# Making Relationships Count: Measuring Trust in Relationships Between a Catholic Development Agency and Māori Communities

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**Abstract:** *Relationships affect outcomes in the international development sector, yet there are few frameworks or indicators to measure trust as a foundation of relationships. This article describes an emergent framework for evaluating trust in cross-cultural relationships. It is based on a case study of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand and its Indigenous partners. Perspectives on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and measuring trust are explored from an Indigenous world view. Interviews with five people representing all parties suggest various types of behaviours that indicate trust. Through this exploration, culturally competent M&E and the centrality of relationships in expanding evaluation practice are revealed.*

**Keywords:** *monitoring and evaluation frameworks, trust indicators, Indigenous communities*

**Résumé :** *Les relations ont un effet sur les résultats dans le secteur du développement international. Cependant, il y a peu de cadres ou d'indicateurs pour mesurer la confiance comme fondement de relations. Le présent article décrit un nouveau cadre pour évaluer la confiance dans les relations interculturelles. Il est fondé sur une étude de cas de Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand et de ses partenaires autochtones. Les perspectives sur le suivi et l'évaluation et la mesure de la confiance sont explorées d'un point de vue autochtone. Des entrevues avec cinq personnes représentant toutes les parties suggèrent divers types de comportement qui montrent la confiance. Par l'intermédiaire de cette exploration, un mode de suivi et d'évaluation culturellement compétent et la centralité des relations dans l'élargissement de la pratique d'évaluation sont révélés.*

**Mots clés :** *cadres de suivi et d'évaluation, indicateurs de confiance, communautés autochtones*

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## INTRODUCTION

Most development organizations design and carry out development programs based on an approach that is "managerial" at heart. Since the mid-1990s, virtually all development organizations and funding agencies operate on the basis of so-called logical frameworks, results frameworks, or theory-of-change models (Prinsen & Nijhof, 2015; Ringhofer & Kohlweg, 2019). This approach echoes the thinking of Peter Drucker, "the man who invented management" (Lewis, 1998). Drucker's approach to capitalist corporations was one driven by "managing for results" and "management by objectives" (Drucker, 1964). These approaches to "doing development" exude a managerial approach to societal change processes—an approach that is driven by carefully budgeted predetermined objectives and not by the politics of carefully negotiated human relations.

This managerial thinking eventually found its way into development organizations, often labelled results-based management. When the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, these goals were measured and expressed by 60 indicators. "Results-Based-Management was applied to the MDGs in a very direct fashion" (Hulme, 2010, p. 20). The current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have taken this approach on measuring and managing to even further heights, detailing 231 indicators (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018).

Of course, this managerialism in development practice has been criticized sharply, not only because of its instrumental rather than political view of inequalities but also because it marginalizes alternative and Indigenous views and analyses. In reflecting about how research methods can be used to colonize or decolonize human relations, Tuhiwai Smith criticized the dominant model of managerial or instrumental rationality as "research through imperial eyes" (2012, p. 42). Against this backdrop, an increasing number of development policy-makers and practitioners want to be "doing development differently" (Booth, Harris, & Wild, 2016). McGregor's postdevelopment review of religious development organisations, for example, suggests they too display a growing drive to work toward societal change with an explicit attention for "uneven power relationships between developers and recipient communities and the negative impacts development can have upon peoples and places" (2008, p. 166).

This growing attention for relationships between people in development agencies and people in the communities they work with has brought the matter of trust in the relationship between these two parties to the forefront. Rallis, Rossman, and Gajda, for example, highlight the need to move beyond consent processes and explore "trust-building . . . that is dialogic, conducted interactively between the evaluator and the participants" (2007, p. 408). Similarly, Baur, Abma, and Widdershoven underscore the importance—and complexity—of such a "dialogic process" when this involves evaluation "that empowers marginalized stakeholder groups, and at the same time is acceptable for the dominant stakeholder groups" (2010, p. 238). For development workers or evaluators who do not have a long-standing relationship with communities with historic experiences of

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colonial asymmetric power relationships, Abma advises they "should take these conditions into account by investing a lot of time developing conditions of trust" (2006, p. 32).

The relationship between non-Indigenous researchers and Indigenous communities and activists is an example of an engagement characterized by longstanding asymmetrical power dynamics and facing the sensitive moral issue of colonization and decolonization. Some people argue that "the current and future role of the non-indigenous researcher is marginal to the 'decolonizing methodologies' agenda" (Wilson, 2001, p. 217), which can lead non-Indigenous people to avoid engagement (Hotere-Barnes, 2015). On the other hand, there are also people who advocate that there can be valuable gains in careful collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous parties. Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea, for example, advocate for "deliberate and mutual sharing and probing of Pacific *and* Western epistemologies" (2014, p. 332). Several recent experiences across the Pacific illustrate that the careful dialogue and sharing of the Pacific's Indigenous and Western epistemologies can be fruitful for all parties involved (Dacks et al., 2019; Movono & Hughes, 2020; Sterling et al., 2020).

