanding services difficult and involve establishing new relationships, new audits, new accountabilities etc. “At the moment I just haven’t had a chance to do that, it’s a job for next year to look at all the different ministries and look at all their funding streams and see whether there is some synchronicity in that and whether we can apply to them for funding which would be great.”

However Sue did go on to say that things were looking brighter

“I do know that right up (at the) ministry level, spearheaded by Bill English, the silo mentality of each of the ministries is being questioned by Treasury and Treasury have now put out a… requirement I suppose you could say, that, where each ministry is contracting with a NGO, they have to have the same contracting form for each department…..Any door’s the right door, right service right time, it’s basically all the same thing. It means that you have a 360-degree service somebody can access at any time and eventually get what they need. It would be wonderful if, any doors the right door could merge with right service right time so that, in fact, people can come and do the whole thing.”
4.2. Working Together More Fund

The respondent suggested that increased efficiencies and better value for money were the major drivers for the creation of this fund. The same respondent stressed that, in the end, collaboration would be driven by the desire to deliver a better service. He also went on to say, from a funders perspective, that overlap and duplication, lack of communication within geographic sectors and funders wanting to see their money being used well were all strong drivers for collaboration.
4.2.2 Benefits

The major benefit of this collaboration was the importance of the funders seeing better value for their money with collaboration but with the suggestion that it isn’t necessarily cheaper, but “bigger bang for buck.” In the end, there was a belief that this would lead to wider services and increased efficiencies. There is a belief that successful collaboration will result in the funder’s dollar going more into service delivery than backroom administration.

4.2.3 Barriers

Barriers were seen here as fundamentally based around relationships, both personal and organisational. Issues around distrust were viewed as being the most difficult hurdle in achieving collaborative working. Other barriers were seen as narrow perspectives on solutions, unexpected complexity and financial and administrative issues. When organisations are of different sizes there could also be a wariness of one taking over the other so how do you achieve a true partnership? This links back to our big vs. small trade-off in section 4.2.5.

4.2.4 Enablers

Strong commitment is an important enabler identified by this interviewee. “You’ve got to go beyond ‘this feels right’ kind of thing to ‘this really works best for us and the client’” There also has to be a level of trust, comfort and synergy between different parties which is at the personal and the organisational level.
4.2.5 Survival Mode

The respondent confirmed the findings from MHAPS and even used the term ‘survival mode.’ “There’s been a high level of stress in the NGO sector where many of them have lost premises” “I know a lot of NGOs that are running on empty so a lot of them have been on survival mode”

One example of how the survival mode issue could be countered or the effects reduced would be a real example seen in the Waimakariri district post-disaster:

“There was a lot of interesting stuff going on last year where the council worked closely with the NGO sector and that meant that bringing organisations together was handled by the council and therefore it happened. So groups could come along without having to spend a lot of time organising venues and food and registrations and so forth, it was all done.....So where the system stepped in and worked in an integrated way with the sector I think it probably did enable them to work collaboratively but not to the point where they would need this fund, they just did it. Did what you do to meet the need.”

This would be an example of external pressure, successfully providing resources and the capacity for organisations to collaborate during desperate times while still in ‘survival mode.’

Additionally, one respondent felt that, now things are beginning to settle down in Christchurch and people are looking to the future, the idea of collaboration is starting to flourish

“So what we’re starting to see, or sense really, not see, is that is beginning to evolve into I think probably another stage where groups are more open to working in an integrated way now... I think there’s also a stronger desire and a capability of actually putting the effort into this now over and above just delivering a core service.”
4.3. Families for Families

4.3.1 Drivers

Nikki from Families for Families was the only respondent within a service delivery NGO to emphasise resources as being the key driver for collaboration. This was a very new charity with a good plan, but who felt they needed the experience and capacity of a larger, more established organisation (the Salvation Army) to help execute the service particularly infrastructure such as storage and transport. “We needed certain things done that we knew we couldn’t do ourselves. It was never a question of whether or not.”

