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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Otara Health Charitable Trust has been supporting the community of Otara around health and social issues for over 20 years. As an agency, it is all too familiar with the challenges that face the community of Otara. In 2016 along with other partners, The Roots Collective, Accelerating Aotearoa and Crosspower NZ the Thriving Otara movement was created. This movement serves to support the community of Otara by looking at the key issues that stop the community from thriving and consider what can be done differently to make a change.

Using Twyford’s Governance Model and guided by Mark Friedman’s Results Based Accountability framework, the Thriving Otara movement is working to develop enduring solutions to the complex issues. Critical to the development of these solutions is ensuring there is agreement on what the issues are. The issues facing Otara are complex need to recognise the intergenerational impact on the community. While people are very proud of Otara, they are also very clear that there are areas that need to be improved. Over 1003 Otara residents participated in this research which included many who identified as being born and raised in Otara. Before being presented the Thriving Otara Indicators Framework, participants were asked to identify issues in Otara that concerned them. What was revealed was a clear alignment between the resident’s perspectives and the Thriving Otara framework. This gives confidence that Thriving Otara has understood the community perspectives and is in a stronger position to engage and mobilise the wider community in the movement.

What this research has also confirmed, is how the Thriving Otara framework was viewed by participants. Over 95% thought the framework was easy to understand and over 95% thought that others would also easily understand the framework. This research also showed that participants were clear that they too had a role in driving change. They also reinforced that they are aware that change needs to be driven across different levels with many acknowledging local government and government agencies as being important in driving it. By advocating, promoting and role modelling, participants saw they would be able to participate in driving change.

This research project has helped to reinforce the importance of resident voices as part of the journey. The quest is to live a quality life within their community, with the support of government, local government and social services is not unique to Otara, but the power of these voices may be lost if we are not intentional in gathering them.
Otara is a vibrant, multicultural community located in South Auckland. It is surrounded by the suburbs of Papatoetoe, East Tamaki, Clover Park and Flat Bush. In the 1950s, Otara had a predominantly Māori population, but in recent times it has changed to having a very strong base of Pacific peoples making it a culturally rich community. However as a community, Otara continues to be challenged by poor health and social outcomes for its residents.

In 2016, Otara Health Charitable Trust (OHCT) along with other providers, Accelerating Aotearoa, The Roots and Crosspower NZ engaged those that live, work, play and pray in the Otara community to explore a new way of working to address the poor health and social outcomes. Thriving Otara is a movement created to support the aspirations of the community. Working with a small group of committed stakeholders, Otara Health Charitable Trust has been supporting the Thriving Otara movement to identify nine key areas that if positive changes were made would see the community of Otara thrive.

**INTRODUCTION**

**THE AIM OF THIS RESEARCH IS TO ENGAGE LOCAL OTARA RESIDENTS TO:**

1. Confirm Thriving Otara population indicators align to how the community see the priorities they must address to thrive

2. Confirm that the Thriving Otara framework is easily understood by Otara residents

3. Understand the attitudes towards change and who is responsible in driving change in their community
BACKGROUND OTARA

For many years, government agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs) and primary health organisations (PHOs) have worked to address health and social issues faced by residents of Otara. Despite these efforts, the aspirations of Otara residents have yet to be fully realised. A snapshot of Otara reveals that:

- 75,663 people usually reside in the Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board area.
- Otara’s population ranks it 9th in size out of the 21 Auckland City local boards.
- Otara has a relatively young population with nearly one in three Otara residents being under 15 years old (compared with only one in five for all of Auckland). In contrast, only one in 15 Otara residents are aged 65 years or over.
- At 46.2%, home ownership rates are low in Otara compared with the Auckland-wide figure of 64.8%. (Home ownership is defined as a household living in a private dwelling owned by the occupier or held in a family trust.)
- Otara residents broadly identify themselves within the following ethnic groups: Pacific peoples (83.6%), Māori (17.5%), European (9.9%), Asian (3%), Middle Eastern, Latin American or African (MELAA; 0.2%), and Other (0.2%).
- After English, Samoan is the most common language spoken in Otara; it is spoken by about 32% of people across Otara. (2013 Census, Statistics New Zealand)
THRIVING OTARA FRAMEWORK

The Thriving Otara framework is informed by Twyfords Collaborative Governance (TCG) and Friedman’s Result-Based Accountability (RBA) frameworks. Twyfords model for Collaborative Governance is a methodology developed to assist diverse stakeholders co-create enduring solutions to complex issues.

Twyfords model as shown in Figure 1. acknowledges the need to invest time in building readiness and relationships amongst stakeholders, in turn leading to the building of capacity. With this regard, much of the activity to date for Thriving Otara has been invested in ensuring that the diverse stakeholders agree on the issues and process.

Results Based Accountability seeks to make changes based on understanding the impact at a programme level (how much is someone better off as a result of the intervention) as well as a population level (what difference are we making as a community of stakeholders at a population level). While there is a focus on ensuring the project is working well, the vision of thriving Otara - “All People in Otara are Thriving” is best measured taking a population health approach. As a result, Thriving Otara has identified indicators to track and measure to determine whether the community of Otara is thriving.
Thriving Otara stakeholders agreed that the following population level indicators would show if Otara was thriving or not. These were identified as:

- Health - Otara children are healthy and active
- Health - Otara children eat healthy
- Health - Otara children sleep in their own bed
- Housing - Houses in Otara are dry, warm and healthy
- Safety - Otara families are safer and happier
- Education - Otara communities value education
- Education - Otara Youth have better opportunities
- Employment - Otarians are getting jobs
- Economy - new business start ups in Otara

It is critical to the success of the Thriving Otara movement that the issues identified by Otara residents are reflected in the indicators. This will support residents to see the efforts of Thriving Otara aligning to their needs.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COLLECTIVE IMPACT APPROACH

Community development is an approach that allows community members to work on common problems. Meade, Shaw, and Banks (2016) explain that a community development approach embraces mutual learning opportunities as a vehicle for addressing a community’s needs. A defining feature of community development is that the community itself leads in identifying the issue, or issues, they want to address, the outcomes they want to achieve, and the process for getting there. The community is seen as an agent of change, and there is an emphasis on empowerment and capacity building, as well as tangible outcomes (Ball & Thornley, 2015).