We find the work of Sterling et al. particularly incisive regarding the engagement between two distinct epistemologies. This team of 27 researchers and activists from 22 organizations (13 of which are based in the Pacific) reflects carefully on the dialogue—the "iterative consideration of similarities and differences" (2020, p. 1130)—between Indigenous and Western epistemologies. It argues that such a dialogue need not lead to a new or merged epistemology but that a keen and respectful engagement can be fruitful for both parties if their encounter assists each of them in making adjustments to their own epistemology to meet their own needs. However, before such a fruitful engagement between two communities and their respective epistemologies can take place, it is critically important that both have or are developing trust-based relationships—effectively as a precondition for such an encounter to be fruitful.

For the research we report on here, we acknowledge that relationships between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous researchers and activists take place in a historical framework predicated on colonialism. This requires research methods that are not only appreciative of this historical framework but also contribute to decolonization of the—indeed, our—ongoing relationships. Tuhiwai Smith notes supportive non-Indigenous researchers or outsiders "ought to be included because they can be useful allies and colleagues in research" (2012, p. 186)—the former referring to the political struggle of decolonization, the latter to the fruitful epistemological encounter.

On the one hand, the centrality of the ongoing relationship—and the mutual trust upon which the relationship rests and expands—has been an essential feature of Indigenous research approaches. "Relational mindfulness sets [Indigenous approaches such as] talanoa apart from Socratic or dialectic methods of discussion or speech" (Tecun, Hafoka, 'Ulu 'ave, & 'Ulu 'ave-Hafoka, 2018, p. 159). Wehipeihana concurs: "Relationships therefore are not something the evaluator simply pays attention to; they are inextricably linked to engaging with Indigenous

people and therefore Indigenous evaluation" (2019, p. 375). On the other hand, the centrality of trust in cross-cultural relationships is becoming an appreciated feature in the eyes of mainstream development organizations who want to "do development differently": "There is evidence that trust can be a virtuous cycle under certain conditions, with a trusting relationship . . . motivating better performance, as well as further trust" (Honig & Gulrajani, 2018, p. 73).

In the light of these debates about cross-cultural collaboration, we outline in this article the findings from a research and learning process, undertaken by one of us (Leuthart) as part of a postgraduate degree in development studies at Massey University, Aotearoa New Zealand. Leuthart was associated with Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand (Caritas) as a volunteer media and research adviser for several years and conducted this research to assist Caritas in finding ways to monitor and evaluate its relationships with Māori communities. Where this article captures Leuthart's research experiences, the singular first-person pronoun is used, and where this paper reflects a shared reflection of the two authors on those experiences, the plural first-person pronoun appears.

The purpose of this article is twofold: exploring the gains that can be made in the carefully considered collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous parties, as well as sketching the features of a framework to identify and appreciate—"measure"—the behaviours that express and expand trust in the relationships between mostly non-Indigenous staff of a Catholic development agency (Caritas) and two Māori communities: the rural community of Parihaka and Te Rūnanga o Te Hāhi Katorika (the national Catholic Māori Council).

In drafting our framework to measure trust, we have taken inspiration from the work of Morgan and Fa'aui (2014) and Ruru and Wilson (2021), who designed two frameworks—respectively the "Mauri (life, essence) Decision-Making Framework" and the "Mauri compass"—to assess sustainability policies and practices in a way that integrates Indigenous and non-Indigenous values in Aotearoa New Zealand. We hope our findings and framework may also be useful for comparable engagements elsewhere. Montrosse-Moorhead's review of literature on the role of trust in evaluation inspires our hope in that it concludes "identifying aspects of trust-building practice" as a critically important aspect (2021, p. 389).

## METHODOLOGY: A CASE-STUDY AND INDIGENOUS APPROACH

This research involved an exploration of behaviours related to trust and the question, "How do Caritas Aotearoa and the tangata whenua partners define trust in terms of their relationship to each other?" In searching for insights into complex, dynamic relationships, an overall qualitative methodology was applied. A qualitative approach allowed me to aim not for precise measurements but for a holistic understanding of complex realities (Mayoux, 2006, p. 118). My study was guided by both a case-study and Indigenous approach. As a case study, the research focused on Caritas and its specific relationship with two selected Māori communities. My

intent was to put a boundary around Caritas and thereby keep the focus of my inquiry to this organization's specific relationship with two selected Māori communities. This allowed for drawing on Caritas's activity and experience and then applying my own analysis. With room for holistic description, I was able to capture various nuances and patterns that other research methods might have overlooked.

