Organising for Emergence

An exploratory study of the ReGeneration network

Final report prepared for Enviroschools

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Preface

The publication of this report is a cause of real celebration for me. As someone who has been actively involved in alternative learning environments for many years, I have experienced the absence of any kind of professional research and/or evaluation process at almost all such events as a profound missing.

New Zealand has a rich history of innovation in the social, education, enterprise and environmental fields. All too often these projects are invisible to the wider society. We don't notice them until they become "history". When the chance to help create a network of "young changemakers", in partnership with the Enviroschools Foundation presented itself, I knew that we had a unique opportunity to not simply document an event, but to actively learn from the formation of a new network in real time.

One of the real challenges for social innovators is the art of finding or making space conducive to the practice of innovating. My experience is that the right space—by that I mean that elusive combination of physical environment, adequate time, positive energy and creative tension—does about half the work by itself. In the right setting people will just get on with it.

So the decision to invite researchers into what I hoped would be just such an innovation space involved some risks. Firstly, that the presence of researchers would limit the ability of the organisers and participants to relax and be themselves. People generally (and I suspect New Zealanders especially) don't like being "guinea pigs", a paradox given our history as a sociological and technological laboratory.

Some of what makes an innovation space is that it is "safe to fail". No one likes stuffing up, but the idea of stuffing up with an audience—let alone an audience of researchers armed with clipboards and raised eyebrows—is enough for most social innovators to make sure that researchers are kept well away from the action.

Equally, though, we need spaces that are "safe to succeed". When events like ReGeneration "work" they can be transformative, for individuals (participants and organisers alike), for issues (leading to new insights and possibilities) and for the system as a whole (the emergence of a new attitude or paradigm). Transformation is different from information. The pedagogy used to support it is similarly different. It relies on everyone being whole-heartedly part of the process and willing to be changed by it. Radical transparency is really your only option, and this includes the researchers.

I want to acknowledge Josie and Rachel for the skills, knowledge, sensitivity and critical insight that they bring to their work. Working with and learning from them during this project has been a

real privilege. The support of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) has made, and will continue to make, a real difference for this project as it continues to develop through its second, third and fourth iterations.

The other partners I want to acknowledge are the team at the Tindall Foundation, not simply for financially supporting the ReGeneration '09 event but also the personal support and encouragement I, and others in the team, have received from Stephen Tindall and Trevor Gray.

Finally, a huge thanks to the crew at Enviroschools, from the national team to the wonderful regional co-ordinators, facilitators, teachers and students all around the country.

Like every generation, today's young adults have a unique perspectives and capabilities. If you are under 25 you probably won't remember life without the internet or mobile phones. Today's youth have internalised forms of social connection and access to information that previous generations find hard to conceive of. They also face a range of challenges of such complexity and magnitude that our most senior scientists and policy makers are similarly struggling to understand. The depth of character, intelligence and optimism of all the young people involved in the ReGeneration network never fails to amaze me. Game on!

Billy Matheson
ReGeneration Project Convenor, Enviroschools Foundation

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Executive summary

ReGeneration '09 was a four-day event organised by the Enviroschools Foundation with support from Te Mauri Tau, a number of young social entrepreneurs, and the Tindall Foundation. It was an effort to build on the work of Enviroschools and catalyse a youth network for learning and change that could provide ongoing support for young people as they transition from school to young adulthood. The hui brought together two main cohorts of young people from across New Zealand: approximately 20 young adults (aged 18 to mid-30s) who were studying and/or working in areas connected with sustainability and social change; and approximately 25 secondary-school-aged youth (aged 14 to 17) who were emerging leaders and innovators in sustainability and environmental issues within their schools and communities. Older adults were also present as participants, friends, parents, mentors, role models and sources of wisdom and experience. A long-term goal for the emergent ReGeneration network was to develop nodes of youth-initiated and youth-supported regenerative action in communities across New Zealand.

As educational researchers interested in both sustainability and social/educational change processes, we became participant-observers at the hui, where we also conducted individual and group interviews, facilitated reflection activities and provided evaluation forms. Two main research questions underpinned our research approach:

1. What are the personal narratives of people involved in ReGeneration '09?

2. What is the emerging ReGeneration '09 network narrative?

We pay particular attention to the individual narratives of the young adults in Chapter 3 and the youth cohort in Chapter 6. Throughout the report we build a picture of how the ReGeneration '09 shared narrative developed, with particular insights—especially in Chapters 4 and 5—into the nature of the network being created and the ways that participants collaboratively generated knowledge and ways of being that they deemed important for our current times. The report braids together multiple voices: our own, participants' and other authors'. One of the threads to this report, and ReGeneration itself, is an interest in how emergent change occurs within complex systems.

The young adults

We interviewed eight of the "young adult" cohort, including three of the main co-organisers, about what had brought them to ReGeneration, what they felt they could contribute, their hopes for the future of the emerging network and how they interpreted the concept of "regeneration". The word *regeneration* sparked metaphors of intergenerational connections; cycles of death and

regrowth; nourishing the energies of themselves and other people; and connections to people, places and communities. Overarching all of these ideas was a message of positivity and hope. Many interviewees saw regeneration (the concept) and ReGeneration (the hui/network) as sitting in direct contrast to "old-school" approaches towards sustainability which, in their experience, could often lead to anger, frustration and despair.

Across the young adults' narratives there was a strong theme of connectedness to land, people and places; and personal commitments to living their own lives in ways built on principles of sustainability and regeneration. The young adults also shared many common views about the power of intergenerational learning, and the value of developing supportive, positive networks where people who cared about environment, community and sustainability could come together to learn, grow their energies and develop something collaboratively. Some talked about themselves as working in a "social innovation" space and hoped to be able to support other young people to enter into and take on leadership roles in such spaces. All saw themselves as having something particular to offer to support the youth cohort, drawing on many aspects of who they were, including their particular skills, knowledge and experience; their interests and passions; their personalities and their ways of relating to people. The ideas and experiences important to the young adults translated into workshop design and processes.

The programme

The hui involved a variety of workshop sessions and discussions as well as shared meals and social activities. The programme-in-action showed us that ReGeneration '09 came together through creative, careful and inspired planning by the co-organisers, who drew on their extensive experience, including that accumulated within their whānau, organisation and extended networks. The workshops mixed conceptual and skills development, while also creating space for the emotional and spiritual. While many themes resurfaced throughout the gathering, over the days the emphasis shifted from concept development towards action planning. The programme content provided a foundation of learning from which the participants might be able to act more consciously, collaboratively and effectively in the future.

The learning environment

We identified key features of the ReGeneration '09 learning environment created by the lead facilitation processes and the collaborative construction by everyone present, and compared and contrasted these features with common approaches to secondary school teaching and learning (recognising that our characterisations of the latter are not true in all cases). These features were:

- collaborative construction of ideas, rather than students being taught the "correct" answers
- multimodal and experiential learning, rather than learning mostly through text and talk

- place-based approaches, rather than a curriculum built from universalised or decontextualised knowledge
- narratives and storytelling as part of the curriculum, rather than only as social side-talk
- a strengths-based and positive approach, rather than a competitive environment and problem-based approach
- interdisciplinary and multiple knowledges, rather than knowledge separated into disciplines
- bicultural and intergenerational learning as integrated dimensions of the learning experience.

By highlighting how these ideas are taking expression in a self-organising learning network like ReGeneration, we hope to contribute to further thinking about how our education system might be reshaped to incorporate more of these ideas and ways of doing things.

The outcomes

The learning environment was designed to inspire, motivate and catalyse participants to carry the ideas and work of ReGeneration forward once they returned to their homes, schools and communities. Evaluation form responses and four follow-up interviews illustrated some of the outcomes that participants perceived to have emerged from their ReGeneration '09 experience, highlighting how ongoing developments have continued in this network.

Nearly all participants indicated that they had learnt a great deal through being part of the hui, and were, in many ways, different people because of it. Four months later, the four young interviewees still felt inspired and energised to take on, and create, regenerative actions in their communities. They also believed that they had gained new skills, knowledge and connections to help them on their way. Over the course of the hui, participants shared and strengthened their intentions for localised regenerative actions, and many new ideas and plans were sparked. The four interviewees had been involved—often in leadership roles—in a wide range of regenerative activities since the gathering. They had continued their involvement with the expanding network, in part through a ReGeneration Ning (purpose-built online social network) and subsequent "road trip" (series of local ReGeneration events). Making and maintaining connections with the people in their local communities and national networks was a strong theme in all narratives. Participants had a hopeful outlook for the future, balanced against their belief that building community resilience is an essential for riding—and creating—the wave of major change that they are predicting.

The emergent regenerative network

The final chapter outlines what we and others may learn from this piece of research in relation to our initial overall interest in emergent change and specific interest in self-generating networks for knowledge building, learning and change. A "zeitgeist" around sustainability, social change, self-organisation and emergence is visible in contemporary literature, not to mention in the broadcast

and online media environment. This work challenges us to think about change processes, and about human relationships with one another and the Earth, in a very different way from those that have predominated in Western society through the Industrial Age. Aspects of ReGeneration give us insight into the kind of paradigm shifts that other writers have argued will be necessary in today's times of genuinely open-ended challenges, particularly in shifting from a mechanistic paradigm to a complex systems paradigm. We conclude with four interesting design features of ReGeneration:

- **Planning for emergence with enabling constraints**: ReGeneration '09 was a carefully orchestrated event designed to maximise the contributions that each individual might make and to provide conditions for connections to form between people and between ideas. We observed "enabling constraints" in the design of the workshops, the selection and contributions of the organisers and older youth and mentors, the culture of the hui and the online platform and national planning beyond it. This fits with ideas about complex co-activity, which is neither prescriptive nor chaotic, but instead finds a creative balance between being "rule-bound" (with some shared values, understandings and activities) while retaining the capacity to generate expansive, flexible or unanticipated possibilities (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000).

- **Building from difference, and building for difference**: Just as diversity has been recognised as an essential feature of intelligent systems, the ReGeneration space supported collaboration and consensus *and* allowed for—and even welcomed—difference. An important capability for the 21st century is learning to seek out and work with difference to generate something new and to address complex and deeply rooted challenges (Gilbert, 2009).

- **Encouraging local development and action, supported by online and offline networking**: ReGeneration participants were encouraged to engage their existing local connections and networks to continue their regenerative work, while being supported to access and contribute to the mentors and online network associated with ReGeneration. This new social technology facilitates quick and thoughtful exchanges in ways that enable new interest and action alliances to form, focus and flex—giving community organising quite different capabilities than were possible a decade ago (Shirky, 2008).

- **Looking backwards to look forwards**: Throughout the gathering, participants were encouraged to listen carefully to knowledge of the past, perhaps regenerating values and practices that have been lost in whānau, communities and nations, and revitalising them in ways relevant for today. The concept of ReGeneration also involves some parts transforming into something quite different from the original ingredients—allowing space for the unpredictable nature of what the young people might help to create.

1. Introduction

> *Watch and listen for those who articulate a vision that you share, who are acting on a calling that inspires you. Watch for individuals from whom you can learn. Watch for groups of fellow travellers with whom you can journey. Take the plunge, prepared to learn—to be disappointed, to be energised, to be up and down, but most of all learn—about what works for you, what engages you, what matters to you, where you feel you can make a difference. Consider your own calling. Perhaps you, too, will find yourself called to social innovation. (Westley, Zimmerman, & Patton, 2006, p. 52*

In 2008 NZCER was approached by one of the organisers of a hui focused around youth and sustainability that was being planned for February 2009. The hui, called ReGeneration'09, was organised by the Enviroschools Foundation (with support from the Tindall Foundation).

The Enviroschools Foundation is a charitable trust that provides support and strategic direction for a nationwide environmental education programme (see the Enviroschools vision in the inset box below). Since the Enviroschools concept was developed in the Waikato in the 1990s, it has been extended into schools across New Zealand (www.enviroschools.org.nz). The Enviroschools Foundation works with a large network of people and organisations, adopting a collaborative approach, building relationships to support and enhance existing environmental education initiatives. An important partnership is with Te Mauri Tau, a kaupapa Māori charitable trust based in Raglan that fosters Māori language and culture by working creatively in the areas of health, environment and education.

Enviroschools has developed capabilities in the facilitation of sustainability-focused youth gatherings, such as the Enviroschools Youth Jams in 2007 and 2008, which bring together school-aged youth from around the country. ReGeneration '09, as it was explained to us, was an effort to build on the work Enviroschools has already done, bringing an additional focus on building a youth network for learning and change that could provide long-term and ongoing support for young people as they moved towards (and reached) the transition from school student to young adult.

In the remainder of this chapter we briefly describe ReGeneration '09, and why we wanted to be involved in this research. Finally, we say a few words about the way this report has been put together, and who it is for.

ReGeneration '09—what was it?

The name ReGeneration[1] was carefully chosen by the organisers for its many layers of meaning and significance. We explore some of the meanings constructed individually and collectively by the participants in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 as we detail the unfolding of ReGeneration '09. We believe that this reflects the approach of ReGeneration itself. It is an approach of emergence, in which both ReGeneration as a group of people, a process and a network, and "regeneration" as a meaningful concept, emerged as a living co-construction of its participants. A brief overview of events in the ReGeneration '09 timeline is given below to help readers to locate this report and its findings in context.

The first event of ReGeneration '09 was a hui convened from 19–22 February at the Tauhara centre in Taupo. The hui was designed to bring together two main cohorts of young people. The first cohort comprised approximately 20 young adults (aged 18 to mid-30s) who were studying and/or working in areas connected with sustainability and social change. The second cohort comprised approximately 25 secondary school-aged youth (aged 14 to17) who were leaders or emerging leaders and innovators in sustainability and environmental issues within their schools and communities. Participants came from many different regions of New Zealand.

One of the intentions of the hui was that the older cohort could support and provide mentorship for the younger youth, but all would be learning together. Other adults of a range of ages were also present at the hui as participants, friends, parents, mentors, role models and sources of wisdom and experience. The hui involved a variety of workshop sessions, discussions, as well as sharing meals and social activities (see Chapter 4). It was designed to inspire, motivate and

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[1] In this report "ReGeneration '09" refers to the hui that was held in February 2009, while "ReGeneration" refers to the ongoing network of people and activities.

catalyse participants to carry the ideas and work of ReGeneration forward once they returned to their homes, schools and communities.

The next step for ReGeneration was to invite all the participants to continue to communicate, exchange ideas and plan activities with each other through a purpose-built online social network (http://regen09.ning.com/), where participants in ReGeneration '09 could extend the network by inviting their own friends and contacts to join.

A long-term goal of ReGeneration is to develop nodes of youth-initiated and youth-supported regenerative action in communities across all regions of New Zealand. About six months after the hui, some of the ReGeneration organisers planned a road trip to visit some of the hui participants in their regions to check in with how things were going, and provide support towards a potential nationwide ReGeneration festival in 2010.