Community development practitioners work with residents and other organisations to bring about changes in their community. Community development practitioners must be willing to try different approaches to engage stakeholders in their efforts to affect change. Effective community development is an action that helps residents to recognise and develop their ability and potential and to organise themselves to respond to social issues and needs which they commonly share (Greene & Cosgrove, 2017). It supports the establishment of a stronger community that controls and uses assets to uphold social justice for improving the quality of community life.

These approaches always rely on community leaders and local government for support. Most communities face a number of issues at any one time, so it can be a challenge to attract people to come forward to engage with the community development practitioners, professionals and other members of the public. In addition, Walzer, Weaver, and McGuire (2016) said efforts to achieve realistic and successful outcomes of community change need a collective impact approach. This approach, created by Kania and Kramer (2011), contains five key elements to support social change: common agenda, measuring results consistently, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and backbone organisation(s).

Research has shown that collective impact is more effective than isolated effort to create social change (Greene & Cosgrove, 2017; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Walzer et al., 2016). People often get frustrated advocating for issues on their own, whereas networking with organisations and agencies who can provide the resources needed to address particular issues may be more effective.

Collective impact is grounded in the assumption that solutions are not predetermined but emerge over time. The collective impact approach acknowledges that affecting change is complex but that a community already has resources and strength that can be tapped into.

The community development and collective impact approaches informed the data analysis of this research.
This research project used a mixed methods qualitative methodology to collect information from the residents. There were two phases to the data collection.

**PHASE ONE –**

**SURVEY INTERVIEWS WITH SELF-SELECTED OTARA RESIDENTS**

Interview subjects were recruited from the community. OHCT volunteers disseminated promotional material through a mail drop explaining the reasons for the survey and seeking participants for the survey interviews. 4000 households were targeted. The map below shows the areas targeted for interviews.

Participants self selected participation and were invited to engage OHCT. Interviewers were selected and appointed by OHCT. These interviewers visited Otara residents a fortnight later and conducted the interviews. These surveys were carried out between June and July 2018 at the participant’s home. There were four interviewers who were also able to interview in a language other than English. The other languages offered were Samoan and Cook Island Māori.

**PHASE TWO –**

**FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH SELF-SELECTED OTARA RESIDENTS**

Following the survey interviews, OHCT disseminated promotional material promoting the focus groups via email and mail to stakeholders, government agencies and the community. Two focus group interviews were held a fortnight later, at different times to ensure that as many people as possible could participate at a time that was convenient to them. The focus group interviews took place at the Pacific Community Centre, Manukau Institute Technology.

The principles of community-led development and collective impact were engaged when conducting and analysing the data from both data collection phases. Phase one, the survey, gave researchers an overview of how Thriving Otara could be shaped. The data collected in this initial phase also signalled the issues that should be emphasised in phase two, the focus group interview – indicating how the data sets from the both phases are not only useful in their own right but also inter-connected. The focus group interviews conducted in phase two generated more detail, “fleshing out” the findings from the survey conducted in phase one.
FINDINGS:

1003 residents of Otara participated in the survey interviews.

The majority of participants identified as being from the Pacific Islands (n=655). The second largest group were Māori at 23.7% (n=238). Where participants identified as having Māori heritage, they were only identified as Māori.

A further breakdown of the Pacific Islanders can be seen in the pie chart below. Of the 655 participants who identified as Pacific, Samoans (50%) were the largest, followed by Cook Islanders (23.9%), Tongans (20.1%) then Niueans (3.8%).
Participants were asked how many adults stayed in their home. Two adults was the most common response with 292 participants responding with this. The highest response was a household where 23 adults lived, however only one household identified this.

Participants were asked to identify how many children lived in their home. The graph below shows that for many households, they did not have any children living there (n=298). for those households that did have children, two children was the most popular. However, over a third of households had three children or more living there.

Participants were asked to identify how many families resided in their dwelling. The majority of participants identified that there was only one family living at the residence. Very few identified that there were three or more families living at the house.
Participants were asked to identify one thing they loved about living in Otara. A key reason why participants loved Otara was because of the people who live in Otara.

“The people are generally nice and friendly. Great sporting culture with Scorpions…”

Many acknowledged the diversity of the community and how that made them feel positively about Otara. They were also fond of the experiences and memories they had from when they grew up in Otara. Many mentioned the proximity of shops and other recreational activities to their home. There was also a significant number of people that identified the food available was another reason they loved Otara. It should be noted that this was not expanded on to establish whether it was the type of food, the cost of food, or availability that they most enjoyed.
Participants were asked to identify one issue they would change about their community. Below are the key themes that emerged.

1. TOWN CENTRE
There was a significant number of participants that indicated interest in the revitalisation of the town centre with many calling for an upgrade. There were also similar calls for a supermarket within the town centre. The return of banks was also seen as desirable given there are no longer any banks at the town centre.

2. HOUSING
Many indicated the need to focus on the provision of more housing in Otara. There was also a focus on lifting the quality of housing currently available in Otara. Some responses focused on eliminating homelessness in Otara. They wanted houses to be better insulated so they are warmer. Some participants would also like to see lower rents. Participants believed that better housing will lead to improved health outcomes for whānau.