Some researchers assert the value of case studies to generally provide understanding about similar groups. For instance, Berg (2009, p. 329) argues they can serve as a breeding ground for hypotheses that may be applied to subsequent studies. However, I was simply content that my study might provide a constructive framework for trust for Caritas and its tangata whenua (people of the land, locality) partners to use as a tool for monitoring and evaluation purpose. The study was also informed by a Kaupapa Māori (Māori-centred) approach that is concerned with privileging Māori knowledges and voices. It demands a paradigmatic shift to see the world through alternative eyes and query the way knowledge is produced (Wehipeihana, 2013). Guided by this framework, I developed a culturally responsive practice with advice from my Māori research partner. He advised me what was acceptable and not acceptable from each community's perspective.

## POSITIONALITY

As a non-Māori, I questioned my legitimacy to approach this research and was nervous about how relevant and influential my point of view, beliefs, and experience would be in relation to the research context. This meant first confronting two key questions, paraphrasing Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p. 186): Can I do this research, and if I can, how should I be conducting it? I pondered my own ethnic identity as a middle-aged female Pākehā (New Zealander of European descent) growing up in Taranaki, New Zealand, in the 1970s, when nothing in our school curriculum or community invited learning about the historical significance of Parihaka, just down the road. Through this self-reflection process, I tried to turn my anxiety about the exploitative nature of extracting information for my needs to a focus on how this cross-cultural research might benefit the participating Māori communities as well as Caritas.

In the few years prior to conducting the research, I worked with Caritas as a volunteer media advisor and researcher. It was in this capacity—as someone already engaged with the organisation—that I was asked to consider researching their ongoing work with their tangata whenua partners. Caritas was interested in how it could use monitoring and evaluation to measure the relationship-building work it was doing and approached me because it was felt my "insider" position would be reassuring, enabling the participants to talk to me freely and with honesty.

And so, I have been humbled to conduct the research and give voice to the interests of Māori people. However, not being a Māori researcher, I was unsure of my capabilities when faced with my own perceived expectation that to do "Māori-centred research requires a Māori analysis and produces Māori knowledge" (Cunningham, 2000, p. 65). To help overcome this, I worked with a Māori research partner. He was a staff member of Caritas who, even though a young man, had considerable mana (respect) within the communities we were visiting.

He helped me reflect on what a culturally responsive practice should look like. He accompanied me to each interview and introduced me to each participant in te reo Māori (Māori language). His shared language, insight, and tikanga (Māori customs) were critical to establishing a level of trust between myself as researcher and all the participants. Ultimately, as a non-Māori, I could not say I was doing Indigenous research, but with my partner's support, I could ensure my approach respected and prioritized the world through their eyes.

## DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

My data-collection methods included semistructured interviews and participant observations. Data was collected intermittently between 2016 and 2018. I interviewed five people in June in 2016 from across three communities. The semistructured interview revolved around three key questions: what trust means to the interviewee in the relationship with the other party, what behaviour and practices characterize a trusting relationship, and what would deepen trust-based relationships between parties. With consent of the interviewees, the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were coded for recurring themes as they emerged from the text (O'Leary, 2014, p. 308)—a method approaching an "inductive content analysis" (Moretti et al., 2011, p. 420). Participant observations were recorded in a journal, and notes were coded at the end of the research (Dahlke, Hall, & Phinney, 2015; Spradley, 2016).

In line with the qualitative research approach that seeks a sample of interviewees with depths of insights rather than representativeness, the interviews for this research involved five individuals with many years of experience in cross-cultural collaboration among the parties involved. Caritas suggested the names of potential interviewees I could approach, on the basis of their knowledge of the most experienced people in the collaboration. While this did introduce a risk of selection bias, I ascertained in meetings that the suggested names were indeed among the most experienced people among the three key parties involved who would accurately reflect their communities.

- **Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand:** Caritas Aotearoa is the Catholic agency for justice, peace, and development based in Wellington. Two people were interviewed.
- **Parihaka**: Parihaka is a small, rural Māori community situated in South Taranaki. Parihaka is well known for being home to Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi, two visionary Māori leaders who inspired their people toward peaceful resistance during the Taranaki Māori wars of 1860–1869 (Scott, 1975). The legacy of their actions and the principles of nonviolence, equality, and collective action still inspire the Parihaka community today. One person was interviewed.
- **Te Rūnanga o Te Hāhi Katorika (national Catholic Māori Council)**: Te Rūnanga is the national Catholic Māori Council. Its role is to advise the

New Zealand bishops on matters concerning Māori within the Catholic Church and in society in general. It is the primary body of Māori consultation for Caritas. Two people were interviewed.