4.3.2 Benefits

The drivers were similar to the benefits, access to resources, experience and know-how offered by a large, well-established NGO.

4.3.3 Barriers

One barrier Families for Families experienced was that the fundamental service of their organisation was that one family or individual could donate $20 and would know exactly where that $20 went: a food packet directly to another family. One organisation approached by Nikki said they would take the food and split it up into food banks. Nikki then went on to the Sallies who promised to deliver the food parcels to families. This was a barrier of values or service delivery in that Nikki wanted it done one way and wouldn’t accept anything less.

4.3.4 Enablers

One bit of advice Nikki gave to achieving the successful collaboration was to stand firm with beliefs and values:
“Know what you want to do. Know how you’re going to do it and do it, stick to it. Be determined.”

4.3.5 Big vs. Small Trade-off

Families for Families was a new start-up with exciting ideas but without the infrastructure and experience of a large, established organisation, so collaborating with the Salvation Army while maintaining commitment to ideas and values worked effectively for both parties. Here collaboration with a big NGO wasn’t an issue, it was a benefit.

4.4. Other Organisations

4.4.1 Drivers

External pressure again was quite a prominent theme in some of the brief phone interviews. One respondent from a large organisation felt coerced:

“It feels like we’re forced into it. Some good services come out of it but it doesn’t feel like collaboration.”

One respondent said strong ties between old friends will always be present and this will always drive collaboration.

A large number of organisations found they were forced to co-locate/collaborate as a direct result of the earthquakes.

The common theme of effectiveness/outcome driven was raised by several organisations. Also the realisation that in a time of such enormous need one organisation didn’t have the skill set or reach to make a difference, so combining two sets of skills to get better results was a solution.
4.4.2 Benefits

The Migrant inter-agency found that the links with iwi provided huge support to migrant agencies including accommodation, administration, facilities and access to Maori wardens with their ‘street knowledge.’ This had flow-on effects to a general level of cultural sensitivity.

In general effectiveness of services was a theme.

4.4.3 Barriers

A huge barrier to one organisation was that it took more resources than it created. For example accountability documentation, management meetings and budgets, and that collaboration was initially very resource hungry and it took time to realise the benefits.

The Migrant Inter-agency found that with the rigid rules of large relief agencies against funding professional organisations, financing their work was a huge barrier. They found that almost all followed a hand up vs. hand out model of assistance and preferred to use their own staff or inexperienced volunteers rather than work with pre-established local and knowledgeable NGOs with strong established networks. This was a serious hindrance to the response and recovery and also links back to our big vs. small trade-off in 4.2.5.

The Migrant Inter-agency found in their report that the ‘silo mentality’ in designated response groups, especially government departments is a point needing discussion further between adequately involved appropriate stakeholders.

4.4.4 Enablers

The Migrant inter-agency found that, in order to succeed, you must be prepared to share - be prepared to develop strategies and share learning from experiences. They also suggested nationwide initiative is needed to get major relief organisations to change focus from enacting hand out practices. From our
interviews it appeared that strong leadership, trust and respect in the community will all aid collaboration and service delivery in general.

4.4.5 Silo Mentality

In regards to the silo mentality of funding agencies one respondent expressed frustration but also went on to say the situation is improving:

“...A number of government agencies I think are actually doing some really creative things and it takes a lot to get that from me in terms of government departments. But they talk about these virtual offices. I've seen them working in Papanui here with MSD and various others working in the same physical location and a lot of informal sharing. That to me potentially is a great way for government agencies and the NGO sector really to work together”

In response to the silo funding and cross-sector collaboration issues, one respondent proposed that

“a positive spinoff from that has been that it’s probably united the NG sector in terms of well if they won’t work as well together with us as we want then we’ll just get on and do the job with each other. One agency recently got sick of waiting for some decisions on social housing so it’s just managed to secure some funding. “