Why we wanted to be involved in this research

We wanted to be involved as research partners in ReGeneration for two reasons. Firstly, as educational researchers interested in both sustainability and social/educational change processes, we supported the intentions for the hui and the subsequent national network of people and activity that has followed. We saw research as one way to document, reflect on and learn from the work being done in this area, and we hoped it would add value to the organisation and people running ReGeneration '09.

Secondly, ReGeneration '09 weaves together many educational ideas of interest to ourselves and our colleagues at NZCER. NZCER's mission is to support learning and teaching in New Zealand through the provision of quality educational research, resources and information:

> We strive as an organisation to contribute new insights into current educational issues, to lead the thinking on future possibilities and to at times challenge established wisdom. We want to contribute to an education system where all learners are well-equipped for the world ahead, and to support a society in which everyone actively participates and continues to learn throughout their lives. (NZCER Vision)

The overarching theme of NZCER's current research programme is 21st century learning, and we saw the ReGeneration initiative as aligning perfectly with one of our current development areas: Future-focused issues in education (see inset box on the next page). NZCER's Future-Focused Issues project will be built around a series of "case studies"—of individuals, groups, initiatives and bodies of literature—that shed light on the transformative potential of future-focused issues for education, with a particular emphasis on the four future-focused issues identified in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007).[2] ReGeneration '09 is the first of these case studies.

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[2] Four "future-focused issues"—sustainability, citizenship, enterprise and globalisation—appear in two prominent sections of the curriculum: the Principles (p. 9) and School curriculum: Design and Review (p. 39). They are also clearly manifested in the Vision for young people (p. 8), and can be interpreted to weave through the Essence Statement of each learning area (pp. 17–32).

NZCER's Future-Focused Issues project in development

This project-in-development aims to examine opportunities and dilemmas associated with future-focused issues in New Zealand education. It builds on a body of contract work that NZCER has already undertaken in areas relevant to the *future focus* principle in *The New Zealand Curriculum*. These include *Evaluation of the Regional E4E Clusters Initiative (2007–2008)*, *Evaluation of Education for Sustainability (2007–2008),* and two research projects for the *Secondary Futures* initiative (one completed in 2005, and one due to begin in mid-2009).

While some work has been done to support futures thinking in New Zealand education, our experience suggests that many people within the formal education sector still have limited understandings of futures thinking in general, and of the four future-focused issues in *The New Zealand Curriculum* in particular. However, pockets of innovative thinking and development are occurring on the margins of the formal education sector, and in the spaces where education intersects with other sectors. In this research project, we aim to explore these pockets of thinking and innovation.

One of our initial aims is to look for examples of what we are loosely labelling "self-generating networks for knowledge building, learning and change". We are interested in how such networks form around the future-focused issues in both formal and nonformal education, with particular emphasis on how new knowledge is generated in these networks, and in connection with learning beyond school (i.e., with business, communities, youth groups, Web-based social networks etc.).

We are interested in exploring people's understandings of the future-focused issues in Aotearoa, with particular emphasis on relationships and tensions across the four areas. In the long term, we hope that this project will provide insight into the potential implications of the future-focused issues as both design principles *and* suggested learning contexts for New Zealand school curricula.

How we compiled this report

This report has been written for the Enviroschools Foundation and the organisers and participants of ReGeneration '09. It aims to represent some of the important ideas, processes, points of view and outcomes that we noticed as researcher-participants in ReGeneration '09. We hope that by reflecting back these ideas and outcomes to the people involved, we will add to the ongoing learning and development that is occurring within the ReGeneration network. We also hope that this report will be of interest to a wider audience interested in sustainability, youth learning and leadership, and social and educational change.

Research is a deliberative process of deciding what questions to ask, what kinds of data to collect to answer those questions and, finally, how to synthesise, interpret and represent those data. As with any research, the data and analyses contained in this report can only ever be a partial representation of ReGeneration '09 and the ReGeneration network*,* and our interpretation is filtered by our own interests and experiences. As educational researchers, one challenge for us in writing this report stemmed from the distinctive qualitative differences that ReGeneration*,* as a research context, presented when compared with the research environments in which we are most experienced: schools. For example, when we write about school-based research, we are able to draw on a large set of conceptual categories and labels that are familiar to most readers as "ideas and things that are part of schools". These include labels to describe people's roles (e.g., teacher, student, principal), physical objects and spaces (school, classrooms, staffrooms) and organising concepts associated with the daily practices of schooling (curriculum, teaching, subject, assessment, lesson), and so on. Each of these conceptual categories implies a space with edges

and boundaries that readers can easily fill based their own prior knowledge and experiences of these categories. Even though the edges and boundaries of these concepts may be more fluid in real life than they appear on the written page, they are at least simple to write about.

As a self-generating network for learning and social change, ReGeneration does not come with the same set of descriptive labels and categories. The roles that people play in the network, the things that happen within the network and the spaces in which these things occur all require description; but the language to describe these things is much less self-evident and more fluid— even when used by the participants themselves. For example, the word images below show some of the language that describes roles people played in the network. At any one time, a particular person could have occupied many of these roles, but the role(s) they played at one moment could be different from the role(s) they played in another moment.

The variety and interplay of words reminds us of Stephen Sterling's (2001, p. 24) fluid collection of adjectives to describe ways of working in an ecological education paradigm (see below).

In this report in some cases we have adopted some of the language used by the participants in ReGeneration, or language drawn from relevant literature, while in other cases we have chosen words that we think help to simplify matters for readers.

The report braids together multiple voices: our own, participants' and other authors'. We have purposefully developed it as a bricolage, presenting a range of data in their raw form, rather than attempting to present a single grand or linear narrative. In many chapters we have used the technique of inset boxes to include participant quotes, or quotes from researchers and theorists alongside the main narrative thread. In other cases we include participant quotes in the main body of the text. Our choices have been purposeful, but we also invite readers to bring their own interpretations to these layerings of text.

This report presents a picture of ReGeneration at a specific moment in time. The ReGeneration network continues to evolve and change—to learn and regenerate. We hope that the report, and our contribution, will form part of this emerging regeneration narrative.

Emergent change

One of the threads to this report, and ReGeneration itself, is an interest in how emergent change occurs within complex systems. The concept of emergence has been applied to the understanding of everything from the origins of cellular life and the phenomena of human and animal consciousness, to the creation of novelty and innovation within human organisations and social networks (Capra, 2002). Complexity thinking, which provides the theoretical underpinning for concepts of emergence, has become popular across many disciplines, from mathematics, design and business to biology, sociology and education (Davis et al. , 2000; Sterling, 2001). Our interest in emergent change is particularly located in two realms: first, the realm of education systems and structures, and second, in the realm of collaborative action to address the ecological,

> *Perhaps the most common block to using emergent processes is that it is virtually impossible to know what specific forms outcomes will take. This is because emergence, by definition, involves the unknown. What lessens the risk and increases the likelihood of success is the clarity of intention guiding the work. (Holman, 2008, p. 62)*

social and economic challenges of the 21st century. As we discuss in the final chapter of the report, we believe ReGeneration provides the opportunity to research episodes of emergence in both realms.

Structure of the chapters

The report's structure is loosely chronological. The next chapter sets out the methodology for this work. In Chapter 3 we discuss interviews with some of the young adult cohort (18 to mid-30s) the morning before the beginning of the ReGeneration hui. In Chapters 4 and 5 we describe the programme-in-action. Chapter 6 provides a brief account of some of the things that have happened since the hui, for individual participants and the collective network. In Chapter 7 we discuss ReGeneration as an example of emergent social change in education and in addressing 21st century challenges.

2. Methodology

Research questions

Two main research questions underpinned our approach to the ReGeneration research: What are the personal narratives of people involved in ReGeneration '09? and What is the ReGeneration '09 network narrative? From these two main questions we developed a series of subquestions, shown below:

What are the personal narratives of people involved in ReGeneration '09?
- What life experiences culminate in a motivation towards this work/understanding?
- How do individuals understand and enact sustainability and regeneration?
- How do individuals understand and enact intergenerational learning?
- What is their vision for their local places/communities? (e.g., their whānau, school, neighbourhood, region, networks, interest groups etc.)?
- What are they learning/doing differently as a result of their participation in ReGeneration '09, and what enabled these shifts?

What is the ReGeneration '09 network narrative?
- What is the shared narrative(s) being created, and how?
- What is the nature of the network(s) created, and how is new knowledge/ways of being generated here?
- Where/when/how do pertinent turning points/emergent ideas develop in the central narrative or subplots?
- What can the narrative(s) tell us about: sustainability; active citizenship; knowledge networks; youth/intergenerational stewardship; cultural/whole-systems transformation; future-focused education?

The research approach

We (the researchers) were both participants in, and observers of, the ReGeneration '09 hui. We used an appreciative inquiry approach to this research which suited our overall frame and the nature of the data-sharing partnership (Preskill & Catsambas, 2006). We planned our data collection methods in ways we believed would help participants to reflect on the nature and value of ReGeneration and their own learning, by focusing on successful processes, outcomes and visions. It was also important that our presence as researchers, and our methods of research, fitted comfortably with the kaupapa of the ReGeneration hui.

We introduced ourselves and the research in person at the start of the gathering, explained the purpose of the research and our approach to research ethics and made ourselves available to answer any questions. We gave out information sheets and outlined our planned methods for collecting data. These included:

1. individual interviews with around a dozen participants
2. small focus group interviews with the youth participants
3. descriptive and/or reflective observations of key discussions and the retreat process being used (through note-taking by the researchers)
4. inviting participants to write post-it notes in response to prompt questions (or "sentence starters") and stick these on a large sheet of paper which we would collect
5. inviting participants to complete a final evaluation form at the end of the hui.

We asked those who were happy to take part to complete a consent form. Every ReGeneration participant was free to choose whether or not they wanted to be part of the research. Due to the size of the group, we asked anybody who was *not* happy with us recording their contributions in the workshop discussions and activities to let us know or indicate it on a form.

The data collection episodes were scheduled to occur at different points throughout the gathering, in consultation with the organisers. The organisers also made suggestions about particular people we might like to approach for individual or group interviews.

The semistructured interview/focus group schedule, sentence starters, evaluation form and observation guide are in the appendices.

3. The young adults

The morning before the ReGeneration hui formally began, we interviewed eight of the "young adult" cohort (aged approximately 18 to mid-30s). This included three of the main co-organisers of the hui. The interviews encouraged the participants to talk about what they felt had brought them to ReGeneration, what they hoped to get from the hui and what they felt they were personally contributing to the hui. We asked them to talk about their hopes and dreams for their own piece of the ReGeneration jigsaw and what they could imagine doing when they went back to their home. We also asked them what the concept of "ReGeneration" meant to them. This chapter braids together the personal narratives of the interviewees to represent the emerging collective narrative about ReGeneration that was carried forward and developed further through the subsequent days of the hui.

Who were the young adults at ReGeneration?

The young adult cohort represented people at a variety of life stages. Some had recently finished high school and were currently enrolled in undergraduate tertiary studies. Some were undertaking (or had completed) tertiary or graduate studies, some had participated in or established their own community programmes or courses and some were several years into their working careers. One was a first-time parent and another was soon to become one. Most were either working or studying in areas connected to sustainability, community development and social change. As described in Chapter 1, one aspect of the ReGeneration hui design was the idea that this group of people had a role to play as mentors and guides for the "younger youth" cohort (aged approximately 14 to 17).

Many of the young adults knew each other from previous hui and conferences, or through their professional and social connections to Enviroschools and/or Te Mauri Tau. Within the group there were circles of people who had known each other for many years. There were also some people who had met one or more of the co-organisers much more recently and were much newer to the network. The co-organisers had invited people they knew through these existing relationships to participate in ReGeneration, and tried to have people from all of the Enviroschools regions if possible.

In our analysis we looked across all of the interviews to identify themes that emerged from across the narratives, while also taking care to notice the unique threads and strands that were woven together within any one person's narrative. In this chapter we discuss a series of themes that emerged across different narratives. Under each theme, our synthesis is accompanied by text boxes showing quotes from different individuals. We have kept the quotes separate from the

synthesis, rather than integrating these directly into the text, in order to allow the reader to weave these together as they read.

The final section in this chapter discusses the young adults' personal interpretations of the meaning of "ReGeneration".[3]

Social entrepreneurship and working in a social innovation space

Three of the young adults who were well into their working careers talked about their aspirations to shape their work in an "innovation space". They used terms such as "social entrepreneurship" and "social enterprise" to describe these aspirations.

I've had experience organising networks, online social networks, there are lots of things that have and haven't worked, things I'd do differently. I have my own perspective as a designer and social entrepreneur… that term has only been on my radar for a very short time, but it describes some of what I do.

All three had backgrounds in design and, at some stage of their lives had shifted their gaze from thinking about the design of things, to thinking about design (or redesign) of social systems, communities and networks of people to bring about transformation or change. Many factors influenced their thinking about designing social networks for change. These included various social innovation and networking experiences they had previously participated in or created; things they had read; and people they were connected to in their professional and personal lives. They hoped to feed their learning forward into the design and facilitation of the ReGeneration hui (and the ongoing ReGen network) in at least two ways: first, by drawing on their own skills in group facilitation and social process, and second, to provide inspiration or even role model to the younger people what it might look like to *be* a social entrepreneur.

In my move from engineering to convening around topics and opportunities that matter—I've seen and experienced the power of people coming together in collaborative ways.

I can share my knowledge and perspectives … [and if the younger people here] are inclined to develop themselves as social entrepreneurs when they are my age they will have helped to shape that profession.

During some of these interviews we discussed what it meant to be working in this innovation space at this particular age and stage of life.[4] One interviewee recalled a comment about this from the manager of a philanthropic organisation which the co-organisers of ReGeneration had approached to provide funding support for the hui:

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[3] These interviews all took place the morning before the gathering began. The interviewees' interpretations of ReGeneration may have changed and evolved during the course of the hui.

[4] These discussions were partly reflective of the researchers' own perspectives, as we were at a similar age and life stage as these interviewees and were also interested in social change and social process.

[The manager of the organisation said] they don't have people operating in that space in-between secondary and 'grown-up' or more mature philanthropic demand. He was very keen to support us [the co-coordinators of ReGeneration] on a superficial level because of our ages, because we are engaging with this kind of stuff …

These interviewees acknowledged that they were in a lifestage where many people are typically beginning to juggle careers with beginning a family, and that it could be difficult to be active in sustainability and regeneration initiatives for people their age who don't have paid work in this area. For some of the interviewees, knowing the energy that it took to sustain this kind of work, it was important to begin to "pass on the torch" to the younger participants in ReGeneration, while helping them develop the links, networks, knowledge and skills that would sustain the younger people's energies over the long term.

Contributing and cultivating one's unique skills, talents and perspectives

All of the interviewees from the young adult cohort saw ways in which their own particular skills, talents and perspectives could contribute to ReGeneration. They talked about knowledge they had gained through their prior work and educational experiences, lessons they had learnt from personal experiences, their own culture and upbringing, as well as talents and passions they had cultivated within themselves over time.