Conducting face-to-face interviews in a cross-cultural environment and a context of colonial legacies highlighted real and potential power issues. However, I believe potentially detrimental effects were limited due to the involvement of a respected Māori research partner and the structuring of the research on the basis of Māori principles and practices. I tried to optimize the opportunity for participants' empowerment and ensure they could see the benefit of the research. The intention was to establish a shared sense of power where they could see that their input and alternative ways of knowing and measuring were valued. One way of reflecting this was to represent their full comments to demonstrate my endeavour at sense making and capturing as safely and fully as possible the essence of what participants were saying.

The interviews were also conducted at a place of their choosing to ensure they felt comfortable. All participants were happy to talk, and it was clear it was a topic they felt passionately about. Both positive comments and some criticisms were expressed. For one participant, the questions raised many emotions, and some of her answers in return were often abrupt and challenging. As another participant said, "Trust is hard," and I felt grateful these people were prepared to share their opinions about something tricky and complex. Their honesty and passionate opinions contributed to the richness of the data. A small koha (gift) was offered to all participants in appreciation of their time and input.

Participant observations took place at a hui ā tau (annual meeting) at Parihaka in September 2016. This is an annual forum organized by Caritas where all the tangata whenua communities are invited to come together to discuss issues. Three out of five of the research participants were present, but all their organizations were represented. The hui involved a two-night stay on the marae (meeting place) over a weekend. Marae are central to the Māori cultural experience. They are communal meeting grounds consisting of various spaces where people come together to eat and sleep and be together, including for religious and educational experiences. Attendance at this hui was a privilege. I was welcomed to attend based on my work and involvement with Caritas. My invitation was only forthcoming because the Māori community trusted Caritas and trusted that I was supporting their work through this research.

## SUMMARY OF APPROACH AND LIMITATIONS

Finding the right perspective from which to view this study took time and consideration. Reflecting on methodology tested me on a number of grounds: first, to consider my personal subjectivities in exploring how to build trust and capture essence in light of cross-cultural expectations; second, to reflect on what integrity and meaningful data looks like considering my responsibility for the dignity and welfare of my participants; and finally, to critically consider how meaning comes

not just from social behaviors but from understanding specific situations in a broader historical and political context.

## FINDINGS: A FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING TRUST

Both Caritas and the partners believed indicators for trust lay in reconceptualizing evaluation from a Māori world view. It was evident this would not be a search for one clear definition or universal measure that might be used to qualify trust. Rather, it would be an exploration of concepts that might be seen as proxy indicators to evaluate trust. Combined, these behaviours formed the basis for a simple framework (Figure 1).

