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Lecture Notes

Closing The Gaps
&
Capacity Building

07 June 2000
8.30am

Te Puaw&nanga Ki Te Ao
(Masters Class)
Waikato University
HAMILTON

Tena koutou katoa i runga i nga &huatanga o tenei ra.

It is my great pleasure to be speaking to a Class in Development Studies within Te Pua W&nanga ki te Ao. I am especially heartened by the opportunity to focus on development and, therefore, capability rather than deficiencies.

The history of wh&nau, hap. and iwi and the M&ori race generally is full of examples of our peopleís predisposition to development. One could go right back to our origins, when T&ne separated Rangi (the sky father) and Papa (the earth mother), he did so to allow light, enlightenment and energy into this dark world. So in the process of creating a ëgapí he was also closing others, however, it is worth remembering that this did not happen without a certain amount of conflict and dissent. Our ancestorsí adoption of technology as a tool for future development is one example. Our peopleís pre-occupation with building upon our own structures, institutions and processes to keep pace with the pressures and consequences of development, is another.

In recent times, we have become obsessive about the needs our people have, all too often at the expense of their dreams and aspirations. Yet, for me, development is about finding ways to fulfil dreams. It is not about deciding whether to dream or not. However, when people are deprived, alienated and disaffected to the extent that our people have been, they tend not to have dreams.

This Government accepts the Treaty of Waitangi as New Zealandís founding document and as the basis of constitutional Government in this country. By signing that Treaty, the Crown guaranteed the rights of hap. and undertook to protect them. The Crown also recognised M&ori as co-signatories under the Articles of the Treaty. This Government is committed to fulfilling its obligations as a Treaty partner to support self-determination for wh&nau, hap. and iwi.

The current strategy for M&ori development was not effective and the Crown, under the Treaty of Waitangi, had a responsibility to ensure M&ori progressed in the same way as other people in New Zealand. That hasnít happened, so thereís a lot of work to do and for the first time, I think, we do have a Government that is committed to saying ëlook we donít have all the answers for indigenous peoples in this countryí.

Around the world itís been shown that indigenous peoples progress at a far greater rate when they are in control of their own development, and this is really what we are committed to doing. M&ori communities must be involved at all levels in developing solutions.

M&ori people are ambitious people, and we have had to face many challenges to ensure we survived as a visible presence in Aotearoa. Even though our presence is explicit and enduring, we still face the challenges posed by our rates of unemployment, low educational achievement levels, health status, crime rates and so on. At the same time, we have the dreams (passed on by our t.puna) that we want to fulfil. The question is how can we deal with both these challenges at the same time?

I am part of a Government that has a clear view about this.

We have recognised a number of things, and they are reflected in our M&ori Affairs policy that is underpinned by:

- The Treaty of Waitangi

- M&ori development

- Capacity building

- Closing the socio-economic gaps between M&ori and non-M&ori

- and, Tracking expenditure on M&ori outcomes.

The Government expects all five elements to be reflected in the activities of government departments. My particular expectation of departments is that they will:

- Uphold the Treaty of Waitangi as the primary factor in the relationship between the Crown and wh&nau, hap. and iwi

-Actively support the rangatiratanga of tangata whenua in managing and controlling their own development

- Aid, sponsor and resource capacity building as a developmental process

- Make a concerted effort to close the gaps between M&ori and non-M&ori

- and, Ensure their respective contributions to M&ori outcomes can be tracked and measured.

Clearly, all of these elements are important in themselves as well as collectively. However, today I hope to clarify, as much as I can, what we consider the relationship is between the Governmentís strategies and M&ori development, since I think this is likely to be of the greatest significance to you.

To do this, I will cover issues around the Closing the Gaps and Capacity

Building policies:
1. People are the most significant resource we have, and the socio-economic gaps between M&ori and non-M&ori are unsustainable. Therefore, we need to address the socio-economic disparities they endure. Hence our Closing the Gaps policy.

2. M&ori want to manage and control their own development, and they should be supported by the Government to do so. Therefore, we have also developed a Capacity Building policy.