Some talked about themselves as having a particular "way of being" with people, or a particular way of looking at things, that they thought was important for the overall dynamic of the group. Among all the interviewees there seemed to be an appreciation that the differences between individuals were as important to the overall group experience as the things they shared in common. When talking about what they could personally *bring* to ReGen, most also talked about themselves as equally *receiving* and *learning* from their involvement.

[I contribute] a lot of environmental experience, gardening, topography, my experience of ranger work with DOC … Also my wittiness. I know I am a funny person, and I know when things need to be a bit more lenient, I [am good at] knowing what the youth I work with [need].

I think [I can contribute] a few things[to ReGeneration]—I approach things in a different way for a few reasons—I have studied engineering and science so I tend to be quite sceptical about things but sometimes within a group that is an important role to play ...

When I say that [I am interested in climate change and reaching peak oil] it reflects my passion a lot. For other members of the ReGen team there are other aspects that are more paramount in their minds. That is one of the brilliant aspects about our team that we're all passionate about a different crucial aspect. [One person] brings the community focus, and similarly [another person] and I bring a focus on physical resources and a future focus, and [a fourth person] is focused on solutions and what's really working now for communities…

It's like weaving a whole lot of different threads of different passions—I'm here for reasons of selflessness and selfishness. As a young 21-year-old, doing this work with younger students is huge learning and professional development for me … it's learning communication strategies, it has good professional development potential for me that leads into my future careers and paths. It also feeds into my passions— it's a hobby, I love it and it really fulfils me to do this kind of work.

I've got a way about myself, my thinking about myself, [that] just by turning up to a thing you are contributing. [I have] a holistic approach to seeing the environment and how it can contribute to us … from a Māori perspective there are a lot of ways to unlock a person's potential by using the environment around them, using the skills of others, [and] the tools of this environment.

Commitments and connections to places and people

Many of the young adults had a strong sense of connection and commitment to particular places—often places where they had grown up, where they had strong family/whānau connections or where they had experienced significant changes or turnarounds in their lives. Looking backwards in time, they described these places (and their people) as sources of inspiration for their interest and involvement in environment, sustainability and, ultimately, their participation in ReGeneration. Looking to the present and future, many had a long-term commitment to get involved in social and environmental actions that would benefit those places and communities. Some also expressed a strong sense of commitment to taking action in the place they were *currently* living; for example, getting involved in community projects in the cities where they were studying or working.

If I was really to go back to my young [days] it was remembering my grandmother and the lessons she taught me, taking me in the bush, showing me what is there that is medicinal, showing me what is in the sea, what is edible and what's not. Honouring my grandmother and everything that she's left behind. Knowing that it's a better place ... My dreams are being able to go home and incorporate the youth, who feel there is nothing for them to relate to ... so they can feel comfortable, connected, with like-minded people within the Far North area. Reconnecting with ourselves as people, and with the environment ...

I come up from Nelson, grown up my whole life in the same house. I have a lot of ancestry and relatives around there, current generations of extended family all live in the Nelson/Tasman and surrounding areas, Murchison to Nelson Lakes on both sides of my family especially my mother's ... I'm a 7th or 8th generation New Zealander and that's all been in Nelson.

[When I go back home I can see myself] trying to create the same drive in my community, my people, the awareness around that we need to cherish the natural resources that we do have, expand our learnings/knowledge, on the land that we all share, and find the direction.

My parents and my family I think are outstanding citizens. I grew up with one foot on the beautiful beach at Moeraki and the other at the environment court—my parents were constantly fighting against inappropriate development, sewage ponds, desecration ... More recently my family has been involved in the equivalent of transition towns and ... getting more involved in the community front.

I think one of the major [reasons I have become involved with ReGeneration] was that we had a holiday home on Waiheke Island—so having summers that were low tech and I got a lot of time in nature by myself to really connect with the environment. When I was about 18 I did a conservation course that was half outdoor recreation and half conservation. So it's pretty much having experiences in nature –that gave me respect for the aesthetic and want to protect the environment. And you start— start joining dots between what you're using and what you're seeing and then valuing what we have ... Also both my grandmothers were gardeners so they gave me plots in their gardens and gave me lots of nurturing.

Experiencing connections and forming relationships with like-minded people

It was common for the young adult interviewees to talk about having experienced a buzz of excitement and a sense of possibility at previous conferences and hui they had attended around sustainability or social change. For some who had previously felt they were working in isolation, these hui and conferences had given them a sense that they were not "on their own". Many talked about wanting to recreate this kind of electric experience at ReGeneration for the younger youth cohort (aged 14 to 17).

Two of the main co-organisers of the ReGeneration hui expressed the view that personal relationships between the ReGeneration participants were critically important for sustaining the network. They believed it was not simply a matter of finding people to collaborate with; it was about finding people you actually enjoyed being with as well as working with.

> *I was by myself in my interest [in environment and sustainability] for a long time until I met a big bunch of people who I still know through this now—at a conference in 2006. So that was a key moment of banding together and finding other young people who are interesting, fun, really intelligent and able to come together in a short space of time and just bring a whole heap of energy together. So that conference really shifted my commitment as well because suddenly I was committed with a whole bunch of people.*

> *One thing that really sparked me was when I was in the end of 5th Form (2004)—I had role on the city youth council, and had an opportunity to attend a forum run by MYD and Sir Peter Blake Trust with other young environmental leaders where the age range was 16 to 18. I put my hand up for that because it just sounded good ... Meeting other young leaders at that time was for me my version of ReGen '09 as it might be for these students.*

> *What we've learnt from Intersect [an online sustainability network for young professionals] is that online networks aren't effective without personal relationships or people who [have met] each other physically—they don't sustain themselves.*

> *Something that brings me here, it's partly the themes but it's also the people. People that I would enjoy spending time with and seek out their company in any situation. To have their company and have these conversations, [that's an opportunity] not to be missed. There's a bit of commonality [we share] in being able to have conversations that in everyday life [other] people might not want to talk about.*

> *One of the key differences with me around this work which is quite hard to name and describe is 'getting into relationship with each other' ... I hope that the participants in this event feel linked, bonded to each other for the next 10–12–20 years ... [To be able to] look back and say 'This was a beginning point for me' ... In future when they may be doing a project together ... and to come back to the relationship thing, I feel like it's trying to take a step on from the networking thing—trying to be part of each other's lives ...*

Being comfortable with—and listening for—difference

While they valued the strength that was gained by a pooling and sharing of energy with like-minded others, some interviewees reiterated the importance of being aware of their differences,

not assuming that everyone's views and values were shared, and ensuring that the space created in ReGeneration was inclusive enough to allow multiple—and at times contradictory—perspectives to be heard.

The organisers of ReGeneration '09, both Māori and non-Māori, were particularly conscious about how Māori knowledge, culture and values were represented in the ReGeneration space. While Māori concepts and practices were an essential dimension of ReGeneration, it was important to the organisers that these were not co-opted or represented out of their cultural context. One illustration of how the organisers addressed this possibility was the way the notion of the tuakana/teina relationship was introduced early in the hui (see page 21, Chapter 4).

> *... but we have to be careful not to let this group become a clique in itself. Some people know each other quite well, sometimes it's better when nobody knows anybody ... Maybe sometimes with giving this open space to young people, it's [also]really important to notice what questions we are asking them, because you can ask a question with an expectation of a certain answer. I've been to environmental things before where there is an expectation that everyone necessarily has something that is common [such as political affiliation, or lifestyle], when there isn't, and it can exclude someone.*

> *I think at [these gatherings] ... things are contested, everyone brings different assumptions and expectations ... My sense with this project is there is enough big issues on the table, the edges are permeable, new people coming in, so we will have to renegotiate stuff ... even stuff like taking your shoes off, did we agree on that? Does it have to be enforced? All that stuff fascinates me.*

> *... I've learnt listening is a huge advantage if you're going in with a whole lot of assumptions ... you won't come out with a lot of answers ... [there's] a huge benefit for young people to see how conflicting views and opinions can coexist.*

> *Jams like this where I feel we've got to get more indigenous people in to offer experience to other ethnics who maybe don't understand what they're going through in their struggles ... to show people from other countries 'This is how things happen here' and how can you contribute ... [and be] able to honour your ancestors.*

Commitments to living a life built on principles of sustainability and regeneration

Some of the young adults had made commitments to living their lives in particular principled ways that aligned with their beliefs about sustainability and regeneration. For example, one person was committed to reducing their personal carbon footprint, and therefore had decided never to fly again. For others, it was a commitment to recognising humans as a regenerative force in addressing environmental issues. One subgroup of the young adults had experimented with setting up their own small experiential learning community in Whaingaroa built on sustainability principles. Many interviewees felt their personal commitments to these ways of living flowed into their commitment to helping other people to become aware of the kinds of alternative possibilities for living that they had committed to themselves.

> *Going back a few years, it was a classic experience, [I was] reading about climate change ... I had a moment a few years ago, I really started thinking 'I want to make a difference around this stuff, not just spend the next 10 years being a design interiors architect lecturer at a polytech'. How could I make a change in the things the people in this book were talking about?*

> *It's kind of a sense that I feel like I live in a world where I don't see people living lives that they're really in love with—and that's something I want to create in the world, being the support and empowerment to others that they can lead a life following their passions whatever they are.*

> *[I take] a real stand for humans as a regenerative presence—quite a fierce stand on that.*

An intergenerational perspective

ReGeneration is an intentionally intergenerational network, with a primary focus on bringing together different generations of "young people". It is perhaps not surprising that many of the interviewees expressed strong beliefs about the power of intergenerational learning.

> *Me growing up as a typical Māori boy ... Growing on the Marae, I really just learned a whole lot of different things from our kaumātua right down to our babies.*

> *At the core of that for me is around creating relationships with people that are based on connections and love and support—both across generations and within peer groups. And the cross-generational thing is an interesting thing, like how do I as a younger person also support someone to enter [into] leadership and coming into the later years of their life, and what that means for being in a relationship with the whole community across a broad spectrum.*

> *Again going back to when I was younger, my experiences living around the elderly, having my own generation and the younger generation around me, I have to be able to connect to every generation around me. Without my elder I am nothing, and without my children I have nothing to leave behind. That we all have something to give to contribute to something bigger, better. To be a part of that is huge.*

> *Something else that brings me here beyond sustainability is intergenerational work. It's not about us learning the best ways of doing things and then waiting til we've got it sussed [before we] teach younger students, it's about, OK, how do we do this together, how do we learn alongside each other?*

Experiencing gaps or disjunctures in formal education

The interviewees had different kinds of experiences with formal education. Some had been successful and actively engaged with school, and created their own opportunities to build their knowledge and experiences in sustainability matters through engagement in school councils and youth councils. Some had struggled with school as teenagers, feeling that it hadn't been the right kind of environment for them. Some had pursued tertiary studies in fields like engineering, science and social science, and some had emerged with a sense that there was "something missing", or something fundamentally flawed in the way that sustainability and regeneration issues were thought about, talked about and taught in existing educational programmes.

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> *At the time [I was a young teenager] the kura I believe was failing us. In general Māori struggle with numeracy, literacy. We're more practical learners, that's how our kaumātua taught us. To go out to the environment. We have our own science, own way of learning. To put us in a classroom, I understand that wasn't the right environment for us. I had those struggles of trying to figure out which direction should I take. I had a discussion with my uncle, he said do you want to enter the wānanga and really just get some grounding. Come and see if it's for you. The whole wānanga ironed everything out for me. It put a whole lot of questions at ease and opened up a lot of new questions. I've learned a lot, now I've got to awhi the next generation, relating to them in the way that yeah I've been there, crashed, burned, yelled out for help, and found it in the environment.*

> *I don't remember any specific environmental stuff [happening at my school] ... but in my first two years of high school I was in a trial programme of integrated studies, I brought enviro stuff into that, because I had a scope to do it. Because I was a keen bean I put myself up for the Youth Council, sat on city council youth committee, [which] always had random environmental things that came up.*

> *I've been through my own journey through university and working with various organisations in this thing called 'sustainability', and I don't think how we've been doing it so far is going to work. It's coming from a 'less bad' place, and to focus on minimising our harm, and minimising ourselves as humans, well it's not really good for the soul, and I'm not really interested in enrolling a whole new generation into this. So I'm interested in a different conversation and for that to be a shared conversation. And I'm interested in what does that do for how people engage differently and operate differently and inspire each other?*

What did "ReGeneration" mean to the young adults?

The young adults' interpretations of ReGeneration (the hui/network), and regeneration as a concept were interconnected with other themes discussed in this chapter. The word regeneration sparked metaphors of intergenerational connections, cycles of death and regrowth, nourishing the energies of themselves and other people, connections to people, places and communities. Overarching all of these ideas was a message of positivity and hope. Many interviewees saw regeneration/ReGeneration as sitting in direct contrast to "old-school" approaches towards sustainability which, in their experience, could often lead to anger, frustration and despair.

The 'concept' [of regeneration] for me brings forth the idea of regenerating bush, and the things that come after that. E.g. bare earth—mosses, lichens ... new trees ... eventually you have a big canopy. What I like about these gatherings, you can see that [happening] ... [I feel that] I fill my cup up when I come here [to these hui] ... to know that things are growing in other places as well. I think the old-school environmental activism, protesting and stuff, can really knock it out of you. This new take of the bottom up, young people coming up with ideas and following it through, it's actually the only way to go ...

[The concept of ReGeneration], it's awesome, it gives a vehicle to create that space for young people. There are a whole lot of different discussions happening in the world, but they are all fragmented, and there is no movement. The coming together of young people and them realising they aren't alone gives them the power to know they can go on into the challenges, create the pathways that haven't been searched before.

For me I think it's about all us getting together, the organisers, tuakana, those stepping out of school, showing them that we together can make this change. Helping them step out of school and still feel comfortable that it's in the area that they have learned about in school—to learn, to listen, to go back into our own areas, lay foundations and have other people join our waka.

I just saw a great cheesy video [online] called the 'we' generation saying 'You think we are self-serving consumers ... all we care about is ourselves' and this clip says but this isn't true— it's about the 'we', [we have] a sense of wholeness and direction, we are very good at getting connected. I liked that, I thought the sentiment of it was just perfect. So to me Regeneration is overlaying the 're' over that—things like 're-membering', because there are a lot of things we have done through human history that were a lot more sustainable—like milk bottles, growing vege gardens, we made a lot more stuff. So there's that generational aspect of saying... [let's look back to the past]. But 'regeneration' also talks about something having died—something has to die in order for something to regenerate in its place. I think we are in the rest-home now, not at the graveside of the old world yet, [but] it's looking pretty shabby ... it's using a Zimmer-frame! It [regeneration] is the sentiment of hope and renewal and an unfurling of a vision we're all holding in our hearts.