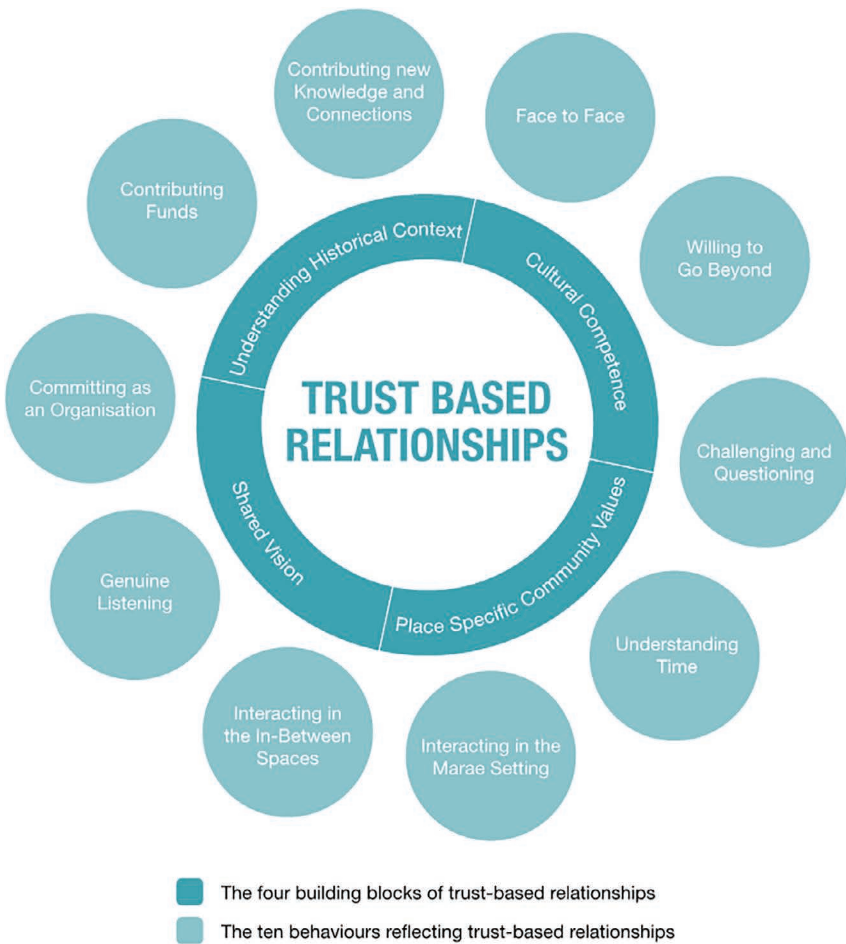


**Figure 1**. A framework for monitoring and evaluating trust in Caritas's relationships with tangata whenua
*Source*: Authors.

This framework has two distinct elements: an inner core and a set of behaviours that indicate trust.

### *The inner core: the building blocks of trust*

Trust is at the heart of the framework. This central tenet is encircled by four inner building blocks of trust. All participants mentioned similar, multidimensional concepts that need to be laid down first to form genuine relationships. These are:

- understanding the historical context;
- being culturally competent;
- reflecting place-specific community values; and
- sharing a vision.

They are "the up-front work of investing in relationship," according one participant. They reflect the "first level of trust" (Christopher, Watts, McCormick, & Young, 2008, p. 1400) and a respect for Indigenous ways of knowing (LaFrance & Nichols, 2010; Wehipeihana, 2013).

### *The 10 behaviours that indicate trust*

Building on this inner core, participants all spoke similarly of behaviours they experienced as markers or indicators of trust-based relationships. Their views are grouped into 10 types of behaviour. They are listed as follows, in no particular order:

- Kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face)
- Going beyond the minimally required
- Challenging and questioning
- Understanding time
- Interacting in the marae setting
- Interacting in the in-between spaces
- Listening genuinely
- Committing as an organization
- Contributing funds
- Contributing new knowledge and connections

While the four building blocks and 10 types of behaviour that are indicators of trust-based relationships emerged from the interviews, they share—logically—similarities with other lists, such as seven Māori proverbs that evolved into "ethical guidelines for researchers" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, p. 124) or five components of "Kaupapa Māori research methodology" (Stevenson, 2018, p. 57).

## DESCRIBING THE FRAMEWORK IN PARTICIPANTS' WORDS

The following paragraphs describe the makeup of the framework—that is, the concepts the participants believed to indicate trust in relationships.

### *Understanding the historical context*

Participants described historical context as understanding the historical oppression and the history of colonization. Having knowledge of the invasion of Parihaka and the passive resistance approach taken by the leaders Te Whiti and Tohu was important. They described the purpose of understanding context as accepting there may be distrust and not taking a relationship for granted:

> *You need to know who we are, you need to know where we came from.*
>
> (Participant Three, Te Rūnanga)

### *Cultural competence*

Participants felt a certain level of cultural competence was a necessary and fundamental underpinning of a trusting relationship. Tangata whenua participants described this cultural competence as showing you have made an effort and not being shy on the marae:

> *Yes, we have etiquette and protocols. So we should. What is there to be nervous about? Don't be nervous. Get on with it.*
>
> (Participant Four, Te Rūnanga)

### *Place-specific community values*

Aligned with cultural competency, tangata whenua participants described the importance of connecting with community and partaking in community events as "how you learn" (Participant Three, Te Rūnanga). They believed there needed to be an awareness of what tangata whenua stood for:

> *Tangata whenua translates as people of the particular land that you are working with. It's specific to where you are standing. These are people grounded to the earth they stand upon.*
>
> (Participant Five, Parihaka)

### *Shared vision*

Alongside community values, participants saw a respect for a shared vision and values as fundamental to a trust-based relationship. In the words of one participant:

> *Have we got enough of a relationship to confront our differences? Is our shared vision that they allow us to be who we are, and we allow them to be who they are?*
>
> (Participant One, Caritas)

## THE 10 BEHAVIOURS THAT INDICATE TRUST

Building on these foundations are 10 types of behaviour radiating out from the heart. Participants suggested it is through commitment to these behaviours that trust grows in a relationship.