3. CRIME
Safety was another area that concerned Otara residents. Many participants stated they wanted less crime in Otara. Participants saw a key issue was to reduce gangs. Problems with windscreen washers was also a concern for some participants. They wanted strategies in place to eliminate this practice in Otara. Domestic violence was another area that many residents wanted to see addressed. Youth crime was another area that received significant attention. Many noting youth violence and crime were issues that needed to be addressed. Truancy and youth on bikes were also highlighted as concerns. Educational opportunities and programmes for youth were seen by many as a way to help address these issues.

4. SUPPORT SERVICES
Several participants commented that support services and the system were not working. Many would like to see support services for the Otara residents improved. A good support system should include the provisions for youth, elderly people and homeless. There was also interest in seeing the establishment of groups to support stay at home mothers return to the workforce.

5. HEALTHCARE
Participants wanted to see affordable healthcare services and more services available. Several participants commented that they experienced difficulties getting to a doctor due to the high demand placed on the services.

6. AFFORDABLE LIVING
Similar to housing, participants wanted to see more affordable and warm homes. They saw issues with the costs of renting and living in Otara. Participants said that access to healthy food and healthcare services were challenging for some families due to costs.

7. FACILITIES
Participants wanted to see more accessible facilities available for Otara residents. They wanted more recreation activities in the community for different age groups of residents. There was a desire to see more parks and bike lanes in Otara. In addition, many participants said they wanted to have a supermarket in their local neighbourhood, rather than the shops that are currently operating. They also felt the Otara town centre need to be upgraded. Participants believed that upgrading these facilities will create a better environment for all age groups.

8. EMPLOYMENT
Responses regarding employment aligned to the notion that Otara residents needed more jobs. More jobs would lead to families being able to manage better given the current cost of living and low wage rates. With the ability to secure an income came the notion that this would reduce social issues and family problems.

9. COMFORTABLE COMMUNITY
Several participants said they would like to have a clean home and street. Some said people needed to be educated to keep Otara clean. Many participants said the neighbourhood is too noisy and so there is a need for a better system for noise control. Some commented about the need for more street lights and an improvement to the traffic system.

Of course, a comfortable community is not only about the physical environment. A lot of participants would like to have a sense of belonging to this community – they believe that they have responsibilities to create and maintain Otara as a community where everyone feels they belong. They would also like to change the negative stereotype that Otara has in the wider community.
EXAMINING THE THRIVING OTARA INDICATORS

Participants were shown the indicators identified by Thriving Otara as provided earlier in the report.

**Issues that Concerned Participants.**

![Bar chart showing the number of participants concerned about different indicators. Housing is the most popular, followed by Health and Safety, Education, Income, Employment, Neighbourhood, Economy, Recreation, and Other.]

**INDICATORS THAT CONCERNED PARTICIPANTS**

Participants were asked to identify which of the indicators reflected an issue that concerned them. Housing was the most popular with over 60% of participants identifying it as a concern. Health (58%) and Safety (52%) were the next highest indicators, with both getting over 50% of participants agreeing. Education (42%) was then followed by Income (35%), Employment (31%) and Neighbourhood (27%). Recreation (13%) and Economy (17%) were the lowest two.

**Priority Issue**

Participants asked to prioritise the issue according to the importance for them. Housing (21.9%), Health (21.1%) and Safety (16.3%) were the top three indicators that participants identified as a priority issue for them. Education (13.9) was the only other indicator to be above 10 percent. The remaining indicators were all under 10 percent, Income (8.5%), Employment (7%), Neighbourhood (5.1%), Economy (2.9%), Recreation (1.5%) and Other (1.3%).
1. HOUSING
For those participants that identified housing as a concern, it was far from satisfactory. They viewed having a warm and affordable house as a basic need in life.

“...if you got a good house, you will have good health...”

Many of the participants identified that to buy or rent in Otara was expensive and was a key reason why people were struggling to find a home.

“...my house is fine, but I know a lot of people in Otara are struggling to find houses and pay rent...”

As a result of the tight and expensive rental market, many Otara residents stated that they move often with some commenting that homelessness has long been a concern for Otara.

“...current house is sometimes cold, but I hear of people sleeping in cars and parks...”

Some noted that the standard of available housing was poor. There were also those that saw the condition of housing as the result of the people occupying the property not looking after it.

“...Otara before despite all the bad reputation talk, home owners and Housing New Zealand tenants were house proud...”

Many identified that homes were cold and damp. For some, the condition of the house was the result of houses being old. However, they were wary of implications that it had on families and children.

“...sick all the time due to housing issues, chronic coughs, housing damp and cold not helping with son’s health condition...”

There was significant feedback about this in relation to Housing New Zealand stock and how participants felt that their concerns were not being addressed when they were raised.

“...been in Housing NZ for 20 years, but still waiting for an upgrade or renovation...”

There was also a sense that it was difficult to get HNZ houses due to both long waiting lists and the criteria being restrictive. Too many families waiting for homes and end up overcrowding in one place.

Participants were also concerned by alcohol consumption and partying in their community.

2. HEALTH
For those that indicated health was the most important concern, they did so because they saw the connection between good health and living longer.
“...we all need to be healthy to be around to enjoy life and... start making better health choices at a younger age...”

Participants connected health with concerns about housing, pointing out that health issues arise because of houses that are in poor condition. However, they saw it as a health issue rather than a housing issue. Some participants noted that the population is aging and many elderly people in Otara are currently struggling with health issues.