[Regeneration] is what my family are doing in Camden—they set out to decarbonise the settlement and their way of life. Realised that the way to do that is to reconnect the community—connecting people with people so they didn't feel that they were alone and had to travel into town to meet people—suddenly the local markets sprung up, the library regenerated, film nights. So about connecting people with people and connecting people with place—with localisation comes decarbonisation: which for me is the ultimate goal right now. For others in the team the ultimate goal is connecting people with people, and people with place— if we weren't up a shit creek without a paddle that would also be my goal. But we need to reduce our emissions gradient and get it falling by 2015.

Summary

This chapter has highlighted some of the common themes that emerged across the young adults' narratives about what had brought them to ReGeneration, what they felt they could contribute to the network, their hopes for the future of the emerging network and how they interpreted the concept of "regeneration".

Across these narratives there was a strong theme of connectedness to land, people and places; and personal commitments to living their own lives in ways built on principles of sustainability and

regeneration. The young adults also shared many common views about the power of intergenerational learning, and the development of supportive positive networks where people who cared about environment, community and sustainability could come together to learn, grow their energies and develop something together.

Some talked about themselves as working in a "social innovation" space, and hoped to be able to support other young people to enter into and take on leadership roles in such spaces. All saw themselves as having something particular to offer to support the youth cohort, drawing on many aspects of who they were, including their particular skills, knowledge and experience; their interests and passions, their personalities and their ways of relating to people.

Perhaps one of the most interesting themes across the young adult narratives was the idea that the ReGeneration space could (or should) both support collaboration and consensus *and* allow for— or even welcome—difference. For some interviewees, this theme emerged from their experiences of discomfort in past group situations in which differences had been glossed over. In our view, the simultaneous accommodation of collaboration, consensus *and* difference poses one of the most challenging aspects for group processes.

The ideas and experiences important to the young adults translated into workshop design and processes. In the next chapter, we describe the format and structure of workshops held over the three days of the ReGeneration hui.

4.   The programme

The personal narratives of the organisers and young adults presented in the previous chapter show that the overall narrative of ReGeneration is dependent on the people who came together, drawing together differences and similarities in each individual's viewpoint and experience. The hui programme put together by the co-organisers was also fundamental for creating a shared narrative for ReGeneration and the nature of the network going forward. This chapter describes the programme, drawing on the planning material we received, our participant observations over the first two days and the interviews and focus groups we conducted. The next chapter will further explore some of the key themes that we identified in the teaching and learning approaches apparent throughout the gathering. Across the two chapters we present a selection of insights from relevant literature to draw attention to some potential parallels between ReGeneration and other thinking about social innovation and knowledge-building networks.

The programme

ReGeneration '09 was held at the Tauhara Centre, a social justice retreat and conference venue on the outskirts of Acacia Bay overlooking Lake Taupo and Mount Tauhara. The gathering took place over a long weekend in February, from Thursday afternoon to Sunday morning. The co-organisers and many of the young adults arrived the previous day to (metaphorically) warm the space, re-connect and share the last of the planning. The gathering was a live-in experience comprising, amongst other things, facilitated workshops, energiser activities, shared meals and social events. All these elements were important in creating the general atmosphere and learning environment, although we focus mostly on the workshop activities here. We (the researchers) arrived early Thursday morning and left late Saturday morning, approximately 24 hours before the hui concluded and the other participants returned home. We participated in the gathering and took turns as note taker.

When asked if I am pessimistic or optimistic about the future, my answer is always the same: If you look at the science about what is happening on earth and aren't pessimistic, you don't understand data. But if you meet the people who are working to restore this earth and the lives of the poor, and you aren't optimistic, you haven't got a pulse. What I see everywhere in the world are ordinary people willing to confront despair, power, and incalculable odds in order to restore some semblance of grace, justice, and beauty to this world ... Humanity is coalescing. It is reconstituting the world, and the action is taking place in schoolrooms, farms, jungles, villages, campuses, companies, refuge camps, deserts, fisheries, and slums. (Hawken, 2009, p. 1)

Getting together (Thursday afternoon)

The gathering opened with karakia and greetings, a tour of significant places within the centre's grounds and welcomes from the co-organisers and a member of Tuwhare Toa, the mana whenua. Participants introduced themselves and created connections through a series of icebreaker activities to learn about each person and where they came from.

Later, the organisers showcased Enviroschools' journey from its inception in the mid-1990s to the present day recording key milestones on a wall-mounted timeline. The facilitators then invited each participant to recall other regenerative events, and achievements that they had been part of over the same time period and add them to the bursting timeline. By the end of the session hundreds of coloured post-it notes complemented Enviroschools' history, and a discussion followed about the diversity and momentum of this kind of work.

According to the Public Conversations Project (1992) some key aspects of dialogue are that:

- facilitators establish a safe and respectful atmosphere;

- participants speak as individuals not as representatives or experts;

- exploration of complexity, uncertainty, and commonality is encouraged; and

- new insights emerge.

The next main session was centred on the open question "What is regeneration to you?" Small groups formed to consider the question and record their thinking on large sheets of paper. Each group creatively communicated their response to the full audience using a variety of formats, including short skits, a poem and scientific diagrams.

While the younger participants left the workshops to settle into their accommodation, the young adults and other adults met to clarify their visions and roles for the period. They, and we the researchers, were invited to be full participants in the gathering, while staying attentive to our responsibilities to the younger youth and the event as a whole. A rich discussion emerged regarding how the group wanted to be with the younger youth, with some individuals drawing on past experience in similar roles to help articulate protocols and ways of being that they would like to adopt or consciously challenge within ReGeneration.

Calls to action (Friday)

Following karakia and notices, the morning was spent further exploring three "touchstone concepts" for the gathering: regeneration; tuakana/teina; and organising. Before the gathering the organisers had explained the view that these concepts ought to be developed collectively in order to have some shared language and meaning across all participants.

Accountability grows out of the act of co-creation. (Block, 2008, p. 11)

Touchstone concepts

First the group was asked to remember the previous night when "we had all these concepts coming down like rain" and call out words and phrases that helped to convey what regeneration meant to them. A second facilitator then led an activity to explore and unpack his particular understanding of regeneration, drawing a solid line across a whiteboard. He described the line as

being like the "neutral" point. At this point, for example, human effect on the environment could be measured as being of net neutral impact—"doing no harm". Everything below the line represented having a negative impact, where the goal for change might be to find ways to "do less bad". Finally, everything above the line represented the idea of having a net positive impact—that is, making things *better* than they were before through one's actions. To him this represented the space for "regenerative" action. He asked each person to imagine the possibilities of a "regenerative response" (working above the line) to a specific issue in their own community, and how this might differ from a response aimed at "doing no harm" (sitting on the line) or "being less bad" (operating below the line).

> *Transformation hinges on changing the structure of how we engage not by trying to change individuals.*
>
> *Our language, or conversation, is the action step that makes creating an alternative future possible.*
>
> *(Block, 2008, p. 52)*

The second touchstone concept to be explored was the tuakana/teina dynamic. Prior to our attendance at ReGeneration we were told that the organisers were grappling with how to convey and embody intergenerational learning relationships.

The organisers had sought the counsel of kaumātua to gain permission and insight for using the terminology. The organisers' main concern was that everyone—including the researchers— needed to understand that "tuakana" and "teina" should not be used as if they were permanent roles or states occupied by particular people, constant across time and space. Rather, as we understand it having no equivalent in English language, tuakana and teina are more an expression of a context-dependent dynamic where each only exists in relation to the other and may shift and change according to the particularities of any given situation and the intricacies of historically- and situationally-grounded relationships. In other words, a person is only a tuakana when they are in a relationship with someone else who is a teina to them—and in any other sets of relationships, each person could be either a tuakana or teina to another person depending on the nature of those relationships and their context. A facilitator explained this interdependence to the group, mentioning, amongst other insights, that role relationships have to do with experience and involve responsibilities *to* and *for* each other:

> The awesome thing about this [tuakana/teina] relationship is that it's very dynamic. It relates to the concept of ako—it means *to learn* and also *to teach*—the same word, ako. So we learn from you as you learn from us. These are some of the ako that we want to weave in over the next few days. (Enviroschools organiser)

Participants formed two lines, male and female, arranged from the youngest to the oldest. Each person could see how, in age terms, they were tuakana to all the younger people in front of them, and teina to all the older people behind them, but they also talked about how sometimes conventional ideas about age roles could be reversed in these relationships, so that a younger person might be the tuakana, teaching their elder in an area in which they had more knowledge or experience. During the full-group discussion that followed an older member of the group expressed his thoughts to those further down the age line:

> Myself and [the 'older' young adult beside me], whilst we are tuakana we also look to all of you as our tuakana, for your inspiration to us. You are providing an example for us. You are not just teina, you bring energy to us.

"Organising" was the third and final touchstone concept to be explored. Here a facilitator gave a personal narrative about his career development and passions to encourage participants to ponder the difference between organisation as an institution or "thing", and organising as a process or culture:

> When I finished school I worked in a hotel for a while, then I went to university and was tutoring, I worked at Te Papa, and now I work for Enviroschools—I was thinking how much time in my life I have spent in different 'organisations'. But you can also think about the word in terms of the process of organising. For me it is a culture. When I come to a jam like this, it's like a celebration of the culture of organising. Think about how much organising has gone into all of this … (Enviroschools organiser)

He also talked about community organising as a force of change, spoke about Barack Obama's background and invited an adult mentor to share the community organising he had been part of in Raglan.

> *For the last hundred years the big organizational question has been whether any given task was best taken on by the state, directing the effort in a planned way, or by businesses competing in a market. The debate was based on the universal and unspoken supposition that people couldn't simply self-assemble; the choice between markets and managed effort assumed that there was no third alternative. Now there is. (Shirky, 2008, p. 47)*

Calls to action

Four consecutive one-hour workshops followed to explore four possible "contexts" or "calls to action" for regeneration, each led by a different member of the Enviroschools team drawing on the specific expertise of others in the room. One of the interviewees had earlier explained to us that this session had in part come about from a recognition that each of the four organisers held slightly different motivations for and understandings of regeneration, and that each of these were equally valid and extremely powerful in combination:

> The deepest shift for me was when [another organiser] and I sat down and put together the programme—we had so many discussions about regeneration and saw that it's a cloudy and ambiguous thing that's so hard to define, it means so many things to different people. We thought we could sideline it and design the programme but we couldn't because we didn't know what we were designing. It's when I said 'I can't see any other way except [focusing on reducing] carbon [emissions]' and he said he couldn't see any other way than the community thing. That was when we said [why don't we design the programme to have] a future challenges context, a physical environment context, a culture and community context and a solutions or 'what's working' context … That was a really big moment for me— regeneration is about looking towards action with regards to these four contexts—always acting with regards to these four contexts. (Enviroschools organiser)

By designing the programme with each of these four "calls to action", the organisers wanted to be explicit in showing that different things could motivate different people to want to participate in regenerative action. They also wanted to show how each person could use their own personal passions, motivations and interests to connect with those that motivated other people. In an introduction to the four workshops, the organiser quoted above asked the full group to ponder the question: "If we listen closely to all of these things before we take action, how much more regenerative could our actions be?"

Each of the workshops is briefly described below.

1. *Future challenges*: One of the Enviroschools organisers and two young adults presented their sophisticated PowerPoint presentation alongside a *Dr Phil* question-and-answer roleplay to look in depth at three particular challenges: climate change; peak oil; and economic insecurity. Participants also shared their knowledge about what each challenge is, why it's happening and its potential implications for the present and future.

2. *Physical environments*: Participants were asked a series of questions to "connect with" the environment where they live, thinking about how they "know" the physical environment, and who else might know about its history, significance and health. Four panellists, including an invited guest from a Taupo lakes and waterways network, discussed the projects and organisations through which they worked—alongside others—to preserve their local environment.

> *Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) prepares people of all walks of life to plan for, cope with, and find sustainable solutions for issues that threaten the sustainability of our planet ... Understanding and addressing these global issues of sustainability that affect individual nations and communities are at the heart of ESD. These issues come from three spheres of sustainable development—environment, society and economy ... Educating to deal with complex issues that threaten planetary sustainability is the challenge of ESD. Education reform alone will not accomplish this. It will take a broad and deep effort from many sectors of society.*
>
> *Decade of Education for Sustainable Development International Implementation Scheme (UNESCO Education Sector, 2005)*

3. *People in place, culture and community*: A series of activities and questions helped participants to explore the notion of "belonging" and a wide range of calls to action for different cultures and contexts. One message we heard was that, within any locale or mission, the strengths of different cultures and subcultures might be drawn forth. Respect was paid to a kuia of Whaingaroa, and some of her teachings and vision were shared by one of the adult mentors, who also reminded the group that mana whenua hold the "deeper stories" of a place.

> *Bioregions, with their distinctive cycles of renewal and vulnerabilities, need to be taken into account in making decisions about what students need to learn—and from whom ... [It is important for students to learn about] the limits and possibilities of their bioregions, along with the narratives that help to renew the land ethic of their own culture. (Bowers, 2005, p.2)*

4. *What's working:* This workshop focused participants' attention on the things that they thought were already "humming" locally and nationally, and engaged their imagination in what could happen in their ideal community and wider

society. It served as a reminder to identify, celebrate and build on the positives, and use this knowledge to inform future projects.

Following the workshops four respective "hot spots" were set up so that participants could caucus to discuss their strongest calling in more depth, including its relationship to each of the other three contexts, before feeding their ideas back to the full group.

In the late afternoon the organisers and young adults convened for a check-in and planning session while we, the researchers, facilitated a reflection session with the younger cohort to surface their impressions of the way that the gathering was being held and how they were learning in this new space. First we asked them to write an individual response to any one of four starter statements.[5] Next they formed small groups, and while we interviewed two of the groups, a member of each of the other groups facilitated a discussion using three questions adapted from the interview schedule (see Appendix B for more details). Some of the young people's comments and feedback from these sessions are discussed in Chapter 5.

Skill me up (Saturday)

Following karakia and notices much of the day was dedicated to skills-sharing and, later, story-telling. Three parallel workshops were set up to run simultaneously with participants divided into three groups to participate in each workshop. Each workshop was designed and facilitated by at least one Enviroschools organiser, young adult or adult mentor with experience and passion for that area.

1. *Project organising and community development*: Participants were provided with a planning framework that they used to evaluate one of their recent "actions", and discuss how it could help them plan more effectively for the future. Particular attention was paid to articulating long-term outcomes beyond completing an action, and to different logistical and relationship-building strategies that help to make these more likely.

> *The essence of restorative community building is ... citizens' willingness to own up to their contribution, to be humble, to choose accountability, and to have faith in their own capacity to make authentic promises to create an alternative future ... Restoration begins when we think of community as a possibility, a declaration of the future that we choose to live into ... The communal possibility rotates on the question 'what can we create together?' This emerges from the social space we create when we are together. It is shaped by the nature of the culture within which we operate but it is not controlled by it. (Block, 2008, p. 48)*

2. *Presenting yourself and your ideas*: Participants were supported to come up with a clear, succinct message to engage, excite and inform an audience about something they were involved in. The facilitators shared tips that had helped them to build their own confidence and skills as public speakers and asked participants to brainstorm characteristics of good presenters using musicians as an example. Several

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[5] "Something I've noticed about the facilitation/the workshops is …"; "I've realised …"; "I'm inspired or motivated to …"; "Something I'm wondering (or confused about) is …"

people practised sharing their message with a microphone and received feedback from the group.