### *Kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face)*

Participants agreed that continuing to show up for face-to-face encounters is the best approach to building a cross-cultural relationship. In Māori this is known as "kanohi ki te kanohi":

> *If your face is seen, you have a better chance of building up a relationship. You just don't have the standing if you don't turn up.*
>
> (Caritas research partner)

Tangata whenua participants agreed that when engaging cross-culturally, kanohi ki te kanohi is an advantage because unless you see the face, you do not see the body language:

> *It means accepting you need to do more than just send a letter. It means continuing to show up time after time and being ok with that. This takes time and effort and budget, and you have to be ok with that.*
>
> (Participant Three, Te Rūnanga)

Participant observation of a meeting in Parihaka found that during some intervals, groups of outsiders were invited under the leadership of a Parihaka representative on a walk around the village. Outsiders and villagers mingled, with the villagers sharing stories relating to historic landmarks and all sharing hopes and aspirations.

### *Going beyond the minimally required*

The Caritas participants talked about being prepared to make changes, going beyond where they are now, and not imposing their version of things on others—that is:

> *Not thinking or acting in an exclusively Pākehā world view.*
>
> (Participant Two, Caritas)

They saw this "going beyond" as about taking cultural competence to the next level—that is, not leaving the te reo and tikanga solely to the Kaihāpai Māori (Māori advocate) role but supporting them with staff-wide waiata (songs) and everyone trying out a little more conversational Māori on the paepae (place where visitors speaks):

> *For Caritas staff to invest more time and commitment to learning te reo so that we can use the waikorero [formal speeches made by men during pōwhiri (welcome ceremony) and in social gatherings] and te pepeha [another formal welcome on the marae, the way you introduce yourself in Māori] to explain who Caritas is and what they do. This is not possible if we are always waiting for the Māori formalities to be over then for the "real" conversations to begin in English.*
>
> (Participant Two, Caritas)

Tangata whenua participants also recognised that a commitment to go beyond the minimum level of a greeting was important for trust to be deepened:

> *A "kia ora" is not good enough. You should be learning Manaakitanga (hospitality, kindness) Māori. You need to know how we think and what we need. If you can't do this in Aoteaora [New Zealand], how can you profess to do it overseas?*
>
> (Participant Four, Te Rūnanga)

They also looked for respect shown for the Kaihāpai Māori role. They believed that for Caritas to invest in this role was a sign of being willing to go further and that it reflected a respect for relationship building with tangata whenua partners:

> *It would be ideal to see the Kaihāpai Māori role as a full-time job. If not for two people.*
>
> (Participant Four, Te Rūnanga)

### *Challenging and questioning*

Both Caritas and the tangata whenua participants spoke of a willingness to be challenged in a constructive way as a sign of trust. They believed a good relationship demanded an ability to withstand criticism and see it as a learning opportunity:

> *To be challenged and questioned is a sign of trust. I think there is actually maybe something wrong if we are not being questioned and being put on the spot a bit!*
>
> (Participant Two, Caritas)

As I participated in the proceedings, I experienced this challenging and questioning too. After one tense interview, when some confronting answers seemed directed at my own inadequacy as a Pākehā, my interviewee reassured me that to be challenged was a good thing.

### *Committing as an organisation*

Participants believed a personal willingness to be challenged needed to extend to willingness for the organization to make commitments. From the Māori partners' perspective, how Caritas treated its Māori staff members was an indication of how committed Caritas was to tangata whenua relationships, along with the time and money invested in the Kaihāpai Māori role:

> *Our relationships with individuals are excellent. Having regular staff to deal with has been the success of ongoing relationship and trust between our two communities. We have invested a lot of time getting to know them. And they have invested time getting to know us. If one of them leaves, there is a risk we will feel uncomfortable. You can't take for granted the resourcing and relationships.*
>
> (Participant Four, Te Rūnanga)

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### Understanding time

The notion of time, from a Māori perspective, needs to be embraced for trust to be forthcoming in relationships. For participants in this study, understanding time through a Māori lens means stepping out of Pākehā expectations about time frames—with the urge to solve problems or produce something—and come to grips with the concept of he wā (a time) and te wā (the time):

> *We kept looking for the time when the project was going to happen. We thought the relationship should produce a project and it should do it within our time frame. But we got the message back, "Don't worry about the program. It will come. There is always 'a time' [he wa] for programs, but if you keep going after it, it won't happen. If you trust there will be 'the right time' [te wa] then it will work. What we are after is a relationship with you."*
> (Participant One, Caritas)

### Interacting in the marae setting

Marae are meeting places. The significance of meeting on the marae as opposed to an office was perceived as hugely important for deepening trust:

> *It is like I use another part of my brain when I am in a marae setting. I do lot more listening than I do in the office. I'm not just listening with my ears. I am aware of body language. In the office, we are all just facing our computers and not conscious of the "higher frequencies."*
> (Participant Two, Caritas)