4.5. Summary

The key results and findings from each organization are summarised in Table 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drivers</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Enablers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MHAPS</td>
<td>CDHB funding changes, Future Protection</td>
<td>Effectiveness Synergy, Resources, Learning, Stability. Critical Mass, Understanding</td>
<td>Values, service delivery, cultural and management style differences, Financial issues, Rushing, Siloed funding, Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4F</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Access to resources and experience</td>
<td>Service delivery differences (minor)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTMF</td>
<td>Increased efficiencies, effectiveness</td>
<td>Dollar produces more, Increased efficiencies, effectiveness</td>
<td>Relationships, narrow perspectives on solutions, distrust, capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIA</td>
<td>Displacement from Earthquake</td>
<td>Specialised skills</td>
<td>Rigid rules on part of other agencies. Lack of responsiveness. Siloed funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Funder Driven, Old Friends, Resources, Earthquake, Different Skill Sets</td>
<td>Effectiveness.</td>
<td>External coercion, values differences, capacity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Discussion

5.1. Consistency with literature

5.1.1 Drivers

Our findings were consistent with the literature in that three out of the five broad drivers we found during interviews were also discussed in the literature. These were external pressures, resources and effectiveness. However we found external pressure was a much stronger driver in our findings than in the literature. Given, the CDHB changes, the MSD preferences and the external funding provided for collaboration, this seems to be a fair representation of the Christchurch sector. Future protection and old friends were drivers that weren’t mentioned in the literature and both of these may be particularly Christchurch-centric. Old friend networks are historically strong in smaller, more central regions and if the main funding agency for health based NGOs is cutting funding to small agencies, then it is reasonable to desire some future protection..

5.1.2 Benefits

The perceived benefits from our data differ from our literature findings. The main difference was that the literature claimed political factors were the most common benefit of collaboration. Our findings returned one ‘political’ benefit, which was that “bigger has more clout”. As mentioned in the literature review, we feel this is most likely because there is not a strong lobbying environment in New Zealand and also that we are dealing with smaller grassroots, service delivery focused organisations.

Effectiveness came in as our strongest finding and without political benefits this would also be consistent with the literature. Another difference is that reducing competition emerged as an important benefit in the literature but was not mentioned at all in our interviews so this may indicate Christchurch is a less competitive, more collaborative environment than other areas.
5.1.3 Barriers

The barriers we found were more consistent with the literature than drivers or benefits. However the relative importance of the barriers was different in our findings than in the literature. Whereas in the literature most to least important were objectives, sacrifices, values, operational, personalities, communication, capacity, in the findings from the interviews the order was values, capacity, operational, objectives, commitment, personalities. This could just be due to small sample size or could be a reflection of the Christchurch NGO environment i.e. smaller capacity (access to resources) but stronger values driven objectives. Due to the limitations of our study, it would be difficult to draw any more conclusions. Some very strong clashes occurred over values and service delivery/management styles although these were worked through over time with help from an external facilitator and a strong board. Issues around values and objectives were prevalent in our findings - these clashes were a fundamental barrier for the smooth functioning of the collaboration within MHAPS. Once they were sorted through, using various methods (a values hui, and an external party), all parties involved agreed that it was a more effective working environment from there.

5.1.4 Enablers

Our enablers are also fairly consistent with the literature in terms of individual enablers and, for the most part, the order of importance placed on these enablers. There was particular emphasis on having a neutral, external third party aiding the collaboration whether it was a funder (CDHB, WTMF) or a consultant (Board Clarity or Catalyst for Change in MHAPS case); the external party was deemed pivotal. There was also a strong emphasis from MHAPS’ perspective on having a really strong board facilitating the merger. Because they had a strong, dedicated voluntary board that was separate from the service delivery staff and management, they were able to work out the fine details while the staff carried on with their normal business. This removed a lot of the aforementioned barriers related to capacity and resources and we must not understate the effort required here: “A lot of head banging on walls… and many, many 60 hour weeks.’ (Beth) Had that been experienced by the service delivery staff while trying to deliver services, things may have turned out differently.
5.2 Emergent Themes