“...for all the other issues to be addressed you should have your health in the best of order, without health the others are nonexistent...”

Participants also saw the connection between health and having a good diet. They identified that there were many fast-food food outlets in their community and they contributed to health issues such as obesity.

“...choices are limited due to being too costly e.g. fruits vs chips. Cheaper options that are more accessible are fish and chips...”

Some participants expressed that health services in the past were better than they are currently and this was a concern for them. Some of the participants have experienced or are currently experiencing health issues, some have had bad experiences with healthcare services, and some saw a lot of people with health issues in Otara. The participants stated they need more doctors in Otara, because currently the doctors are always busy and delays getting medical help can exacerbate the residents’ health issues.

“...Doctors need to improve, I have to wait hours for doctors I can’t believe it, we need more doctors...”

Two specific health areas were noted by the participants: mental health and dental healthcare. Mental health has become a concern for many Māori and Pacific people in Otara, and some participants would like to see more funding available for dental healthcare for Otara residents.

“...physical, mental and emotional health is key to all people to thrive...”

3. SAFETY

Participants held the view that the Otara neighbourhood deserved to be a safe environment. Most of the participants were most concerned for the safety of their children and family members.

“...Otara deserves to be a safe place for everyone to live and thrive...”

There were some who identified safety was a concern due to living alone. Many participants believed that the crime rates in Otara was high. Domestic violence and youth crime were the type of crime that was often referred to by participants.

“...I just want all my kids to play like normal kids do, instead of being fearful something will happen...”

Some of the participants shared that their home had been burgled previously so already had a heightened sensitivity. Participants also raised that random people would knock on their windows every day and that their children were being bullied. While there was a clear theme relating to crime, it also emerged that safety related to drug use and availability in the community. Some shared that they were aware of their neighbours selling drugs and and saw this as a safety issue for them.

“...having trust with people in my street that we will look after each other...”

There were concerns made about how alcohol and parties would cause concern about their safety. The safety issues also raised concerns around road safety, with some believing that there were many careless drivers in Otara who caused accidents.

“...if kids aren’t safe, they’re not learning and can play a part in everything else...”

4. EDUCATION

Participants who said that education is the most important issue for them did so because they believe education will lead to a brighter future for children and address issues such as youth crime.

“...key to Otara’s future, both children and adults should be learning throughout life...”

Some noted the positive impact that schools can have within their community not only with regards to education but about connectedness and community spirit.

“...schools bring the community together when all or most Otarians school their kids in Otara...”

At the same time, some responses indicated that there was a negative perception about local schools in Otara.

“...don’t want kids to go schools in Otara. Bad kids at Otara schools...”

There were concerns about young people not in school as many noted that they were worried about youth riding bikes through the town centre and around the neighbourhood when they could be at school.

“...a lot of kids don’t even go to school. They idolise maniacs on
the motorbikes and follow them not realising what they're getting themselves into…”

Several participants commented that the cost of education was high. They noted that the costs for school uniforms and stationery impacted on families abilities to send their children to school.

“…need to look into more ways to target families who can’t afford schooling…”

There was also those that experienced difficulties when trying to engage their children’s school. They noted that they wanted better connections with schools with several participants commenting that teaching staff needed to be better when working with students with disabilities and working across different cultures.

“…my grandchild who is diagnosed with autism is being treated differently from other kids. Teachers need to be educated around health issues, racism etc…”

5. EMPLOYMENT

Participants saw the connection between employment, income and quality of family life.

“…need good paying jobs for Otara so people can afford high rental prices and high cost of living…”

Participants also recognised the positive social outcomes that occur when people are employed and earning an income.

“…more people working, less roaming around street and town centre…”

It was also supported by the following statement from a participant.

“…income means security…”

Employment was also seen as a way of increasing your chances at success.

“…so kids don’t get into system benefit... they can make their dreams come true…”

For most participants, they recognised the challenge of getting a job, with some saying there are too many processes and barriers to finding employment.

“…I’m looking for work right now and having a hard time doing it…”

There was also a sense that finding good jobs in Otara was very difficult and that most would have to work outside of the neighbourhood. Good jobs often related to jobs that paid well. Many participants commented that jobs needed to pay more so people can cover the expenses. There was also recognition, that while many may have jobs, some of those were unable to find full time roles and as such work limited hours resulting in having less money to cover their expenses.

6. INCOME

The responses for income mostly related to employment and housing. For example, participants commented they need more and better-paid jobs because their rents are high and income is low.

“…if there is no income coming into the home, then it is very difficult to live i.e pay for food, power, housing, education…”

Many wanted to have their own house, but they found the price of houses too expensive. Aside from housing, many participants believed their income is not sufficient to meet their basic needs. Some participants who chose this indicator commented that many people in Otara are struggling to make ends meet.

“…seeing more people on the road begging…”

Participants believed having more locally based jobs and raising the minimum wage would bring better opportunities which, in turn, would create a better future for residents. There was acknowledgement at the cost of working longer hours to increase income was having on families.

“…working long hours and not spending time with family. High cost of living…”

Some commented that income from government such as benefits and pension were not enough to cover their living expenses. There was some consideration about financial support for those with sick family members.

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD

There was recognition that it was important to have a positive view of their neighbourhood.

“…Important for neighbors to know one another and live peacefully with one another.”

Some participants identified that they would like to have a safe neighbourhood for themselves and future generations to be a part of.

“Your environment is crucial to your upbringing and identity. Strong neighbourhood can help being our children and youth up right…”

They did not want their children growing up in a community with
8. Economy
For those who identified the economy as the most indicator for the Otara community, there was recognition of what a strong economy would mean for Otara and the flow on effect.