3. *Visual communication*: Participants brainstormed different communication mediums, and were shown a variety of design and Web-based tools that might help them to design and promote their projects. The facilitator shared some of her successful communication strategies, focusing on the goal of engaging people in ways that "move them, inspire them, and connect them together to get a sense of momentum".

> *We now have communications tools that are flexible enough to match our social capabilities, and we are witnessing the rise of new ways of coordinating action that take advantage of that change. These communication tools have been given many names, all variations on a theme: 'social software', 'social media, 'social computing' and so on. Though there are some distinctions between these labels, the core idea is the same: we are living in the middle of a remarkable increase in our ability to share, to cooperate with one another, and to take collective action, all outside the framework of traditional institutions and organizations. (Shirky 2008, p. 20)*

We (the researchers) left the ReGen hui at this point to return to Wellington. The remaining description is taken from the physical programme and conversations with the organisers. The second set of parallel workshops comprised the following:

> *According to the USA Sustainability Leadership Institute, sustainability leaders:*
>
> - *Ground themselves in personal ethic*
> - *Empower themselves to take responsibility*
> - *Convene authentic conversations*
> - *Understand that the creative tension emerging from paradox and diverse perspectives holds potential for breakthrough thinking*
> - *Look for holistic interconnections*
> - *Recognise that outcomes unfold in complex dynamics*
> - *Notice and attend to human dynamics of transformative change*
> - *Experiment, reflect, learn, adjust and share.*

4. *Creative expression*: This workshop focused on street art, performance, and physical communication.

5. *Working with government*: This workshop focused on national, regional and local government, and working with politicians and decision makers.

6. *Convening groups and working with people*: This workshop focused on invitations, manaaki, helping people participate and noticing people's energy.

During the afternoon everybody took a walk to enjoy and pay respect to Lake Taupo. In the evening, founders and leaders of Enviroschools and Te Mauri Tau shared inspiring stories about their lives, passions and missions of their work, and the space was opened for participants from across the full age span to continue the storytelling.

Taking it local (Sunday morning)

Sunday was dedicated to regional and individual planning and reflecting back over the gathering to look towards the future. Two planning processes were supported by the facilitators:

*   *Individual plans*: People were asked to write down and then discuss their responses to a series of questions, including: How might regeneration look for you? What's possible? Who might you like to be in touch with? What are you going to share with them? What are you going to ask them?
*   *Regional plans*: Participants worked together with others from their area to come up with the beginnings of a regional action plan, responding to questions such as: What would regeneration look like in your region? What's already going on? What is possible for you to do?

The gathering was closed through a check-out circle and poroporoaki/farewell.

Summary

To us, the programme shows that ReGeneration '09 came together through creative, careful and inspired planning by the co-organisers who drew on their extensive experience, including that accumulated within their whānau, organisation and extended networks. The workshops mixed together conceptual and skills development, while also creating space for emotional and spiritual input and responses.

While many themes resurfaced throughout the gathering, over the days the emphasis shifted from concept development towards action planning. This seemed important since the young people coming together were generally very action-oriented and excited to get into planning their next big action. The programme content provided a foundation of learning from which the participants might be able to act more consciously, collaboratively and effectively in the future.

The workshops were carefully structured to enable exploratory learning. This balance between structure and openness has been discussed elsewhere as "enabling constraints" (Davis et al., 2000). The idea is that complex co-activity is neither prescriptive nor chaotic, but instead finds a creative balance between being "rule-bound" (with some shared values, understandings and activities) and being capable of expansive, flexible or unanticipated possibilities.

> *The rules are not a matter of 'everyone does the same thing' or 'everyone does their own thing', but of 'everyone participates in a joint project'.*
>
> *(Davis et al., 2000, p. 194)*

5. The learning environment

This section discusses features of the ReGeneration '09 learning environment created by the facilitation processes, highlighting the skills of the lead facilitators as well as the way in which the whole gathering was collaboratively constructed by everyone present. We identified several themes from our analysis across three sources of data: workshops observations, focus group and reflection data from the young cohort and a final evaluation questionnaire. For each theme we provide at least one illustrative example of an activity or discussion from one of the sessions, and include a number of quotes from the youth cohort. Drawing on our perspectives as educational researchers, we have chosen to contrast some of the ReGeneration approaches against some of the common curriculum and pedagogical practices students typically encounter in secondary schools. As we explain below, we recognise the inherent risk in making such comparisons.

> *Complex phenomena transform themselves ... complex systems are systems that learn ... a complex unity [is] capable of flexible response to emergent circumstances. (Davis et al., 2000, p. 81)*
>
> *Studies of 'intelligent groups' show that they are decentralised networks, where decisions happen by those closest to the problem with the most intimate knowledge. They don't aim for consensus. Disagreements demand more critical consciousness. Groups in which people are allowed considerable autonomy are smarter (i.e. more flexibly adaptive). (Davis et al., p. 66)*

ReGeneration vs secondary school: Is it a helpful comparison?

A colleague who reviewed an earlier draft of this report questioned the fairness of comparing the ReGeneration '09 learning environment with the secondary school learning environment. She pointed out that first, some of the practices and approaches that we highlighted at ReGeneration '09 *do* occur in some schooling contexts. Second, other practices or approaches that worked at ReGeneration could not necessarily be easily replicated within the rather different context of a school environment. We have taken heed of this feedback and wish to clearly state that our intention is not to set contemporary secondary school education up as a "straw man" to be knocked down in order to claim the superiority of approaches used at ReGeneration '09. Instead, our comparisons are designed to help us to deepen our exploration of ReGeneration as a "self-organising network for knowledge-building, learning and change".[6]

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[6] This is a term we are developing as part of our future-focused issues project (see Chapter 1). Our ideas on this subject are still evolving, and have been influenced by various literature which has been cited throughout this report (e.g., Capra, 2002; Shirky, 2008).

While both ReGeneration '09 and schools are undoubtedly sites of learning and change, schools are not generally self-organising networks and nor are they necessarily knowledge-producing entities—they are institutions characterised by various formalised roles, structures and practices which are in turn founded on particular sets of beliefs and assumptions. We acknowledge that the generalisations we make in this chapter about secondary school curriculum and pedagogy are certainly not true of all secondary teaching. However, our own experiences as educational researchers and wider literature suggest they are illustrative of common approaches, and these approaches are strongly grounded in the systems, structures and assumptions upon which contemporary secondary education is constructed (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008; Gilbert, 2005). Jane Gilbert's work on the implications of shifting views of knowledge for the education in the 21st century is a key influence here. If it is possible to summarise these dense ideas into a simple argument it is this: secondary schools today are still largely built for the purpose of *transmitting* knowledge to students. Digging deeper, this practice is founded on the assumption that learning lots of important knowledge, and learning it well, is sufficient both as a means to developing one's intellectual capacity, and to prepare people to participate competently in the world.

However, there are compelling arguments that the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century—social, environmental, economic and political—are so different from those of the past that they require us to seriously rethink the way we support young people to meet them. It is argued that we have shifted from a world once perceived, in predominant Western thought, in terms of stability, uniformity and homogeneity, to one which is increasingly viewed in terms of instability, multiplicity and diversity (Kress, 2008), giving rise to an unknowable future (Brady, 2008). ReGeneration appears to sit quite comfortably in this so-called 21st century paradigm. While we have researched examples that have enriched our thinking about possible ways forward for schooling to meet the challenges of the 21st century, in this chapter, we are looking to see what further insights for 21st century education can be gleaned from researching a nonschool youth-led site of learning and change.

Collaborative construction of ideas

At secondary school, students are often provided with new terminology and later tested to see how well their understanding matches the correct definition. This process is designed to help

> *How can we design in an open and non-deterministic way, educational systems and institutions that promote healthy emergence? (Stephen Sterling (2001, p. 80).*

students master the language and concepts of various disciplines. The subject content of those disciplines is usually based on well-established knowledge, and there are many resources available for teachers and students to refer to in order to help them make sense of this knowledge.

At ReGeneration '09 many key concepts were not tightly defined by the facilitators themselves. Instead, they went to the group with carefully framed questions to draw on the knowledge of everybody in the room. The young adult cohort were full participants alongside the youth cohort, and at times we noticed their

contributions seemed to push boundaries at the edge of the younger people's understanding. Rather than converging upon one single understanding, it seemed that the purpose was to stretch people beyond their current thinking to open up wider possibilities without any suggestion that there would be one correct answer.

For example, here are a few of the words and phrases provided by different participants as they discussed the meaning(s) of "regeneration":

> Ecosystems; Healing; Generosity; It's a noun and a verb; With experience comes wisdom; Something natural that happens when we get out of the way; Hauora; Energy of experience; Collaboration; All stroking at once [on a waka]; Beyond Gen Y is the Regenerator Generation …

Being exposed to so many different perspectives and ideas further pushed each person's own thinking about each key concept, as suggested by the comments below:

> My brain is constantly buzzing, I'm constantly in discussions. Whoever is standing up asks a question and I think that's a good point, I've not thought of that before. And someone [else] will say something and I'll be like 'a great idea just came into my head that wasn't there [before]'. New ideas come into my head—that's what learning is about for me, us figuring out our own ideas. (Youth, focus group)

> I felt like ReGen '09 had a very relaxed, respectful environment that allowed everyone to freely express themselves by opinion, question and creation. (Youth, evaluation questionnaire)

Transformative learning is a central idea in complex-systems literature. Such learning goes beyond accommodating or reflectively adapting to new ideas (Sterling, 2001). It involves a paradigm shift, whereby the world is seen as if through new lenses (Davis et al., 2000).

Thus, in relation to sustainability, learning goes beyond 'efficiency thinking' and 'effectiveness thinking' towards 'integrative awareness', or a fundamental change in the nature of how we perceive and 'know' whole systems. It is 'associated with epistemological and perceptual change and a transpersonal/ transorganisational ethical and participative" to rethink the way that we live. (Reed, 2007, drawing on Hawkins, 1991 and Sterling, 2003)

Multimodal and experiential learning

In many secondary school subjects, students primarily learn from books or other text-based resources, and teacher-talk. Students may convey their understandings back to the teacher and/or their classmates in different modes, but written or spoken modes tend to be the most common.[7] At ReGeneration '09 the facilitators and participants drew on a wide range of modalities to convey ideas and come to new

A UNESCO report on Learning for the 21st Century (Delors, 1996) ... highlighted the importance of all the following aspects of learning: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together.

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[7] Obviously, arts-based secondary school subjects may not conform to this generalisation.

understandings, including, for example, PowerPoint presentations, video clips, diagrams, waiata, movement and performance, poetry, skits, panel discussions, visualisations and story telling.

This variety of modalities and associated teaching processes created a learning environment that framed "knowing" as *being* and *doing* as much as *thinking*. By engaging the all senses, the group appeared to extend their learning beyond the realm of thought and talk.

For example, after a body beats session, where participants used their bodies as percussion instruments to create a rhythm, the group was asked to explain what they had learnt. A few of their responses were:

> *Nonverbal communication constitutes a central feature of human development, knowing, and learning. The body communicates through gesture and locomotion (moving from place to place) using proximity, touch, gaze, facial expression, posture, physical appearance, smell, and emotion. (Hanna, 2008, p. 493)*

- If the rest of the team is carrying the kaupapa you can get back on track [for example, if you lose the rhythm for a moment].
- Once it gets comfortable people can start expressing their own different styles [by adding improvisations into the collective beat].
- It lifts the energy.
- If you close your eyes and listen there is so much breadth and depth.

In focus groups the youth participants mentioned that different ways of learning were being catered for at ReGen. They also said that the variation, particularly the more physically active elements, helped to refocus their attention and break up the potential tedium of extended learning periods as they had experienced them at school.[8]

> I'm quite a visual person. I really liked the presentation on climate change this morning. (Youth, focus group)
>
> It's oral, all spoken information, which is good. I think I'd rather be spoken to than have a book chucked at me and fill the book in. (Youth, focus group)
>
> I think we're learning a lot from each other. It's more discussion-based than we'd find in a typical classroom. I feel we are learning practical knowledge as opposed to just learning the theory behind it. (Youth, focus group)
>
> All learning styles are catered for here, and that's not really the case in the classroom … And changing speakers quite often makes it easier for me to learn—because you sometimes get sick of the same person. (Youth, focus group)

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[8] We had noticed on Saturday that the programme was heavily content-laden, and youth *were* spending long periods of time sitting and listening. We wondered whether they might have been becoming bored or disengaged. However, their focus group comments suggested that most were very engaged, although they looked forward to getting into further "action planning" over the course of the hui.

Place-based approaches

Secondary students often struggle to see a connection between the things they learn in some school subjects, and their own lives and contexts. Theorists have argued that this is a legacy of the way curriculum has traditionally been designed and thought about as a set of "universal" knowledge, which can be taught as if it is independent of both the particular people and contexts in which the knowledge was developed, and independent of the people and contexts who are learning it. Place-based approaches provide a contrasting perspective (see inset box to the right).

At almost every ReGen workshop, participants heard about real developments that were occurring in the facilitators' communities and/or were also asked to think about specific situations in their own communities.

For example, below is a series of questions put to participants to explore the context of physical environments:

- Where do you live?
- What's the nearest stream or creek or river where you live?
- What is the nearest lake or sea where you live?
- What is the nearest hill or mountain where you live?
- What do you eat that comes from nearby?
- When you go for a walk, where do you like to go?
- What kind of living things do you see when you go for a walk? (Birds, trees, animals, life?)
- Is there a favourite place you like to visit near to your home? Why do you like stopping there? What is it about that particular place that you like?
- When you are in that place, how healthy is that place? Does it feel like it's in good nick, is it suffering? What specific things do you notice?
- Do you have special memories from that place?
- What organisations take care of this place? Is it council land, DOC land, Māori land?
- Is there a person you think of who is connected to this environment? What questions would you like to ask them about this place? (Is it a science question? Is it a question about the health and wellbeing of the place?)
- What's the best possible outcome you can imagine for this place you've described? What would you like to see happening there?

