

Inspiring Communities releases Learning by Doing



Media Release: 17 April 2013

INSPIRING COMMUNITIES RELEASES LEARNING BY DOING: COMMUNITY-LED CHANGE IN AOTEAROA NZ

Last night (Tuesday 16 April, 2013) Inspiring Communities released the much anticipated publication: 'Learning by Doing: Community-led Change in Aotearoa NZ'. The book draws on three years of experience from around the country and provides tools, resources, stories and learnings to help support and grow community-led development thinking and action.

Learning by Doing was launched at Te Papa in Wellington, to a crowd of 130 community and agency leaders and change-makers from around the country. Inspiring Communities Chairperson David Hanna, and Wellington Mayor Celia Wade-Brown co-hosted the event.

David has been close to the production of the new resource, and believes that Learning by Doing shows just how community-led approaches are making a difference.

"Community-led development is a critical ingredient in New Zealand's future and is achieving visible results in communities. It's not a silver bullet, but integrated alongside other strategies, can make a really positive impact. For example, in Mātaura, 60 families are now fed from their community garden, Lyttelton residents collaborated this year to purchase their local grocery store, and at Victory Primary School in Nelson, school turnover has reduced from 65% to 10%, with student achievement increasing dramatically at the same time".

Jim Diers, an International Neighbourhoods Expert from Seattle, also spoke at the launch. He commented on the global financial, social and environmental crises that are creating greater need for community-led development to thrive, and praised Inspiring Communities for their work in this area.

"Just when we need it most, here is a book guiding people back to the power of community. It sets out the principles and practices we need to use, and demonstrates the possibilities when every community is enabled to find its own way.

"Learning by Doing is a gift to the nation and also to the international community-led development movement. This tiny organisation really is leading a movement from the bottom up. This is the only place in the world that I know where this is happening. New Zealand is lucky to have an organisation like Inspiring Communities doing this great work".

Learning by Doing is a follow up to Inspiring Communities 2010 publication 'What we are Learning about Community-led Development'.

Hanna noted "Since our inaugural publication in 2010, community-led development activities have continued to increase in visibility and scale throughout Aotearoa. The rapid growth of time banking, community gardens, local markets, social enterprise activities, hapū and iwi development plans, neighbourhood strengthening initiatives, men's sheds, and community-developed plans are all great examples of locally-led responses to build community resilience, more sustainably manage resources, and enhance local environments."

Aptly titled, Learning by Doing has drawn on the experiences and growth of many of these community-led developments, sharing the learning that has come from 'doing'.

"We believe that if we want things to be different, we have to actually do things differently, and that's not always easy."

Our hope is that Learning by Doing will continue to invigorate community-led initiatives, and broaden the reach and understanding of practices and principles to help more communities and organisations embrace and explore new ways of working together," said Hanna.

Wellington Mayor Celia Wade-Brown was delighted to be invited to help Inspiring Communities release their new publication, and is excited about the potential for change. She also noted the important role that local government plays in supporting community-led development.

"He tangata, he tangata, he tangata. People are at the centre of communities.

"Our roles touch people's everyday lives in so many ways. I know the power of these community-led development approaches which can transform relationships both at the neighbour to neighbour level; and between communities and others who can together find new solutions to very complex issues."

Hard copies of Learning by Doing are now available for purchased [online](#) for \$39.95 + postage and packaging.

Digital versions of Learning by Doing will be available for purchase later in the year, and over the course of 2013, Inspiring Communities will be releasing individual chapters free online.

Learning by Doing Workshops will also be held in many parts of New Zealand. To discuss tailored training workshops for your community or organisation, please contact exchange@inspiringcommunities.org.nz.

[Click here](#) to see the Learning by Doing Launch Event



Mayor Celia Wade Brown speaking at Learning by Doing Launch



Inspiring Communities Chair David Hanna MC's new book launch.