“Strong economy attracts entrepreneurs to invest in Otara”

There was a sense of the changes that they could expect to see at a local level if the economy was stronger.

“...need a upgrade for the Shopping Centre, Heaving healthy food options, no fast food.”

Although individual responses are not directly related to economy, these participants saw the economy is where everything comes from”.

9. RECREATION
With very few participants indicating this as their priority indicator, many linked their concern about this to their family and children. They saw the benefits of recreation on children and acknowledged that they wanted their children to experience how it was when they were growing up in Otara.

“Want kids to have same upbringing as me, being able to play freely”

In line with this was the desire to provide more opportunities for youth and families to participate at local parks.

“Need more activities in parks, playground for the kids”

Someone also acknowledged that a redeveloped Town Centre would also provide an opportunity for recreation.

anti-social elements and there was an acknowledgement of the change that has occurred in their neighbourhood.

“Neighborhood has changed a lot over the years, I would like to return to how things were, everyone knew each other.”

Several participants stated that Otara has too much partying going on around their neighbourhood. Loud music and the presence of alcohol made them feel unsafe.

“Neighbours drink too much and are too noisy. They cause too much trouble and do not consider feelings of other neighbours…”

Several of the participants commented that they would like to see a clean and safe Otara.

“Alleyways dirty and dangerous, glass everywhere. Need more alleyway lights and improve pavements”
WHAT WOULD CHANGE LOOK LIKE?

Participants were asked how would they know that the issue they had identified was improving. The following provides insight to their responses.

1. HOUSING

Many participants identified that improvement in housing would see a significant shift in the quality and supply of housing available.

*Families living in affordable houses that are not damp, More people will be happier if they are actually living comfortably, Living in healthy homes, If you come from happy home you’ll be a happier citizen of Otara*

Many participants noted that homes needed to cater for the size of households that are typical in Otara so wanted bigger homes. Participants also spoke of not seeing or hearing about overcrowding or homelessness. Some even thought that government and local government intervention in managing rent amounts was needed. There were others that said there would be a reduction in cabins on peoples properties.

*When we see less people on the street and people sleeping in cars*

Some participants spoke about the condition of Housing New Zealand homes improving and maintenance being taken care of regularly and when asked. Warm homes was often mentioned as an improvement.

*Healthier homes, Less cold homes, No more leaking*

There was also a strong view that improvement in housing would see a reduction in rental costs for homes in Otara. They also mentioned home ownership rates would increase too.

2. HEALTH

Many participants recognised that an improvement in health would be seen through a change in unhealthy environments that currently exist.

*Dietary options would be more healthy, Restrictions on the number of fast fried food outlets*

These changes would see a flow on effect in helping people to reduce weight and increase physical activity. Many spoke of seeing improvements in the health of children and families in that they would be looking after themselves better and taking care of themselves.

*When people in Otara are educated and informed about how to take control of their health and wellbeing*

Some participants also spoke about health services being better and this would be reflected in loyalty to certain clinics and Doctors.

*Family have had same doctor for a long time so generally happy, But not sure about other families in Otara*

They also noted that people would not go to the Doctor as often as they are currently going due to having better health.
3. SAFETY
Participants identified that less trouble in the community was a key way of recognising that safety had improved.

*Be able to walk the streets at night freely, not being harrassed by young ones for money and smokes also from older adults too*

It was also reinforced by participants who stated that their home and personal property would not be stolen or damaged. Some participants spoke of seeing Police working with the community to keeping whānau safe. There was also feedback about bringing back fun into their neighbourhoods, which had been missing for some time.

*More liveliness on streets, more kids playing with each other nicely like back in the days*

The reduction of gangs and violence was noted by many as something that would let them know the situation was changing. Youth violence would also decrease. Some also spoke of improving road safety specifically about cars that are speeding around their streets.

4. EDUCATION
Many of the participants stated that a change in education would see more Otara students succeeding at school. Many recognising that there would be an increase in students leaving school with their Level 3 NCEA qualifications and going on to further study to secure better employment opportunities.

*When the Tamariki in Otara are at school with the support of their parents, community trying to educate themselves for a better home and community*

There was also a strong theme of participants recognising education was not just for youth, but for adults too. There was also support from those that believed the reputation of Otara schools would improve and would be recognised nationally for that. There was also recognition of teachers who would be seen as important role models that would motivate students to succeed.

*Have the right teachers with a passion to see the children succeed*

The social benefit of education was also raised, with some seeing the link between education providing opportunities so young people did not have to wash windows. They also saw the benefit to the family units.

*Parents being involved more with school and communities to push their children to commit and finish well*

Participants also connected educational success to people achieving their dreams or striving towards them.

*Thriving kids, Kids succeeding, Kids being more than average Otarians, Kids having dreams*

5. EMPLOYMENT
When employment improves, participants saw more Otara residents entering into business and employing locals.

*More work opportunities created in Otara for Otara*

They also shared they would see more of the community using employment agencies rather than Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) to help find employment. In general, they also noted that there would be less people at the local WINZ office. There was a view that when people are employed there would be a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour.

*Less teens on street causing trouble robberies, Much more positive area, Build up Otara as not being a poor place*

6. INCOME
Many spoke of the Otara residents having increased income and this would allow them to live without their current constraints.

*When more better paid work opportunities are created within Otara*

Many participants also made comment that they would see a reduction in crime as people were able to live comfortably. Other anti-social issues would also be resolved by increasing income.

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD
Generally participants identified that when the neighbourhood was improving, relationships between people would be strengthened.

*When people start speaking out and work together to take control of their own neighbourhood ...*

They would also begin to become more than neighbours and would support each other and in turn this would reduce crime and anti-social behaviour such as alcohol consumption and late night parties.