> *Place-based or 'place-conscious' education theory (Gruenewald, 2003; Penetito, 2004) draws from fields including critical geography, bioregionalism, ecofeminism, and indigenous education. 'Place' is a multidisciplinary construct which connotes much more than simply a spatial area or location. 'Places' have perceptual, sociological, ideological, political, and ecological dimensions, and they are as much a product of human decisions as they are a physical point in time and space. Gruenewald (2003, p. 621) argues that the current education system 'often distracts our attention from, and distorts our response to, the actual contexts of our own lives (places).' Penetito (2004) elegantly captures this notion with three fundamental questions (or 'spatial metaphors') that most school education seems to neglect, but which would underpin a place-based approach. These questions are: 'Who am I?' 'Where am I?' and 'What is this place and how do we fit into it?' (Bolstad, 2005, p. 229)*

Likewise, in each of the skills-sharing sessions participants were asked to work with their past, current or intended projects. We heard about a wide range of projects that people were involved in, and many participants commented about the things they might do differently as a result of their

new learning. Here are just a few projects being led by themselves, their schools' envirogroups and other networks:

- 350 climate change campaign and action festival
- making a video begun at Parihaka for teachers to use in class
- local campaigns to reduce plastic bag use
- improving the health of local waterways
- fundraising to support students in developing countries to attend schools
- community gardens
- craft work
- waste minimisation schemes
- raising funds for school compost bins.

Comments in the final evaluation questionnaires, and other research mediums, showed that the young people appreciated hearing about real projects and making connections with their own experiences and passions. For example:

> I really like the way we shared and jammed about what each other was doing. (Youth, evaluation questionnaire)

> I feel more inspired to take action. Discovering all the great projects around the country was really a reassurance that we are part of something big. I feel ready to campaign! (Youth, evaluation questionnaire)

> At first I felt more like maybe I shouldn't be here because all these other people have done all this amazing stuff whereas we haven't seemed like we've done much, however I [now] feel like I can make a big difference etc. (Youth, evaluation questionnaire)

> Can use/apply knowledge ➔ specific contexts ➔ making the difference. (Youth-small group record)

Narratives and storytelling

In secondary schools, curriculum and pedagogy is centred on "school learning". While there are always possibilities for teacher and students to share stories about themselves, their lives and interests, there are many contexts in which these personal narratives are not considered particularly relevant or appropriate to the focus and content of the school learning. Where this is the case, the exchange of personal stories may be limited to "social talk" amongst students, or between students and teachers.[9]

At ReGeneration, personal stories were often the *main* focus of the "curriculum". As discussed in the sections above, facilitators encouraged participants to think and learn about concepts of regeneration by linking these into each person's own environments, experiences, and communities. In addition, the facilitators, other young adults, and adult mentors often shared stories from their own experiences. On Saturday night, the programme included a session called "inspiring stories" in which a variety of people shared stories about themselves and their communities, things they had been a part of and things they had achieved. Throughout the hui, the facilitators acknowledged the particular achievements of some of the adult mentors, and these achievements were often linked together into a larger overall story of sustainability and community development in Whaingaroa/Raglan (where many of the adult mentors lived) over a period of decades. The post-hui evaluation forms and interviews suggested that these inspirational stories were one of the biggest highlights for some participants:

> *Stories are important to everyone (in all cultures) and everyone understands how to think in stories. All cultures and nations have 'origin' stories: stories about where their members came from, how they are related, and how they continue to be connected to each other. Local communities and individual families usually also have similar kinds of stories about themselves. Pyschologists agree that it is extremely important in young children's development that they are told stories ... Stories are an important means through which people engage with each other ... with the other members of the culture/nation they have been born into, and with that culture/nation's knowledge systems ...*
>
> *Stories also develop an individual's capacity for imagination and creativity, the ability to imagine worlds that are different from the one they are in right now, and the ability to imagine themselves doing and being things that are very different from their current reality. Thus stories do not simply reflect a person's 'reality': they play an active role in constructing it (and they can play a role in transforming it). (Gilbert, Hipkins, & Cooper, 2005, p. 3)*

> [I most liked] inspirational stories of awesome people in action. (Youth, evaluation form)

> [I] learnt that one person can make a big difference—[one of the adult mentors], inspiring story!! (Youth, evaluation form)

> I enjoyed Saturday night's session, especially hearing [one of the adult mentor's] stories. (Youth, evaluation form)

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[9] Educational research highlights the value of this social talk—particularly between students and teachers—in developing the kinds of relationships that have positive impacts on students' learning.

I am more confident in what we are doing and have been inspired by some of the stories I've heard—the Jam has re-motivated me and given me new networks to utilise to help make more of a difference. (Youth, evaluation form)

A strengths-based positive approach

Many participants commented that the facilitation style and general atmosphere throughout the gathering was extremely positive and affirming. The supportive approach was seen to apply equally to how participants were treated (and treated one another) and to how the group explored concepts and actions associated with regeneration. The emphasis on individual "talent releasing" (a term we came across at the gathering) paralleled an "energy releasing" approach to environmental/social challenges. These contrast with more common "problem-focused" approaches to learning about sustainability that the young adult cohort intentionally challenged (as discussed in Chapter 3).

For example, after the activity that explored possible differences between responses that could be "regenerative" (above the line), do "no harm" (the line) or be "less bad" (below the line)[10] participants were asked to describe the feelings or particular energy they associated with working at each level. Some of their responses were:

> *Six principles of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa: (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002)*
>
> *1. Youth development is shaped by the 'big picture'.*
>
> *2. Youth development is about young people being connected.*
>
> *3. Youth development is based on a consistent strengths-based approach.*
>
> *4. Youth development happens through quality relationships.*
>
> *5. Youth development is triggered when young people fully participate.*
>
> *6. Youth development needs good information.*

> To me, 'below the line' is what I feel is supported [at the moment], so to try to move it above the line would be a major struggle.

> Being 'below the line' feels boring.

> I feel it's the difference between [applying] a handbrake [below the line] and [releasing] a balloon [above the line].

> *A restorative experience, relationship, or community produces new energy rather than holding us in place. (Block, 2008, p. 47)*

> I think below the line is like reducing our impact, and above the line is like giving back.

> In science entropy is one of the laws of thermodynamics … Below the line is like entropy, you have to put in a lot of energy to make the change. Above the line, you'd have to put in energy to *stop* the change. (Participants)

The youth cohort were delighted by the respectful and supportive learning environment:

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[10] Described on pages 20–21 in the previous chapter.

[Something I've noticed about the facilitation is] it's positive, friendly. There's nobody judging you so it makes learning so much easier. (Youth, post-it comment)

[I've realised that] there are so many people who care, and the support and energy and enthusiasm is huge and very motivating. (Youth, post-it comment)

I was really amazed because the vibe down here [at ReGen] is so positive. I've not been in a group that's so positive. I think I'm going to get a lot out of it … All the facilitators respect us and we respect back. They've got a positive frame of mind, so the whole thing has a positive vibe. We want to learn because we respect them. (Youth, focus group)

[We are learning] by NOT being TALKED AT, but [by being] talked to, and each of us is appreciated. (Youth, small-group record)

[Compared to school] this forum enables us to learn in a more relaxed and equal environment where everyone is engaged in active learning. (Youth, small-group record)

The youth also made the positive link to how they might approach other people and "problems" in their environments and communities:

I've realised that when attempting stuff look at what people are good at etc. because within a community there is a whole lot of knowledge you can use. (Post-it comment)

I think that ReGen has really opened up my mind to what can be achieved and what has been achieved. Before I arrived at ReGen, I'd been really put off by the apathy of people and the bureaucracy of my council to plan something and do something as big as maybe the 350 fest in Wellington. (Youth, evaluation questionnaire)

Much in contrast to complicated (mechanical) systems that can be caused to respond in specific ways by external forces, the way that a complex (learning) system adapts to a new situation is rooted in its biological-and-experiential structure—its embodied history…if you nudge a person, her or his structure will determine the response. (Davis et al., 2000, p. 81)

I've put a more positive spin on spreading awareness, e.g., 'don't use plastic bags' [is] negative. 'Use ecobags' [is] positive. (Youth, evaluation questionnaire)

[Something I've noticed about the facilitation/workshops is] the positivity and energy, taking time out to revive so we stay positive in making changes, even with subjects that are depressing. (Youth, post-it comment)

[I've realised] that the problems, e.g., climate change and peak oil, aren't just negative. (Youth, post-it comment)

Interdisciplinary and multiple knowledges

At secondary schools knowledge tends to be separated into discrete compartments known as subjects (English, biology, classics, economics, art, etc.). This contrasts with the view that a whole-system, transdisciplinary approach is needed to deal with the sustainability challenge (Capra, 2002). At ReGeneration, knowledge was not broken up and labelled as belonging to

particular disciplinary areas, although many workshop sessions implicitly drew from knowledge and practices associated with a range of disciplines. For example, the Future Challenges workshop (see p. 21, Chapter 4) enabled participants to bring together understandings from the physical sciences, economic theory and other ways of knowing. The engaging account of climate change messages from the global scientific community included information about icecore samples, atmospheric mass and carbon dioxide concentration. Participants were also asked to contribute their ideas about climate change, peak oil and economic instability, and many of their responses showed a range of different knowledges in the room, and also a general ability to make systemic connections and recognise the historically and culturally dependent "root metaphors" that underpin contemporary Western society. Young adults suggested that:

> *Ecojustice academic Chet Bowers (2005, p. 11) discusses 'root metaphors' which he believed underpin Western worldviews and ways of life:*
>
> *Mechanism: thinking of everything including organic processes as mechanistic in nature*
>
> *Anthropocentrism: thinking of the environment as a resource for humans*
>
> *Individualism: thinking of the individual as the source of ideas, values, and as essentially free*
>
> *Progress: thinking of change as contributing to a linear form of progress and as in opposition to traditions*
>
> *Economism: reducing activities, relationships, and products to their market value*
>
> *Evolution: thinking of cultures as evolving from a state of backwardness to being developed and modern—with the West as representative of the most evolved.*

- [It's because of] our way of life: burning of oil, economic growth; [concepts of] development; capitalism; poor design; inappropriate technologies.
- We've designed our systems (like agriculture) to be centralised which therefore needs oil to do it.
- I challenge us to think about something that is not made by oil, transported by oil or made by someone who uses oil.
- We've been growing the size of a subsystem to the size of a large system without following the same (natural) laws.

> *R. Keith Sawyer's (2008, p. 58) insights into four transformative changes needed to prepare students for a rapidly changing world based on learning sciences research:*
>
> *1. The importance of learning deeper conceptual understanding, rather than superficial facts and procedures.*
>
> *2. The importance of learning connected and coherent knowledge, rather than knowledge compartmentalised into distinct subjects and courses.*
>
> *3. The importance of learning authentic knowledge in its context of use, rather than decontextualised classroom exercises.*
>
> *4. The importance of learning in collaboration rather than isolation.*

Below is a paraphrased snapshot of the *Dr Phil* role-playing format, where one of the young adults we interviewed before the gathering brought a human dimension to economic theory. The theme of "conscious connection" of elements in (and between) social and ecological systems also resurfaced throughout the hui:

> Q: We are reliant on goods that we aren't 'consciously connected' to, even though we are really connected to the people who make it and the way it's made. Dr Phil, what the heck is economic instability?

A: You are very correct about our lack of conscious connection with our trading partners. So if you produce toasters in New Zealand and hear of a mortgage crisis miles away in USA where people are going bankrupt it *does* affect us. We have trading relations with everybody in the world. If they have less money there will be less people purchasing our New Zealand toasters. So since I know people won't buy our toasters, I stop spending, and I stop buying things. So we are all connected. Then if we spend less there is less money going to other people. And then we lose confidence and trust in the people we trade with. But if we had trust, we could work together to help each other out and have less booms and busts, or the impacts would be flatter … In New Zealand businesses will close, people will lose jobs … there is predicted unemployment rise from 4 to 7 percent by the end of this year. What could we do?

In the reflective session at the end of Friday, many of the younger youth said that they felt "full" with new and useful knowledge, although several mentioned that they were also experiencing information overload and wanted more space to process the big ideas:

Here we've been given all of these ideas within two or three days and we've been given so many it's like whoa I can't take all of that in at once. At school it's a slower pace. (Youth, focus group)

At school they go 'learn this'. At ReGen it's like a 'good blah blah'. At ReGen they tell you facts in a fun way—like the fun wombat [video clip] … It's a 'blah blah' you can use, unlike a 'blah blah' like geometry, algebra. It's the things you can use. (Youth, focus group)

Bicultural learning

The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) identifies that all school curricula should build on the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa New Zealand, and that "All students [should] have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga". As already discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, ReGeneration was infused with Māori language and tikanga, and this was often done in ways that intentionally provided a learning experience, such as the modelling of the tuakana/teina relationship on the first day of the hui (see page 21, Chapter 4). Other opportunities for learning about te reo Māori me ōna tikanga emerged spontaneously during the hui—for example, during an excited session of group brainstorming on sheets of paper around a crowded room, a facilitator took a moment at the end of the session to point out to the whole group that it was important to treat people's mahi (work) respectfully, and one way to do this was to be careful about not stepping on or stepping over this work while it was lying on the floor.

The retention and regeneration of these narratives in te reo Māori is seen as important in the wellbeing in the physical environment, in other words, the wellbeing of the environment is not independent from these historical narratives and traditions. This idea is connected to an argument put forward by a prominent scholar in linguistic rights, Tove Skutknabb-Kangas (2000), who in a large and comprehensive piece of research, argues that where there is a decrease in linguistic diversity so too the biodiversity is compromised. Skutknabb-Kangas suggests that the relationship between linguistic diversity and biodiversity may 'not only be correlational, but in fact may be causal' (2000, p. ix). (Cooper, 2008 Unpublished, p. 7)

Intergenerational learning

Many of the young people commented on the intergenerational design of ReGeneration. They particularly enjoyed the opportunity to learn from and alongside people who were often only a few years older than they were:

What remains of the cultural commons is dependent upon the intergenerational knowledge that is the basis of a community's traditions of self-sufficiency and mutual support systems. The community's traditions that enable plants, fiber, other natural resources to be turned into healthy meals, clothes that have been adapted to local weather patterns, and sustainable and energy efficient technologies and buildings, are passed on through face-to-face communication, mentoring relationships, embodied learning, ceremonies, and so forth. Due to the failure of educational reformers in the West to understand that the word 'tradition' is as broad and complex as the word 'culture, traditions became viewed as constraints on individual self-expression and autonomy. (Bowers (2005, p. 5)

The diversity of ages and values at ReGen is really inspiring. (Youth, post-it comment)

I really liked how the tuakana at the event were young enough to empathise and understand how us younger people think, but old enough and wise enough to teach us something. Also, the people at ReGen were so inspiring because they were actually living and doing the things they were telling us. (Youth, evaluation questionnaire)

The best thing is we didn't come here with our teachers. The facilitators can understand where we come from, they are the right age. (Youth, focus group)

New skills learnt from not only the workshops, but [from] the teina involved as well … (Youth, evaluation questionnaire)

Everyone's [a] teacher and everyone's [a] student; Environment here is non-restricting and collaborative; authority presence is not here like at organisations. (Youth, small-group record)

Overall impressions

The final evaluation form asked participants of all ages to rate their impressions of the ReGeneration experience. An overview of their responses is provided in the table below.