A Closing the Gaps Strategy for Te Puni K^kiri
Te Puni K^kiriís mandate to report on its analysis of M&ori outcomes in education, health, employment and training and economic resource development, comes from both the Ministry of M&ori Development Act and from Cabinet.

The Ministry of M&ori Development Act 1991 requires Te Puni K^kiri:
to monitor and liaise with each department and agency that provides or has a responsibility to provide services to or for M&ori for the purpose of ensuring the adequacy of those services.
[section 5 (1) (b)]

In 1995, Cabinet agreed that Te Puni K^kiri should not only analyse M&ori outcomes, but also communicate these results to iwi, hap, and M&ori.

To do this, Te Puni K^kiri, in 1998, released the report entitled Progress Towards Closing the Social and Economic Gaps Between M&ori and non-M&ori.

The Report drew on data from across the key sectors in the Act, and provided a benchmark to assess progress in reducing disparities between M&ori and non-M&ori. Until then, it had been difficult to assess the overall social and economic position of M&ori, or to gauge whether or not improvements had occurred across the relevant sectors.

The content will evolve over time as more data on M&ori outcomes becomes available, existing indicators are refined and new indicators are developed. The coverage of the report will be expanded to include other aspects of M&ori social and economic well being.

The Closing the Gaps Reports
The 1998 Report acted as a benchmark against which the Government could measure progress towards achieving the strategic objective for M&ori development.

The report used key statistical indicators to assess changes in the education, employment, economic and health status of M&ori. It was based on data collected by state sector agencies, either through their administrative data collections or through regular surveys. The Closing the Gaps report pulled together historical data across each of the key sectors and provided an assessment of progress made over time.

The findings presented in the report were not new. There was no denying that M&ori had experienced and continue to experience poorer educational outcomes, higher unemployment, lower income levels, lower rates of home ownership, and poorer health than non-M&ori. However, up until the Closing the Gaps report, it was difficult, if not impossible, to assess whether disparities were improving or getting worse.

The indicators used in the Closing the Gaps report were chosen because time series, or longer term, data was available for them and because they represented areas of importance where considerable disparities were seen to exist. While they provided only a partial picture of the social and economic position of M&ori, a narrowing of disparities in these areas would have signalled an improvement in the status of M&ori within the particular sector.

Key findings of the Closing the Gaps 1998 report
A striking feature of M&ori education status over the decade prior to the report was the increased participation of M&ori at all levels of the education system. By comparison, the labour force status of M&ori deteriorated as a result of the economic restructuring of the 1980s, which also resulted in severe job losses for M&ori.

In terms of economic status, levels of M&ori self-employment and household incomes increased over the 1990s. However, housing became less affordable and M&ori were still more reliant on social welfare assistance than non-M&ori.

Although the 1990s saw continued improvements in M&ori life expectancy and declines in the infant mortality rate, M&ori health for almost every other indicator (e.g. cancer incidence, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and pneumonia) presented in the Closing the Gaps 1998 report deteriorated.

Overall, the report findings indicated that the gaps between M&ori and non-M&ori education, employment, economic and health status were significant, and were either stabilised or widening.

Key Findings of the Closing the Gaps Report, 2000
All of the indicators in the report show that there is considerable disparity between M&ori and non-M&ori.

The report demonstrates that M&ori continue to experience:

- poorer health status

- lower income levels

- higher unemployment

- higher rates of prosecution and conviction

- attain fewer educational qualifications

- lower rates of living in owned homes than non-M&ori.

Overall, there have been few reductions in disparity since the last Closing the Gaps report, and in those areas where M&ori rates have been improving, corresponding improvements in the status of non-M&ori mean that disparities between M&ori and non-M&ori are not closing.

Poorer outcomes for M&ori are evident from the start of life:

- M&ori infants are more likely to die than non-M&ori infants

- M&ori children are less likely than non-M&ori to be participating in early childhood education, an area that is important for future educational development.