5.2.1 Big vs. Small trade-off

As discussed in 4.2.5 there were mixed ideas and outcomes around being a small or big organisation. Sue’s idea about people based organisations in section 4.2.5 ties in with the literature. For example, “as voluntary organizations become large, they take on the characteristics of government bureaucracies: aloofness, politicisation, perpetuation of power’ (Smith, 1989). Another respondent’s wariness of being “swallowed up by big scary NGOs” is in line with Richard and Heard’s (2005) idea “Both large and small organisations have reservations concerning participation in coalitions, but it is the smaller ones that are driven to find well-resourced partners and are more likely to be overwhelmed by their powerful allies” (p38).

This wariness of smaller organisations becoming too big in Christchurch is consistent with the literature but here we have evidence of issues directly attributable to being too big including the difficulties of finding a large enough building, and the loss of particular funding aimed at small NGOs.

5.2.2 Silo Mentality

The siloed funding issue was mentioned briefly in the literature reviewed by Snavely and Tracy (2000). In our findings it was a fundamental barrier and the cause of frustration for many participants. If MHAPS, with a dedicated general manager and a financial manager separate from the service delivery staff, were struggling with the capacity to seek funding from different ministries, then smaller organisations would have huge difficulties. Respondents suggest that some of these issues are currently being addressed at ministry and treasury level.

The funders are pushing the NGO sector to be more collaborative with clients being able to walk in from any door and get the service they need, and the NGOs want this. One respondent claimed ‘Well, my hope is that we will move a bit away from being so siloed. Siloed in terms of diagnosis and that we will be able to offer services to people with any kind of diagnosis and still retain that kind of expertise or knowledge.’
In order to make this possible for the NGO sector, the funders need to reach the same level of collaboration and “any doors the right door” mentality.

5.2.3 External Pressure:

Another common theme from both the data collection and the literature review was the significance of external pressure and how it affects the operating environment and the NGO itself. External pressure had both positive and negative perceptions and positive and negative outcomes. The literature claimed it was both a driver and an enabler to success. Within the data collection, we found it was a driver, an enabler, but also a barrier depending on how the actors within the organisation perceived this pressure. Three examples of pressure being applied in Christchurch came from the MSD which one respondent, from a large organisation referred to using terms such as ‘Funder driven/funder controlled – pretend – forced into it.’ Another was from the CDHB, where there were a variety of feelings including helpful, guiding, vague or outright coercive, again depending on the personality. Finally, the Working Together More Fund, which was established out of a concern about getting a lot of applications from organisations that “tended to be doing similar things, overlapping things or duplicating existing organisations so they were concerned about their limited dollars not being used in the most effective way.”

It seems that one respondent who referred to collaboration, as a ‘buzzword’ was correct in that it is the idea of the moment. Whether or not this has positive or negative connotations is unclear; although from our limited research it appears that collaboration has resulted in successful streamlining of the NGO sector with, at the outset, some negative results and feelings but gradually with the idea being more fully accepted.

5.2.4 Business model vs. Values model

Finally, a strong theme that emerged from the data collection was that of the values model vs. the business model in reference to how the NGO sector operates. The literature presented a lot of business ideas in relation to NGO collaboration including competitive advantage, maximizing efficiencies, consultative planning etc. However, during the interviews, these were of little significance with
respondents generally citing values and outcomes as the drivers. One respondent even claimed that a barrier to collaboration with other organisations was their focus on business structures not being compatible with the values model. Beth from PCT recounted

“After bleating about what it should feel like for a long time, that was when it was apparent that the peer support organisations, the foundation that we all have of client centred, client driven empathy... all that stuff. Those goals and values were consistent across all three organisations. And really everything else was minor”

It is important to remember that, although certain models of business can aid NGOs in their operations such as in maintaining slick operations, and keeping costs down, that they are not fundamentally driven by profit. Beth from PCT argued:

“Well, we don’t make any money. So another model has to exist for organisations for whom profit isn’t the end... You have to have a different model in NGOs. In the compassionate sector you have to be able to measure client satisfaction, you have to be able to measure staff stability. There are all kinds of ways of measuring success - they’re just not in that book, they’re in a different book.”