Table 1 **Participants' (all ages) evaluation of the ReGeneration '09 process**[11]

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree*	Don't know
The Jam was well facilitated	84	14		
The Jam was an enjoyable learning process	71	27		
The Jam was a collaborative event	65	33		
The Jam modelled how I would like to work with my school, community etc.	39	55	2	2
The Jam was a new way of learning/working for me	35	33	25	2

* Disagree responses tended to come from older participants who noted that they were already working in this way.

Summary

In this chapter we identified what seemed to be some key features of the ReGeneration '09 learning environment. We intentionally set out to contrast these features against common approaches to secondary school teaching and learning (recognising that our characterisations of the latter are not true in all cases) in order to highlight the significance of these features from a theoretical standpoint. These features were:

• collaborative construction of ideas, rather than students being taught the "correct" answers
• multimodal and experiential learning, rather than learning mostly through text and talk
• place-based approaches, rather than a curriculum built from universalised or decontextualised knowledge
• narratives and storytelling as part of the curriculum, rather than only as social side-talk
• a strengths-based and positive approach, rather than competitive environment and problem-based approach
• interdisciplinary and multiple knowledges, rather than knowledge separated into disciplines
• bicultural and intergenerational learning as integrated dimensions of the learning experience.

Our approach in this chapter is strongly influenced by our own previous research (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008; Roberts, McDowall, & Cooper, 2008) and other educational literature which discusses the origins of our current secondary schooling system, including the root metaphors and philosophical traditions that underpin it (Gilbert, 2005; Kress, 2008).

The future-focused literature (e.g., Gilbert, 2005) suggests that, due to the increasingly complex, changeable and culturally diverse nature of 21st century society, students need, among other things, opportunities to build their sense of identity, become self-reliant, critical and creative thinkers, be able to use initiative, be team players, be able to manage the metacognitive and

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[11] Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

affective aspects of their learning, and be able to engage in ongoing learning throughout their lives. The 21st century learning idea involves encouraging students to carry out authentic tasks in real-world contexts, as opposed to carrying out contrived exercises to accumulate facts or to practise skills that educators expect them to need to repeat in the future. There is a focus on the *process* of learning as much as the products of learning. Relationships *between* ideas are also important. Twenty-first century learning is often talked about in terms of a holistic and integrated approach to learning. The ability to synthesise, to see the "big picture", and to consider the broader context, are important—in contrast to the 20th century practice of breaking things down into component parts, studying these as separate entities and focusing on the detailed facts of a discipline. It involves "big-picture" framings of how different knowledge systems work and interact. It involves thinking about paradigms and systems, and how people frame the world. Twenty-first century learning focuses on developing relationships between people (because this is where new knowledge will be created). It emphasises the social context of students' lives and learning experiences (as opposed to the 20th century notion of the "independent scholar"), as knowledge is seen as a process of solving problems or generating ideas in collaboration with others as the need arises.[12]

Educationists argue that these ideas have not yet, however, been very influential in our education system (Gilbert, 2005). By highlighting how these ideas are taking expression in a self-organising learning network like ReGeneration, we hope to contribute to further thinking about how our education system might be reshaped to incorporate more of these ideas and ways of doing things.

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[12] Although we discuss 21st century learning as if these are necessarily "new ways" of teaching and learning, these also legitimatise some "old ways" of knowing, which may have a greater likelihood of being acknowledged in a 21st century paradigm than the dominant 20th century Industrial Age paradigm. For example, the nonformal education sector, alternative education and progressive or Deweyan educationists could all be said to have certain alliances with "21st century learning".

6. The outcomes

In this chapter we provide a brief account of how participants (and, by extension, their communities) benefited from the ReGeneration hui, and outline some of the things that have happened since for individual participants and the collective network. We draw on findings from the evaluation forms completed on the last day of the hui, and telephone interviews with four of the younger participants four months later.

In June 2009 we interviewed four of the younger participants living in four different regions (two in the South Island and two in the North) who were at different points in the formal education system.[13] Three were members of the youth cohort. The fourth had been part of the young adult cohort but said she had "the fluidity to move in between the groups" because she was closer in age to the younger participants. We asked all four what they had got out of participating in the February hui, how each had been involved in the ReGeneration network and regenerative activities since that time, and what they envisaged for the future. This chapter is broadly structured by these three question areas, and each section starts with a summary of relevant findings from the evaluation forms.

How participants benefited from ReGeneration

The table below provides an overview of what participants learnt or how they believed they had changed as a result of the ReGeneration hui. It shows that nearly all of the 49 participants who completed the evaluation form agreed with each statement. At least half *strongly* agreed that they had a more positive approach to sustainability and a deeper understanding of regeneration. They also felt more able to take action, and had gained useful skills and access to people and resources to help them. Slightly fewer agreed that they had greater awareness of sustainability issues and the potential impact of future challenges in their local area. Perhaps this is in part due to the more negative tone of these statements, or maybe it is because the hui was set in one particular region of New Zealand and could not explore physical challenges in depth.[14]

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[13] At the time of the hui each had completed Year 10, Year 12, Year 13 and first-year university respectively.

[14] Originally the co-organisers had hoped to support an inquiry-based action project in the Taupo community but time limitations prevented it.

Table 2 **Participants' (all ages) evaluation of their learning and changes (percent)**

Because of this Jam …	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
I have a more positive approach to sustainability and regeneration	63	29	4	4
I have a different or deeper understanding of regeneration	61	37	2	
I feel more able to take action around regeneration	61	37		2
I have learnt new and useful skills	51	47	2	
I know where and how to access resources or people to help	33	63		2
I have a greater awareness about sustainability issues	27	57	10	2
I feel more aware of how future challenges will be felt in my local area	29	55	12	2

Four months after the gathering, when we asked four younger participants to think back to the hui and how their lives had unfolded since then, many of these change areas still rang true for them. Two themes in particular stood out across all four interviews, being inspired/energised and gaining new knowledge/skills, both of which they suggested had flowed into the nature and scope of their regenerative plans and activities over the past four months. We describe each of these themes below.

Being inspired and energised

In Chapter 3 we noted that the co-organisers and young adults arrived at ReGeneration '09 with the intention to help (re)activate young people's energy for environmental and social change. Four months later, when we asked them to describe the most significant change or influence they felt as a result of their participation in ReGeneration '09, the four younger interviewees spoke of being more inspired and energised. Three of the four explicitly recalled that prior to ReGeneration '09 they had been feeling exhausted, isolated or frustrated in their pursuits. Similarly, one focus group we ran at ReGeneration had been apprehensive about whether they could sustain their new-found energy long term. Here is their discussion:

> Sometimes when you get home it's hard because … there's so many negative people, you lose it [the positive energy]. Like with Youth Jam last year, I got home and was pumped to do something … two weeks later I was like 'it's not really working, no one is listening to me'.

> Here you're all amped to do something all good and it's like we're going forward. When you get home it all slowly wears off, so it's important to store that energy and to draw on it.

> [You also need to] keep in contact with people.

[And] keep the links strong between us all.

However, in contrast to these apprehensions, at least for the four interviewees we spoke to in June, their energies were still high from the ReGeneration '09 experience and their ongoing connections with the network.

I got really inspired by the Jam. Meeting lots of new people and likeminded people was such a cool experience. To know it is possible to get actions going in my community and to know this is happening all over New Zealand. It gave me such a positive outlook ... I just loved that the Tuakana crew were really inspirational, role models, and having lots of interesting people you could talk to. The place was cool, the food, everything we did was ... The people, and the positive energy means that you can actually do things ... it's kind of hard living in such a cold place as [my town] and not getting down about governments and councils not doing good things about the environment. I think I would have been a lot more pessimistic without ReGen—it taught me to hope a bit more, look for alternatives, just to be positive and see what's out there.

It was really great being around so many people in different ages, and [finding] creative ways of offering solutions to things. A good feel. I made great friends I can see [myself] maintaining friendships with. It helped boost my passion for the environment to know that there are networks.

It's less likely [that I would have done all the things I've done since ReGen without going to the hui]. It's too much effort to do it alone. Organising events takes a lot of energy. It's good to have other people to help with ideas, writing, etc. It can be too hard by yourself. A group of committed people together can make a huge difference. I have been doing some stuff in my own school, recycling, vege gardens. It wasn't as successful [last year]. This year I feel so much energy and support, and it's much more successful. More achievable.

At ReGen it was a little bit freaky for me actually because even though I was the same age of some of the students it felt like they were maybe just coming in where I had come in a couple of years ago. But it was so inspiring to see their passion, and it kind of reminded me of what I used to be like a couple of years ago ... It was so good to see their enthusiasm. It's lifted me up. I felt very down, and felt very disempowered being stuck at uni doing things I didn't really want to be studying, [and] that was teaching me things against what I believed in. The whole ReGen lifted me up out of that, and I've been able to look at the bigger picture of why I'm doing it and where I'm going. I've got more passionate and inspired about doing what I'm doing. Especially seeing those other students, they're just so amazing it's hard not to be inspired by them.

Using new knowledge and skills

Thinking back to the hui, the four younger people we interviewed each recalled at least one workshop (described in Chapter 4) that had been particularly meaningful or useful for them. Three had since drawn quite explicitly on some of the new knowledge and skills that they had learnt in these workshops. The fourth interviewee said that she had been too busy to transfer new learning into tangible actions, but could see how she would in the future. We discuss some of these post-hui actions in the next section.

> *[ReGen] upped my confidence and my skills working with the [350 climate change] group [I'm part of]. The speech workshop [called 'presenting yourself and your ideas'] was helpful because I've stopped writing speeches now [and instead improvise from key points like the facilitators suggested]. I talked at the Earth Hour concert without writing the speech before (partly it was because I didn't have time to write one, and it was dark and so I couldn't see the crowd). I see benefit in both ways [writing a speech or speaking ad lib] but it challenges me to get up with a few points and ramble as I go.*

> *I have used the planning sheet [from the 'project organising and community development' skills workshop] with the events [in the centre column] with columns before and after that. It really helps in terms of planning events, give you a sense of what you want to achieve. [It has given me] a sense of objectives and goals.*

> *It was interesting to learn about the four different 'callings', the natural environment, the people and community, future problems, and what's working now. It was really interesting to know that there are lots of different things that bring people into action in their community. I hadn't really thought about that before. I also really liked learning more about climate change and peak oil and those issues—I hadn't really known much about those before.*

What participants co-created after ReGeneration

The point of ReGeneration '09 was not just to encourage young people to feel and think differently about sustainability, it was also to inspire them to action and to support (and connect) them in their endeavours. With this in mind, the evaluation form asked all participants to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with three statements about possible intentions beyond the hui. The response pattern in the table below shows that all participants intended to become more active in regenerative networks and activities in their regions, and nearly all looked forward to communicating with others about regeneration as a concept or network.

Table 3 **Participants' (all ages) intentions beyond the hui (percent)**

I intend to …	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Get more involved in local regeneration networks and processes	67	33		
Communicate with others about regeneration	59	37	2	
Work towards the 2010 ReGeneration Regional events	31	29	2	8

Participant's intentions beyond the hui were further explored through an open question that asked: "Imagine leaving here and look forward to the few months ahead, what are three specific things that you intend to do in relation to regeneration?" The Enviroschools team coded all responses to this question soon after the hui to prepare a feedback sheet for participants,[15] reproduced in the table below.

Table 4 **Participants' intentions beyond ReGeneration '09 (data summarised by Enviroschools)**

In the months ahead …
69% of us are intending to **plan for, or undertake, a specific action**
63% of us are planning to **network** or **connect** with other people or groups [not yet part of ReGeneration]
31% of us specifically mentioned **supporting, connecting or working with local or similarly focused ReGeneration '09 participants**
31% of us specifically mentioned **actions or planning involving our envirogroup or our school**
27% of us specifically mentioned **promoting regeneration, or recruiting/inspiring others to action**
10% of us are planning on **changing our attitude, or way of being**
<10% of us mentioned **celebrating, learning and raising awareness of the issues**

Two interrelated themes came through strongly in the four participants' comments about what they had been involved in since ReGeneration. One was being involved in a range of localised actions for regeneration and the other was maintaining and making connections locally and nationally.

Plans for localised actions

As discussed in Chapter 3 the participants selected for ReGeneration '09 were already known to the co-organisers as being relatively active in social and environmental change in their regions (with some regions being more active than others). According to the evaluation form, this activity looked set to expand following the hui. Below is a word splash of some of the specific activities that participants said they intended to lead or contribute to following ReGeneration.[16]

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[15] This was published on the ReGeneration Ning, which we discuss in more detail on page 48.

[16] Prior to completing the evaluation forms participants had developed individual and regional plans as part of the final workshop. We only draw on evaluation form and interview material in this report.

Organise more celebrations/events

start up a sustainable business

sustainable youth concert

Propose an idea to youth council

harbour cleanup

Make a school vision

Small day out

Frocks on bikes

Submission on waterways management

FREEZE!

ReGeneration festival

restructure the envirogroup
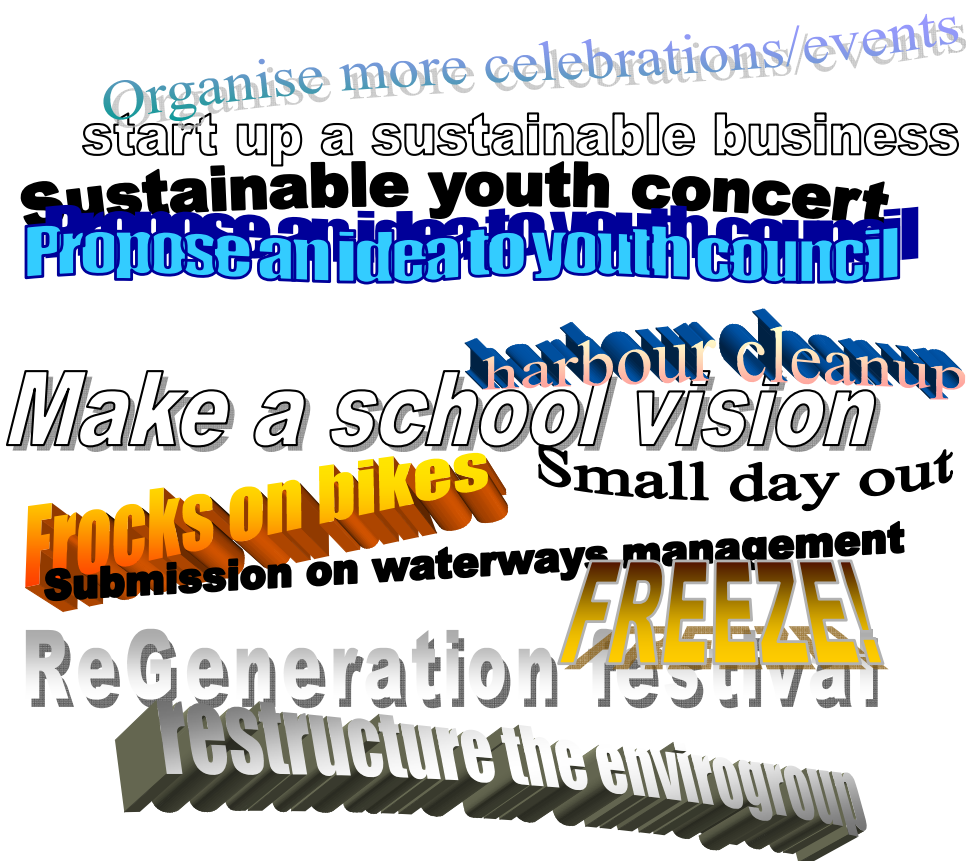
However, not everybody recorded a specific event or campaign that they intended to initiate or become involved in. Many indicated their intentions to develop new approaches or plans with the *potential* to generate other actions without necessarily knowing in advance what these might be. Here are some examples of these more general responses:

• Tell as many people as possible about the regenerated ideas that I've learnt (younger cohort)
• Be mysterious with action.[17] (Younger cohort)
• Talk to my network/people to see how we can combine our resources/knowledge to create an event. (Young adult)
• Go back to uni and make a smaller number of projects work better. (Young adult)
• Use my 7-year-old students to inspire high school students. (Young adult)
• Get an environmental aspect (hopefully workshops too) included in the next Youth in Local Government conference. (Young adult)
• Take creatively fun approaches when speaking to people. (young adult)

In the four months after they had completed an evaluation form, each of the four young interviewees had been involved in a range of regenerative activities, as explained in their quotes below.