*Less partying and less noise, Be able to sleep well at night, less alcohol drinking*
Participants were asked what role could they play in driving the change that they want to see. Many of the respondents acknowledged that getting involved and being active in the community was a key role.

“Being active and engage with like minded people that are passionate about my issue”

There was also a significant number who identified that voicing their concerns or advocating was another role. Similar to this were those that saw they played a role in informing relevant agencies about what is going on in the hopes that they could improve the situation. Much of this work was directed to those that they perceived would be able to solve their issue such as local government, but just as important was communicating to their neighbours and other residents in Otara.

“Talking to grandparents and mothers on how important schools are for their whānau”

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

8. ECONOMY

Industries thriving creating more opportunities for Otara residents is how many participants see improvements would mean for Otara. There was also those that recognised that an improved economy would have positive changes for the community, with less litter, better shops and malls. Having a supermarket in Otara was also seen as a way of seeing the economy improving.

What is your role?

9. RECREATION

Of those that identified recreation as an issue, they shared that a change in recreation would see more families and children playing outside and utilising council facilities such as parks and playgrounds.

More kids outdoors without supervision, Kids coming home late from playing in the park

However, some noted that facilities needed to improve specifically playgrounds available. There was also a view that elderly people in the community would have options for them too.

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Some recognised that the way they engaged those around them was important as it would set the tone for what they wanted to see. Treating people in a way that they themselves want to be treated was important for some participants. There was also those that wanted to engage certain segments of the community to provide support and guidance. Youth were often identified as a group that participants wanted to engage to help guide them.

Get together as a community and rally them to help younger generation

Others recognised engaging groups that already exist within Otara such as street coordinators for Neighbourhood Support groups, local services and Police. Strengthening relationships was also an important role. Relationships between neighbours was often identified as something that needed to improve. It should also be noted that there was a small minority that thought they could not play a role.

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“Talking to grandparents and mothers on how important schools are for their whānau”
Participants were asked to identify who needed to be part of driving the change. Local government was the most popular, followed by community then government. Individuals and Self were very similar, however it should be noted that participants were very clear in identifying both as separate stakeholders.
Participants were asked to identify how they stay informed about community issues. Television was the most popular with 500 identifying it. Print media was second with just under 400 participants identifying this. Of those that identified print media, just over a quarter specifically mentioned the Manukau Courier. The remaining three quarters did not mention the actual print media, rather just identifying newspaper. Social media was the third most popular channel with just under half of these specially mentioning Facebook.

Participants were asked whether they thought the indicators would be easily understood by others. 96.6% (n=997) found the indicators easy to understand. This is a significant figure and supports the idea that Otara residents would not struggle to understand the framework.

Participants were asked whether they thought the indicators would be easily understood by others. 96.6% agreed that others would easily understand the values.
Four focus groups were held after the surveys were completed. These focus groups were held at the MIT Pasifika Community Centre in Otara and were held in the evening to ensure those that worked were able to attend. All participants in the survey were notified of the focus group and were encouraged to confirm attendance. 565 participants in the survey expressed interest in attending focus groups.

In total 26 people attended and participated in a focus group. The focus group was facilitated by a OHCT staff member with support from MIT researchers. Focus group sessions were scheduled to take no longer than 2 hours. All participants were already aware of Thriving Otara, so a re-cap was given in each session, but the focus was on exploring key areas.

The following section provides a summary of what was asked and the responses that were gathered. Given the small number of participants, all feedback has been aggregated to explore and identify emergent themes.

WHAT CAN THEY CHANGE?
Focus group participants were asked about what they can change themselves in their community.

- educated on who to talk to; e.g. a pamphlet
- having a conversation to discuss with families and friends
- be encouraged
- need relationships
- more people working
- physical structures, nice-looking buildings, artwork
- goals can be set
- on the same, or a similar, page
- have more ideas
- bring people together
- have some common goals, similar dreams
- money (or lack of it) is behind many of the issues and concerns
- mind-set of local community and whānau – looking at where to go to from here
- having a shared purpose; everyone knows how to contribute
- when you know something about it, you can do something
- the community can see the direction of the community
- the community knows itself by the indicators
- need people to know about what has been happening

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS
MEASURING RESULTS CONSISTENTLY

goals can be set
Unless a goal is clearly defined, outcomes cannot be measured accurately. This response is also relevant to measuring results consistently.

MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES

• things can be focused on
• the community will thrive
• we need a clean environment
• team work needed in the community
• chance to tell the stories of the community
• open food pantry – need someone to start something, lack of ideas

These mutually reinforcing activities help to strengthen residents’ self-esteem, empowering them to take an active role in changing their community. In identifying what is good about their community, the residents will see the positive side within their community. This can develop residents’ confidence to then see what needs to change, how improvements can be made, and to locate spaces where they can make a difference and be part of this social movement.

CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION

Although more than half of the Otara residents who replied to the phase one survey were wanting to drive change, a significant number indicated that they did not think they could help to improve their community. The participants in the focus group interviews shared their views about why this latter group of residents did not see themselves as having a role in creating changes:

• they haven’t been out in the community
• they think they won’t be able to do anything
• people do not do anything themselves
• don’t feel value in the Otara economy
• cost of living
• don’t have time and resources
• don’t see the need to be responsible
• councils and government won’t listen to them
• don’t see themselves as being influential
• don’t know what they can do
• community development is not a personal priority; e.g. too young to be worried
• don’t want to be responsible and/or accountable
• don’t know who to go to; e.g. who to contact when rubbish needs to be collected, or a car has been left on the street, etc.
• cultural mind-set; e.g. told not to speak up, fear
• being scared to talk because they may get put down
• afraid to make mistakes
• not enough awareness or educating people that they can have a say; e.g. language, cultural
• not touching base with the community in general; not educated enough
• some residents may not have grown themselves
• not seeing others and their world
• some don’t want to be a part of neighbourhood support
• no opportunity to talk about what is needed
• don’t know where to start
• lack of ownership
• no common ground
• don’t know how to become involved in the community

These responses indicate that continuous communication is important in community-led development. Although most of the residents want to be involved in driving change in Otara, a significant number do not know how to start the changes and think that they lack the influence needed to make changes. Therefore, support from backbone organisations (the final element of the collective impact approach) plays a significant role in supporting and enabling change driven by residents.