> *The willingness to stay on marae and learn and live together builds trust. There is a reciprocal responsibility and certain tikanga [customs] and whakawhanaungatanga [relationships based on shared experiences] you have to adhere to. It breaks down barriers, removes the misperceptions about what marae living is about.*
> (Participant Five, Parihaka)

### Interacting in the in-between spaces

Participants spoke of the importance of interacting comfortably together in the in-between spaces—the nonwork spaces—as an important reflection of trust. That is, in the doing of ordinary everyday things, you get to know each other, and trust is developed. They believed being willing to get to know each other and connect on a personal level in these spaces allowed for deepening relationships:

> *Trust can be measured by how well and how often you can be together in the in-between spaces. Where you are off duty and can be yourself. Like being on the road together. Or doing the dishes. It's a time to connect on a personal level.*
> (Participant One, Caritas)

> *We look at how you fit, at the table, in the kitchen, at the sink.*
> (Participant Three, Te Rūnanga)

Notes from my participant observation also underscored the importance of interacting in the in-between spaces. With seven mealtimes across the weekend, shared kai (food) was clearly an important part of the hui. These were

breaks to nourish and refuel, but more than that, they were opportunities to connect outside the more formal sessions inside the wharenui. Food was laid out buffet style, and everyone dished their own and sat together, in no particular assigned seating, at long tables. I observed these sessions as full of relaxed conversation and laughter. Māori, Pākehā Caritas, tangata whenua, old, young, managers and board members, everyone sitting together, mixing, mingling, and sharing.

### Genuine listening

This involves being willing to listen with no agenda to push and recognizing that alongside listening well is taking time to think and talk and discuss:

> *Coming with a genuine approach to listening and learning. Coming with no agenda to push regarding religion has helped make a difference to the level of trust that has been established. We asked them, what kind of relationship would you like to have with us? Then gave them time to think and talk about that.*
>
> (Participant One, Caritas)

> *She came and listened. It sounds simple but takes time. If they can listen and show willingness to listen, then cross communication can start.*
>
> (Participant Four, Te Rūnanga)

### Contributing funds

Participants all spoke of funding as a resource that can be brought to the table. Tangata whenua participants perceived Caritas as a funding body and therefore saw funds as an indicator for trust:

> *I understand aid goes out to lots of international countries, but maybe more resource needs to go into this relationship building between our own nations in New Zealand.*
>
> (Participant Three, Te Rūnanga)

### Contributing new knowledge and connections

Participants recognized trusting relationships as those that give and receive in mutually beneficial ways. All spoke of the advantages of networking:

> *A good trusting relationship can help us connect with moral and social issues, on a local, regional, and global scale. Through networking, we come to understand humanitarian issues that are going on, the need for social action, peace, and advocacy.*
>
> (Participant Five, Parihaka)

## DISCUSSING THE FINDINGS AND APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK AS A TOOL FOR SHARED LEARNING

This framework emerged from research in 2016. For Caritas and the partners, it subsequently became a topic for discussion in an effort to apply it to their evaluation process in the years that followed. All parties continued making efforts to expand and deepen

their relationships, perhaps in an accelerating fashion. For example, I participated in a hui ā tau several months after the research and observed behaviour showing that cultural competence was increasing. First, at the pōwhiri there was 100% adherence to the tikanga of the marae. For example, all women wore skirts, shoes were taken off, no one sat on pillows or tables, and there was no food in the wharenui.

While these actions were a sign of basic cultural competence, it was significant that everyone took them seriously. In an effort to go beyond, not only did everyone manage to introduce themselves in te reo Māori, but 50% of attendees took this further by talking about their roles and work in te reo. The waiata sung by Caritas were clearly well rehearsed, delivered with confidence and without song sheets. An encouragement by the hosts for everyone to try to speak te reo in the wharenui, even after the formalities were over, was embraced by two or three Caritas staff. This was also reflected in the Mass, held in te reo on the Saturday evening in the wharenui. Caritas staff feel they can be guided by the framework and see the indicators as co-constructed, shared values that are helping deepen trust.