As demonstrated in MHAPS, by strong personal clashes in regards to methods and operations, having business models applied to the organisation “was absolutely anathematic of the kind of work that we do.” The consequences of implementing outside business models in an NGO without considering what the fundamental drivers of the organisation are could be disastrous, and would be a huge barrier to successful collaboration, be it between NGOs or cross-sector.

5.3 Post-disaster Practice

There was a general feeling amongst respondents that NGOs had pooled resources well since the earthquake and there was a positive, collaborative working environment. However there was also a similar level of feeling that cross-sector collaboration wasn’t as effective or streamlined as it could be.
Where NGOs became frustrated with central government, they stepped up and did it themselves. As mentioned in section 4.3.6 one respondent suggested the benefit from frustration with central government has been the union of the NGO sector. The respondent also went on to say:

“Umm look I think some of the traditional practices of the government, seeing itself as central to everything, gets in the way of a truly cooperative approach so I think if we look back on this in 20 years time we will see the negative consequences resulting from that more clearly than we can probably see now.”  “At the moment it generates frustration in my view and restricts creative solutions and creative ideas getting shared around and implemented because the government can’t do it alone, the NGO sector can’t do it alone and the commercial can’t do it alone so the only way it’s really going to be effective is if there’s structures put in place for partnerships”

A number of New Zealand based international development NGOs, including Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA), CBM, Christian World Service (CWS), Oxfam, Rotary NZ, Save the Children, TearFund, and World Vision have been part of the on-going response and recovery effort following the Christchurch quake working under the umbrella group, the NGO Disaster Relief Forum (NDRF). This kind of response ties in with the literature in section 2.6. However this seemingly effective and efficient collaboration in response to a disaster obviously brings about an effective response but also raised many issues

Although collaboration within Migrant Inter-agency was effective and desirable, as mentioned in section 4.5.2 they found difficulties in working with the big aid agencies and found them rigid and inflexible in relation to hand up vs. hand out policies. These big agencies would prefer to use their own staff or well-meaning volunteers to deliver services, funded by government, national and international public donations rather than divert the funds to local NGOs with experience and local knowledge. This created huge frustrations, duplications and hindered response and recovery and offset some of the benefits and synergies created by the effective collaboration that the Migrant Inter-Agency presented.

It was clear that the earthquake did precipitate a lot of collaboration in the NGO sector. As Beth puts it “Following the earthquake the co-location was instantaneous” Likewise the migrant inter-agency collaboration and the NDRF were all results of the earthquake as well as the facilitation of collaboration
in the Waimakariri district and the information sharing between the funding agencies immediately post-earthquake.

This prompts the following questions:

1. What would the response have been like had these collaborations already been in place?
2. How can we facilitate this kind of collaboration without a disaster
6. Implications/Recommendations

This study has confirmed a lot of what was present in the literature. The drivers, benefits, barriers and ingredients for success are all present in some form or another and although there are variations in perceived importance, the broad categories are there. Although there do seem to be a few stark differences whether that is because of the environment in Christchurch specifically or even more specifically because of the earthquakes it is hard to tell without prior or future knowledge. However there are some obvious trends with some clear recommendations for NGOs, their funders and researchers.

First and foremost the NGO sector in Canterbury post-disaster is very collaborative. There is active encouragement for collaboration from various external forces. However the members of the NGO sector have perceived and received this encouragement in a variety of ways ranging from feeling coerced to welcoming it. It appears collaboration is essential both inter-sector and cross-sector in a post-disaster environment – no one group can do it alone. Additionally, it has been found that a disaster has the potential to precipitate collaboration.