BACKBONE ORGANISATIONS

• communities thrive when people care, support and attention
• shout it from the rooftops
• motivate the community
• team work needed in the community
• hard to do it individually; more comfortable with people’s own communities, e.g. church, sport
• need to have a neighbourhood board

Backbone organisations are the ones who can support the residents closely; for example, government agencies, NGOs such as Otara Health Charitable Trust, and PHOs. These organisations need to provide the residents with care, support and attention first before they can expect the residents to treat each other and their community in the same way. They also need to provide spaces, venues, resources (funding, techniques, networks) and information to enable residents to get together to set up and be in charge of change projects. Thus, Thriving Otara requires support from both government and backbone organisations to enable the community to effect change around their identified indicators, otherwise the residents will be left with just another feel-good survey.

PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE PARTICIPANTS

Many of the Otara residents involved in the surveys and interviews identified education as a key priority. They believe that education can lead to many benefits for the community and should be seen as a vehicle for change. It is important in any community-led initiative that whānau and community are educated about identified priorities and why changes need to occur. To improve student engagement in Otara, the education system needs to find ways to connect learning with residents who are relevant to the students and their home environment, as well as to the context of the Otara community. For example, a school could organise activities that challenge students as to how they could make their community cleaner and safer, and schools could work together with whānau on how they can be involved in social changes.

Most importantly, the participants believe that improving housing and health in Otara is crucial to providing a safe, clean, healthy environment that will empower the residents in their community.

The participants’ responses also highlighted new approaches to community development; for example, education is not only about formal education for residents and their children. Many participants shared some strategies that can educate and effectively deliver messages to Otara residents and encourage them to be an active member in their community. These strategies mostly relate to using other tools and/or mediums:

• be an advocate first
• social media
• websites
• emails
• couriers
• radio stations
• local newspapers
• cultural newspapers / radio
• stall at the flea market
• WINZ
• community notice board
• churches
• leadership groups in each high school and immediate school

DISCUSSION

Otara is a multicultural community that researchers and
practitioners need to acknowledge and embrace when working with its residents. Practitioners need to consider traditional approaches and ways of engagement that is culturally appropriate to improve and increase effectiveness. Using interviewers that could speak different languages allowed for those where English is a second language.

Communities in the lowest socio economic groups, typically experience poorer health status. The Otara community faces many challenges. Many of the participants in their responses described families and households as struggling. While very proud of Otara and the community, participants were very clear in their acknowledgement of areas that need to be addressed for residents to thrive.

Social, cultural and economic determinants of health
The Thriving Otara indicators are consistent with the literature regarding the social, cultural, and economic determinants of health that identifies good health and the reduction of inequalities coming out of understanding the factors that promote and protect good health. It also speaks to making change in these areas requires intersectoral collaboration and not necessarily focusing on traditional health issues. By understanding the determinants, there is recognition that the development of new approaches or solutions is not an option, but should be part of the underlying philosophy for an community based initiative. It also recognises that any interventions developed need to work at different levels.

Alignment of indicators and community perspectives
Prior to hearing about the indicators, the responses from participants regarding the issues that they were concerned with clearly aligned with the indicators developed by Thriving Otara. However, these indicators are not mutually exclusive, as many of the comments from participants overlapped.

An example of this is was seen where participants who ticked “safety” and “neighbourhood” having the same sentiment about safety in the community and their hopes to see a safer neighbourhood. These participants commented that they wanted to see more activities and initiatives that address issues relating to youth, such as unemployment, drugs and alcohol and education.

Likewise, there were overlapping ideas between health and housing. Health and housing were the two most highly rated concerns by participants. Many commenting that health issues were related to the condition of their home. Many of those who ticked health as a priority did so as a result of being aware they were aging and were concerned how they would live if their health was not in a good state. Others who ticked health or housing issues commented that their children were often sick because of the poor condition of the house they live in. Poor health in children flows on to poor educational outcomes. Making houses warmer and drier, building more houses, improving the conditions of and access to Housing New Zealand homes is of utmost importance to the residents of Otara.

Those who ticked education as a priority see education as a way and means of changing the future of the Otara community as well as individuals lives. They saw education as a pathway out of issues such crime and gangs. Moreover, the focus groups had in-depth discussions on how participants describe “education”, saying that education is not necessarily related to enrolling in a school or tertiary setting, but can also be described as distributing information to residents in a various way and ensuring they are aware of issues and how to deal with them.

Many of the participants complained about the unhealthy food outlets in Otara, but it should be noted that when participants were asked about what they loved about Otara, food was a very popular response. So, even though it is suggested that Otara needs more healthy food outlets, that does not mean the unhealthy ones are not welcome.

It is apparent that participants are concerned for youth in Otara. However, concern about youth is not a new issue. People, and often also their parents and grandparents, have lived in this community with its limited employment opportunities, unaffordable living costs and crime for generations. Rather than highlighting the misdeeds of a small number of youth, it is more constructive to focus on what is working and how to build from that perspective. Many of the participants chose to focus on education, as they believe educating the next generation is the way out of poverty, both material and spiritual.