Disparities continue to exist throughout childhood and young adulthood

- M&ori are leaving secondary school with much lower levels of qualifications than non-M&ori

- majority of young M&ori are leaving school with qualification levels that will disadvantage them when attempting to gain access to quality post school education and employment

- M&ori youth are less likely to move directly into tertiary education than non-M&ori, and are far less likely to be participating in formal tertiary education

- M&ori are over represented in second chance schemes, such as the Training Opportunities Programme (TOPs).

There are significant disparities between M&ori and non-M&ori social and economic status throughout adulthood

- M&ori unemployment and long term unemployment rates continue to be significantly higher than for non-M&ori

- M&ori are also less likely to be participating in the labour force

- M&ori incomes are lower than those for non-M&ori

- M&ori are more likely to require government assistance or to be totally dependent on a benefit

-This impacts on M&ori access to adequate housing, M&ori health status, and contributes to the much higher offending and victimisation rates within the M&ori community.

So What is the Governmentís Closing the Gaps Policy?

The gaps between M&ori and non-M&ori are especially apparent in areas such as housing conditions and home ownership, educational achievement, rates and periods of unemployment, health status, numbers of prison inmates and children and young persons in need of care, protection and control.

This Government has agreed it will work to close those gaps because they have an impact not just on M&ori peopleís ability to participate in all aspects of the life of New Zealand, but also on their ability to manage and control their own development. So the Governmentís priority sectors for closing the gaps are health, housing, education, employment, justice, welfare and business and enterprise development.
The closing the gaps policy provides the Government with further impetus to focus its attention on its own departments, strategies and systems, to produce positive results for M&ori. The Government expects its departments to improve their contributions to make a positive difference to the health, housing, education, employment, justice, welfare and business and enterprise outcomes for M&ori. In my view, this suggests departments will need to be responsive to the needs, interests and priorities of M&ori.

It also suggests, to me, that departments will have to be more rigorous in the development and implementation of their strategies, policies, programmes and services in terms of whether they work well for M&ori.

Closing the Gaps means there is even more reason for departments to engage

with wh&nau, hap., iwi and M&ori organisations to deliver specified services to M&ori communities. However, it is a ëneeds-focusedí policy through which M&ori are treated as clients.

Iwi have a number of qualities that can enhance the ability of Government to meet its stated commitment to closing the gaps and support wh&nau, hap. and iwi self-determination through effecting a Treaty-based partnership.

For M&ori, the main point of the closing the gaps policy is to ensure M&ori are not prevented from having the best possible chance to lead, manage and control their own development. Until now, the disparities between M&ori and non-M&ori have had the potential to be seen as a record of the failings of M&ori people. This is neither sustainable nor appropriate. Closing the Gaps does signal, however, how much of the Governmentís authority, expertise and resources need to be brought to bear to make a substantial difference to socio-economic outcomes for M&ori. The ëeffectiveness auditi of spending on M&ori across government departments would not be completed in time for the June 15 budget, so it was not possible to take funding from those departments for the new strategy. Extra funds would be injected into the Budget.

I am confident the Budget will show the Governmentís commitment to closing the gaps in social and economic development between M&ori and Pakeha. Capacity building is only part of the process. Itís an important part and certainly I expect it to be funded so that over the next 2Ω years we are going to see iwi organisations and Maori organisations in other settings being able to take up this challenge.

And what is capacity-building?
Capacity-building is a sign that the Government considers wh&nau, hap., iwi and M&ori generally have a unique part to play in creating an environment in which M&ori will realise their economic, political, social and cultural aspirations. Capacity-building focuses on enhancing capabilities so M&ori become the managers and controllers of their own development.

This means capacity-building should be an empowering process whereby M&ori have the chance to continue to drive, formulate and implement their own development strategies.

Some iwi have completed a ëstocktakeí of the needs for their hap., which would help the iwi to establish what sort of services and skills are needed.

The next step would be to produce a development plan which would go to the relevant Crown Agency that held the resources that were needed. It would then be up to Te Puni Kokiri to monitor how Government Agencies responded to those plans.