Caritas and its tangata whenua partners use their annual conferences as a place to evaluate their relationships. The hui ā tau, held annually on one of the tangata whenua marae, is a time for discussion and considering progress, for challenging talks, for sharing and listening, for walking and sleeping side by side. It is a public forum with Caritas staff, Māori partners, and some members of the Caritas board in attendance. It captures behaviours that are kanohi ki te kanohi in reporting and evaluating and encourages more talking in an authentic, accountable way. Thus, it ensures partners feel safe to air their grievances and encourages mutual, self-reflective learning. The framework is used as a practical tool to help reflect on and monitor the 10 types of behaviour that are signs of trust:

> *Part of the trust is when we can provide a forum for us all to discuss wider issues. . . . A public forum is more effective than people just facing up to Caritas in private and saying they did what they did. If they are saying to a public forum with all the people in relationship with us: "This is what we intended to do and this is what worked and what didn't," it helps the learning between our relationships and beyond.*
>
> (Parihaka participant)

The framework influences Caritas's approach at its most strategic level. "Strengthening relationships with tangata whenua" is now embedded in the Caritas strategic plan as a strategic pillar, and the framework has been adopted as a learning tool to see how they are measuring up and to further explore and reflect on the dimensions of trust from a tangata whenua perspective. While these moves are positive, the challenge of how to measure this goal is still a real issue for Caritas:

> *We've set the benchmark high. It's a vision for where we want to go, but we also have to make an honest appraisal of where we are. We could fall into the trap of thinking we are doing well. We are vulnerable because it is still only a few people that are champions. Strengthening relationships requires sustained commitment and time, and these often get drowned by other competing priorities.*
>
> (Caritas manager)

Caritas believes cultural competence is paramount. When individuals leave, they take their knowledge with them:

> *We need to allocate time to this and be prepared to step up to the opportunity to extend ourselves. Things like learning karakia [prayer, chant, ritual chant] and waiata and whakataukī [proverb, significant saying] as a whole organization. Filling up our kete [basket], collecting knowledge as we go so we have things to pull out when we need them.* (Caritas manager)

## CONCLUSION

Specifically, this was a study for Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, a Catholic social justice agency wanting to understand how the process of monitoring and evaluation might reflect the relationships it had built with its Māori partners and help improve these relationships. While there was an understanding in the organization that trust is central to these relationships, there was no obvious framework that Caritas could use to examine and measure its constituting elements and therefore see how its actions and engagements with its Māori partners affected trust-building in the relationships. Caritas was keen to explore the outline of such a framework and to do this with its tangata whenua partners.

This study presents an emergent framework for monitoring and evaluating the relationships between a development organization and the Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand, based on semistructured interviews and participant observations. The framework has four building blocks of trust at its core—historical context, cultural competence, a shared vision, and place-specific community values—and 10 behaviours that are markers, or indicators, of trust positioned around this core.

While the framework is specific to Caritas and its work with Māori partners in Aotearoa New Zealand, we argue it also offers a helpful contribution to the growing body of knowledge concerning Indigenous perspectives on monitoring and evaluation and may also be relevant for practitioners in other organizations working with Indigenous peoples, following suggestions by Chandna et al. (2019). We suggest that the emergent Caritas framework has a number of potential implications for professional practitioners working with Indigenous communities:

- Designing programs needs to include a reflection on what makes existing and evolving relationships meaningful for all parties.
- Building or expanding trust in the relationships starts with identifying in dialogue what concepts lie at the center of these relationships, as well as what types of behaviour express (or undermine) those concepts.
- Undertaking culturally responsive monitoring and evaluation needs to include particular and detailed attention for past, present, and potential future relationships between parties.
- Collaborating in the development of a framework that details core concepts and practical behaviour regarding the relationships can be a helpful

start when exploring mutual trust in those relationships. Moreover, once drafted, such a framework can be used to establish a detailed baseline for the question, “How are we doing in the relationship with you?” and monitor progress in time, as well as guide carefully focused efforts to expand trust.

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# APPENDIX

## *Glossary*

| | |
|---|---|
| he wā: | a time |
| he wā, he wāhi: | time and space |
| hui: | public forum |
| hui ā tau: | annual meeting |
| kai: | food |
| Kaihāpai Māori: | Māori advocate |
| kanohi ki te kanohi: | face to face |
| karakia: | prayer |
| kaupapa: | knowledge |
| kete: | basket |
| koha: | gift |
| marae: | meeting place in front of wharenui |
| mana: | respect |
| Manaakitanga Māori: | hospitality, kindness, generosity |
| paepae: | where visitors speak on the marae |
| Pākehā: | New Zealander of European descent |
| pepeha: | another formal welcome on the marae—the way to introduce yourself in Māori |
| pōwhiri: | a welcome |
| te Reo: | Māori language |
| tangata whenua: | the local Indigenous people |
| tikanga: | customs |
| waiata: | song |
| waikorero: | formal speeches made by men during pōwhiri and in social gatherings |
| whakawhanaungatanga: | relationship through shared experience and working together |
| wharenui: | meeting house |
| whakataukī: | Māori proverb |

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