Although participants did not explicitly identify mental health, many of their responses reflect that health, housing and safety affect the mental health of both young and old. How can one feel settled and secure if their housing is cold and damp and they are always worried about getting their house burgled? The responses show the mental health is a key health issue that, to date, has been limited in what has been invested in.

WHO PLAYS A ROLE IN DRIVING CHANGE?
At the moment, there are a number organisations and groups focused on different issues. However, collaboration and better sharing of information is a way to ensure that the individual efforts can lead to change.

Participants were very clear that for change to happen, it will require action at all levels. From individual community members, neighbours, services, local government and government. This will enable all those involved in trying to make improvements in Otara to see and understand the solutions and strategies being proposed, as well as create space for assessment, evaluation and feedback.

Furthermore, it is critical that individuals from the community are both invited and supported to give that feedback to researchers and practitioners because, it is the people in Otara who will
benefit if we it is successful, likewise will be disadvantaged if not. Community development should not be limited to research but must also include active approaches that involve the residents of Otara such as better engagement with families and the community, and wider consultation with community leaders, church leaders, school leaders and community agencies as well.

THRIVING OTARA FRAMEWORK

It is clear that with the alignment of the indicators and community perspectives, that the framework is seen as easy to understand. With the overwhelming support from participants who agreed, there is the opportunity to explore how to promote and popularise this across the wider community. Participants reinforced that there are a number of different channels that can be used to promote community issues and updates.

The implication for Otara Health Charitable Trust is that any work to disseminate information regarding Thriving Otara needs to be done in a coordinated manner and across different platforms. It should also give confidence to the Thriving Otara movement used to develop the indicators.

This validates the approach used by combining Twyfords Governance Model and Friedman’s Results Based Accountability framework. Allowing the time to build relationships and get agreement on the issues as an important factor for Thriving Otara as they move the project forward. By using Results Based Accountability, the Thriving Otara movement will be in a position to engage government agencies and frame discussions using this model given New Zealand Government’s current use of this framework across various departments. While the indicators are currently reflecting population level outcomes, the future will allow for the development of performance level indicators to complement this work.

Thriving Otara is a community development initiative that aims to influence the conditions that affect communities and change the quality of life of Otara residents. Change can be managed by employing different types of collective action. However, it needs to be acknowledged that some activities will be starting from scratch and there are no quick-fix solutions to the challenges residents have identified.
Thriving Otara movement clearly aligns with Otara Health Charitable Trust’s vision of breaking intergenerational effects of poverty and aims to improve the health and well-being of Otara residents.

1003 Otara residents participated in the survey interviews. This is a significant sample size and reflective of the wider population. This report has presented and discussed key social issues identified by Otara residents in their community.

It is clear that participants have a really strong connection to Otara. Many are especially proud of the people that make up the Otara community. While there is incredible pride about the community, there is also recognition that there are areas that need to be improved.

**THE AIMS OF THIS RESEARCH WERE TO:**

1. Confirm Thriving Otara population indicators align to how the community see the priorities they must address to thrive.

What this research has revealed, is that there is clear alignment between what the residents see as important issues that need to be addressed for Otara to thrive and the indicators developed by Thriving Otara.

Before being informed of the Thriving Otara indicators, participants identified issues that they felt that needed to be addressed for Otara to thrive. These issues were analysed and found to fall into the indicators. Housing, health and safety were the top three issues from the indicators that the community identified. This alignment validates the work to date of Thriving Otara and the care that has been taken to develop agreement on the issues before progressing to the development of solutions.

2. Confirm that the Thriving Otara framework is easily understood by Otara residents

Participants were very clear in the way they felt about the indicators. There was overwhelming support that the framework was easily understood. This was further reinforced when over 95% of participants identified that others would also easily understand the framework.

With such as high percentage of participants agreeing the framework was easy to understand, it should give confidence for the Thriving Otara movement as they continue to engage the wider community that onboarding people and agencies to the movement will not be too difficult. A key area that will support this
is to ensure the channels used to engage the community align to the preferred channels that were identified including, print media, social media, television and word of mouth. The appetite for Thriving Otara of residents can be managed by ensuring communications approaches are tailored for the community and recognise the diversity of it.

3. Understand the attitudes towards change and who is responsible in driving change in their community

There is overwhelming support that change is not just the responsibility of one group, but dependent on a number of different stakeholders including individuals within the community right through to services, local government and government agencies. This aligns well with the Thriving Otara framework that recognises everyone plays a role in bringing about and supporting change. When unpacking what this looks like, participants identified a range of roles including advocating, participating, sharing and role modelling. A key feature that was touched upon was the need for individuals to start by doing something differently.

In conclusion, this research project illustrates that the Thriving Otara movement has engaged in a process that has prioritised relationships and time. It is clear that the work invested to date by Thriving Otara has set up the foundation for the exploring and supporting solutions to these issues. Ensuring the residents of Otara continue to be engaged and supported to recognise the power they have to influence these indicators will be ongoing. Successful community initiatives focus on outcomes to create enduring change and this intentions is clearly present in the Thriving Otara movement and Otara Health Charitable Trust’s support of it.

This research project has helped the residents, and been helped by the residents, to identify the level of skills, abilities and knowledge within their community, with the aim of making a difference in Otara. The research participants have considerable experience and knowledge of their own community, providing beneficial information on the historical changes they have experienced, as well as the changes they want to see in the future. Their quest is to live a quality life within their community, with the support of government, local government and essential social services. Theirs is a shared vision, one owned by their community of Otara.
REFERENCES