An example of capacity building at a micro level would be early intervention in a family suffering from domestic violence. The downstream effects of that violence were inhibiting the woman in that family from being able to care for her children properly, and meant the children were living in an environment that had an impact on their learning. So more serious problems for the family were likely further down the line unless intervention took place.

Under the capacity building strategy, a whanau worker might go in, sit down with the family and establish what could be done, and to ensure that it was done.

The same goes for other social services, and in considering current practices one may well ask:
Do people want to continue to have children taken away from their families and placed in care? Some of these placements cost $110,000 a year for one child.
Do they want that to continue because thatís the system weíve got in place?

Do they want to see youth prisons being built? With a cost of around $50,000 a year for people to be kept in prison.

I mean, where do we intervene? Where do we actually stop and say we want to intervene to make a difference?

There are some iwi and Maori organisations that could pick up the strategy immediately and start work, because they already have experience running their own social services.

Capacity-building is envisaged by the Government to be a process which supports the rangatiratanga of wh&nau, hap, and iwi.

It also includes wh&nau, hap., iwi, M&ori organisations and M&ori communitiesí:

- Assessing their current capacity, identifying and prioritising needs

- Creating development plans

- Enhancing the skills and capabilities of their people

- and, Implementing their development plans.

Governmentís role in capacity-building is to:

- Fund or purchase capacity-building initiatives

- Develop and/or provide resources (such as policy, information, advice, programmes and services)

- and, Support the ongoing development of capability amongst wh&nau, hap., iwi, M&ori organisations and M&ori communities.

Capacity building will take all the entrepreneurial skill and task-focused aptitude of M&ori people, because it requires them to be focused on capability and not on needs and deficiencies. Our people will also need people like you to help and support them in their endeavours.

Development and, therefore, capacity building, is not a nebulous process for which the results are invisible. Indeed, it is a process the results of which can be seen on our peopleís faces, and is evident in their hearts and minds.

Development is a changing and evolving process. It should never be treated as static. Nor should the mechanisms and processes by which it is achieved.

The policy is about enabling those groups to build their own strategies, systems, structures and skills so that they can move forward.

It is about building a capacity that supports active iwi participation in strategies to alleviate the disparities between M&ori and non-M&ori and facilitate wh&nau, hap. and iwi development.

It might cost some money up front to deal with all of those issues, but in the end it should, in the long term, save considerable money, because as people build more skills, and families are able to identify what their own needs are, and to have their needs addressed.

It should result in people being able to take charge of their own lives and their own situation.

A community development approach to the reduction of disparities requires that opportunity be provided for communities to respond to their own needs and preferences. This is critical in M&ori development. Old service delivery mechanisms based on a centralised model of planning will not produce the kinds of results the Government wants. They will certainly not lead to the self-determination of wh&nau, hap. and iwi.

The resources for the strategy would also be on top of current government contracts for iwi and urban Maori organisations to deliver social services.
There are some iwi and Maori organisations that could pick up the strategy immediately and start work, because they already had experience running social services.

Under-resourcing and inappropriate contracting processes have lead to ad hoc development with the priorities of government agencies taking centre stage. This type of scenario must be avoided at all costs if the Government is sincere in wanting to advance self-determination for wh&nau, hap. and iwi. Centralised control will not lead to this.

Cabinet has signed off the funding for the ëcapacity buildingí policy, which will see hap., iwi and other M&ori organisations around the country producing their own community development plans that will eventually go to Government agencies for funding.

The alternative is for taxpayers to continue to fork out massive amounts of money in crisis-point interventions, dealing with M&ori who fell through the cracks in existing government programmes and services.

I am really hopeful that by combining the resources of the Government with the hearts and minds of our people, we can truly make the progress we need to make and fulfil the dreams we have always had.

Itís a huge task. Itís a mammoth task but its necessary if we are going to ëmake a differenceí.

No reira, ma te w& pea ka kitea tatou he huarahi pai, hei h&painga, hei whakakaha i tena wh&nau, i tena hap,, i tena iwi ranei.

Kia ora mai tatou.

ENDS