6.1. Recommendations

For NGOs:

In each interview we asked the respondent for advice to organisations considering collaboration. Each respondent had a different suggestion:

- 100% commitment - don’t force it.
- Be prepared for everything,
- Research collaboration
- Stand firm with values
- Take a green fields approach,
- Identify and involve all stakeholders, trust each other,
- Have a strong board and a neutral external facilitator
- Be wary implementing outside business or management structures into values driven NGOs.
As one respondent suggested – it is important to take a green fields approach. No one form of collaboration will work best for all. Explore any collaborative possibility, from sharing information with ‘old friends’ to sharing an administrator to merging organisations together. Do whatever works best for the given organisation - collaboration is not one size fits all.

For funders:

The UK Charities Commission released a comprehensive document on collaboration included in our references. This document was helpful to our research and it would be even more so as a resource to any NGO considering collaboration. The New Zealand Charities Commission links to this document on their website but has yet to produce a New Zealand specific document; this would be a useful resource for New Zealand based NGOs.

There was a level of satisfaction with the CDHB funding changes even though this could be considered a crisis to NGOs in itself. It was suggested by more than one respondent that this was due to localized relationships. These organisations were able to work closely with the CDHB towards a solution that suited all parties rather than just being told what to do. An effective way to imitate this would be to localise more NGO funding initiatives to establish strong supportive relationships in other sectors where benefits could match the costs. Additionally the practice seen in the Waimakariri district is a prime example of how external pressure can be applied as a guiding hand rather than a coercive force.

Encouraging and incentivising collaboration in NGOs is effective but leading by example would be even more so. The siloed funding issues referred to in section 4.2.7 and discussed in section 5.2.3 are a huge barrier. They are being worked towards but until different NGOs offering similar services can easily attain funding from different sources; collaboration between the NGOs will remain difficult.

The strongest recommendation from our findings was having a neutral, external facilitator of involved in the collaborative process, particularly deep collaborations. But this will also be relatively expensive and smaller NGOs would lack the means – facilitating this could be an effective way to encourage and execute effective collaboration. Organisations such as the Working Together More Fund are already enabling this to happen.
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Appendix 1

Semi Structured Interview Guide

Incentivising effective NGO collaboration: post disaster practice in Canterbury

Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me.

Firstly, can you tell me about your organisation before the earthquakes:

1. What does your organisation do?
2. How is it funded?
3. How many staff do you have? – paid/volunteer
4. What sort of preparations for a crisis did you have prior to the quakes? (prompts – securing of contents, evaluation of building, first aid and emergency supplies, BCP, staff contact lists, data storage)
5. In your organisation, what are the key factors of success?
6. How would you rate yourself on these prior to the quakes?
7. What were your aspirations for the organisation?

Now, talking about the events of 2010/11:

8. What happened to your organisation in the quakes?

Prompts: which quake
Closed/relocated/re-opened
Timeframes
Service Delivery pressure

9. Did you enter into any collaborative or joint working arrangements with other NGOs following the quakes

Yes: Please describe
Prompts: Who had the idea of collaborating?

What was your relationship with them?

What were your reasons for entering into the collaboration?

Did you consider any alternative ideas – what, why?

What form has the relationship taken – trust based, contract, legal entity?

Were any external parties involved – CDC, Recover Canty, lawyers?

How do you manage the collaboration on an ongoing basis?

What are your expectations for the future of the collaboration?

Is there anything about the collaborative arrangements that hasn’t or isn’t working?

Is there anything you would do differently with the benefit of hindsight?

Were there any particular obstacles to entering into the collaboration?

What have been the key benefits of collaboration for you and your organisation?

Is there any particular advice you would give to another organisation considering a collaborative relationship

No: Why not

Thinking about your organisation now:

10. What has changed?

Prompts: customer/clientele

Method of operation

Decision making processes

Funding

Support Mechanisms

11. What does the future hold for your organisation?