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[17] This refers to ideas from one of the workshops about using the idea of mystery, intrigue and surprise to promote messages of regeneration in creative and unexpected ways.

> *I also went to this thing called 'hands up'—a talking discussion evening and I was speaking on climate change—I wouldn't know about it without ReGen.*

> *I've been organising stuff at school [because] I am the school environment prefect.*

> *I have a research project with Enviroschools and it's going really well. I've researched most—I say most but there's so many—of the options that are available in the environmental field for young people to go into.*

> *Initially we wanted to have an info pack in the curriculum about sustainability and 350 but other projects have come up so it's kind of on the backburner. But after this crazy lead up to Copenhagen I see it as a potential project.*

> *350 groups all around New Zealand are planning for [climate change day on] the 24th of October, and I helped with planning for the Bill McKibben tour a month and a half ago. I'm in the national 350 team so we're doing a vision, and I'm now working on 350 events for Wellington ...*

> *Right now I am writing submissions to council to 'SOS Enviroschools campaign'— to get the National Government to recognise Enviroschools is very important. John Key has talked about sustainable community so we want to remind him of that.*

> *I'm also part of [an] island community, Quarantine Island. There is a community that goes out and plants trees and stuff like that ...*
>
> *I helped to organise DJ '09 (Dunedin Jam '09). We organised it for Enviroschools in Dunedin, and held it on Quarantine Island in May. It was sort of inspired by Envirojam ...*

> *I'm still trying to work with Meridian Energy. We are looking at getting a windmill for the school.*

> *I have had a couple of meetings with the Canterbury Enviroschools office ... we did a Canterbury regeneration hui as part of the tour ...*

Maintaining and making connections

The evaluation form and interview responses paint a picture of interconnected nodes of activity and a merging of the ReGen network with other established networks. In their evaluation forms many participants mentioned an intention to join, become more active within or recruit other people to a range of institution-based sustainability groups, as well as other regional, national and international networks. These included school envirogroups, AYDEO (Auckland Youth Driven Environment Organisation), Gecko (Victoria University of Wellington Environmental Group), YAC (Dunedin City Council Youth Action Committee), 350 New Zealand Climate Action and so forth. Some specifically mentioned their intention to connect ReGeneration with their other networks and/or to seed a *new* group in their school or area as part of ReGeneration (for example, a community youth group).

The interview narratives show that these participants have continued to maintain and make new connections since ReGeneration. They have found that connecting with others has been crucial for building a sense of community and momentum, and for sparking new ideas and having a more powerful effect. As in earlier chapters, messages about the importance of intergenerationality, difference and diversification recur.

The way I have seen it and been involved in it, it's almost like ... ReGen is the high school student-led aspect of the Enviroschools programme ... and I see it as quite long enduring so I don't think it is going to fall over after the festival next year ... As well as it being just a high school network it draws on all of the age groups and I think that's really important that other people are really appreciated and respected, where their knowledge is acknowledged and respected and it's not taken for granted. And also where young people are really respected and acknowledged. It was like that at ReGen, with the 'they' being kaumātua, and it was really as it should be. It wasn't nuclear like a lot of people's lives are. It was all interrelated and it was all highly obvious.

I think it's got a real potential to provide people with the ability to communicate across the country and to focus action. Already we've had the Freezes on world enviro day. I was using the Ning and emails from people from ReGen to compare what we were doing. I think the ReGen network, especially having those really influential people like [the Enviroschools youth coordinator] has really made this what it is. Having all those young people all being so different… There were people from all kinds of backgrounds who say 'our world needs this', which is really uplifting. I mean everyone can be inspired to focus on the environment and community.

Being part of ReGen is being a wider network for me. Before it was just people from Auckland that I knew. Now [I know] people as far as Nelson, Invercargill and have the wider view from more people. That helps me develop more ideas for my own region. More support for what I'm doing. Get to know people whom I can get support from.

The person I shared a room with [at ReGen] I've seen at the Sir Peter Blake forum and we worked together on ideas for our schools for Earth Hour. We both did rubbish collections and waste audits ... Some [of the ReGen young adults] I know anyway which is helpful. I've kept in touch with [one of the co-organisers] which is really great, and because she is part of 350.

We got the open space idea from [the ReGen organiser based in Auckland]. He kind of like organised the open space discussion forum for us. We got a lot of experienced people in there helping us. I've learned a lot from [him and another ReGen co-organiser]. Being not just by myself but there is group support.

The ReGeneration Ning and road trip

Since the hui many of the participants have joined the ReGeneration Ning (purpose-built online network) and use this to keep in touch with each other and exchange ideas. Two of the four interviewees were using the Ning quite regularly, while the other two had been too busy or were mostly communicating with their ReGeneration peers through other media such as phone calls, Facebook or email. Some of the interviewees had already invited other people from their schools, regions and communities to join the network.

There is the original ReGen crew where everyone knew each other, but now there's heaps of new people coming in so it's diversifying a lot but its still the same thing ... It [the Ning] allows people to either meet more people in their area or just to keep in touch. It is an easy non-stress way to say 'I don't know how to do this, how have you done this?' and get people's responses.

I have been getting a lot of info from the Ning site about what others are doing in their regions—the 350 and the Freeze. It's a way of communicating with other people, collaborating, sharing ideas. Like the Freeze we had about 150 people, Wellington about 300—it wouldn't be possible if we didn't have that communication. The ReGen website gives us a platform to communicate, a group effort. It gives us a lot of ideas as well. We are getting some copycatting of the ideas. It actually works.

Basically I would intro it as 'We are the ReGen team and we have this common goal of regenerating our own regions, and helping others to get involved ... this [Ning] gives you a platform to communicate with and get inspired by other people's ideas and photos. It's not just a communication tool.

Some of the young people had also recently reconvened with the ReGeneration organisers on their "road trip" to visit each of the regions to maintain and build on the energies and connections established at the hui. The young people described this as providing a fresh wave of energy and enthusiasm for their regenerative work.

It was like a mini ReGen like what we had in February. So a lot of the same tools and activities were used and [the ReGen organisers] facilitated it all and got everyone thinking about things they could be involved in, and got everyone started on a bit of a project and working on their ideas and asking them questions about their ideas, and getting them all fired up about doing something big for the festival next year. I can't actually remember any of the group's solid plans but I do remember they were along the lines of getting the school involved, doing campaigns. And a lot of them were quite interested in the 350 campaign and frocks on bikes.

Last week the regional tour of ReGen came down and we got all inspired again. [We invited] about five people from about 11 high schools in Dunedin, and a whole lot of community people from Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust, DOC, DCC, lots of others. Everyone from all the high schools was invited. The place and times were organised by [Enviroschools coordinator] at the Dunedin City Council and [the ReGen co-organisers] etc. I guess they talked to her about organising. [What came out of it?] It's got heaps of people involved, they have all been invited to the Ning site as well. Awesome to meet people from this region I'd never met before who are really into environmental stuff. I think we are going to have a larger group of secondary people to call on. There was a group of uni-aged students as well who are also helping out with the road trip.

Looking to the future

The ReGeneration programme and learning environment was, in part, tailored towards co-creating a new imaginary for the future of New Zealand and the planet. We asked each interviewee about what they imagined for themselves, their communities and their country in the future.

Community focused with a national and global vision

There is no such final destination as "a sustainable future" because the future is unknown and is always in front of us. At the same time we create the future every day. Futures studies literature suggests that through visioning for, critically thinking about and actively trying to create "a sustainable future" people develop their understanding of factors that interact to influence change now (Roberts & Gardiner, 2005). Thus if young people (and others) imagine future possibilities in a way that also develops their capacity to live with uncertainty, their current decisions and actions could take place with these complexities and visions in mind. Below are the four young interviewees' different visions in response to the question: What can you imagine for the future of New Zealand or your community? Their replies align closely with a message from the future challenges workshop described in Chapter 4, which was that due to the uncertain nature of climate change, communities and countries need to "aim for 350 but prepare for 650 [carbon dioxide parts per million]".

I envisage a really positive community that, as we stop having to rely on other countries for trade and oil and stuff, just looking to ourselves to look at how to up-skill, going into transition towns, just really re-looking at how we live. I think it will all turn out all right. We are such an isolated country in NZ.

I also see Māori culture taking a much more important role, especially down here in the South Island. Ngāi Tahu is relooking at how we are 'being' in our communities and they've got this programme, Kotahi Mano Kāika, to get 1,000 homes speaking Māori fluently. It's supposed to take three generations [to get people speaking Māori language in 1,000 homes in the South Island]. I think a lot of people, not just Māori, think it is cool to learn more than one language—starting to think about how we view culture and stuff. Other countries have two or more languages, so I think we will see Māori as much more part of our lives.

I think there might be quite a lot of change depending on what happens at Copenhagen. I'm applying though UNICEF for [one of the] youth climate ambassadors ... the one-week youth forum before the negotiations. I'm not sure what emission reductions will be, but it needs to be fair and stuck to by every country. Developed countries need to support developing countries to help use sustainable technologies. So it's a lot of co-operation needed. There also needs to be quite a high price on carbon so that the amount we emit reduces rapidly.

I just hope that ... because NZ promotes ourselves as clean and green, that is our selling point ... Everyone should consider themselves as an environmental kiwi. Enviroschools and ReGen are a part of this. Encourage people to be part of a sustainable community, something that is good for the people, the planet, and the future of the country ... Hopefully it will just get bigger and bigger. Making connections, networking with other people. Hopefully we can get some more professionals on board—professionals and businesspeople. Making their way of doing things

I think there are a lot of good things happening, and if we focus on community it will build a strong net of resilience along the country and we'll be able to withstand the challenges of the future. I do see the future being quite bleak sometimes and I often say if it turns out better than I think it will I will be very happy and won't be disappointed I was wrong. But if we build up our communities we'll get through it. It's not just about 'getting through it'—it builds up people's quality of life. And it diverts all of the both positive and negative attention that gets put on consumer culture and puts [the attention] on people's own back yards. It [consumer culture] no longer becomes an issue because it's not happening and it doesn't even factor into the equation.

Transitions beyond school

We asked the interviewees what they could imagine themselves doing over the next few years. All saw regeneration as a driving force in what they might do and who they might be. Their responses also aligned well with a cluster of "confident explorers" who appear in some of our other work on youth transitions beyond school. These types of narrative epitomise young people's career development of the future "by pushing the boundaries of *who* they could *be*, rather than attempting to pin down what they should become" and acting as "producers of their own lives, taking on and creating a myriad of opportunities to explore themselves" (Vaughan & Roberts, 2007, p. 100)

Next year I'm thinking about taking a gap year and crewing on sailing boats around the Pacific. My dream is to sail the world with a group of musicians and inspire people to think about their environment, community, through music. I would like to go to probably Otago University and study environmental sciences or design, not exactly sure what but something to do with environment.	*First my goal will be to finish [first year biomedicine], get into medicine— my dream job. But I am still passionate about the environment, it is part of my lifestyle now. I love the outdoors, I want to keep that as well as part of my professional career. In the future I am thinking of continuing to organise things, build awareness, build positive attitudes amongst youth and the community, [including by] staying in touch with my old school.*	*I want to stay at school for the next two years but I'm keen to go to one of the [X] international schools. There are 12 schools around the world set up by Nelson Mandela and someone else. There are students from all different cultures and they're focused on sustainability. It would be a 2-year scholarship ... [Beyond that] I want to go to uni. Geography and environmental studies stand out but I'm not making any decisions yet.*

[ReGeneration] motivated me to move out of home and to go to Wellington where I want to be and where I can do more of the things that I want to do ... [I]t seems like hub of people who are really onto it, and campaigns that are really successful, and for me I want to do the environmental degree at Victoria ... And also I'm doing an organic horticulture course through the polytechnic and I'm going to do a permaculture course. I'm going to finish my degree as soon as I can. I would like to do community planning or even urban planning using permaculture and organic principles. It's kind of this new thing that I've come up with and I don't know if there is a space for me to do it. Kind of like transition towns have post peak oil plans, and plans for what they're going to do in their community. I'd like to use permaculture, and edible landscapes as a basis for planning, and integrate that into everyday urban planning. I've also heard of these things popping up over the country called community resilience units. I'd like to work for them 'cos it sounds so cool, all the civil defence planning, post peak oil, and climate change. That's where I'd try and get a job if I could. Other than that I want to do some travel around the country and get hands-on horticulture skills.

Both of the interviewees who were in their first years of university had maintained connections with their old school and its envirogroup, and expected to continue this relationship well into the future. One said that he continued to give the school support and ideas, as well as connections to others in the community to offer them "the broader picture of what's outside school [and] share the information around". For example, he had given a speech on World Environment Day in May.

The other interviewee had an ongoing mentoring relationship with one of her previous teachers and had attended different teaching/curriculum consultation sessions with her and others.

This second interviewee was also currently on contract to Enviroschools to develop an online resource to set out a great majority of the options available in the environmental field for young people. This project had emerged from her own struggle to find information in this arena and from "the Youth Jam debrief in November last year … when ReGen was in the concept stage and we were talking about how to get young people in that in-between stage in between high school and working, and how to support them". We asked her a little more about where she was at in the project:

> So it [the database I'm developing] includes your normal degree in statistics or physics or earth sciences, but it also includes diplomas and certificates, and the other one you can get at polytech. But it includes extra things like permaculture courses, and internships, and WOOFING and cadetships. Volunteer experiences, and there are lots of global networks you can tap into for internships. There's a media company where you can do sustainable film where they take you on for three months and teach you a whole lot of skills. So it's just a kind of resource for young people who are struggling to decide what to do … It's been so awesome to find out all these different things and so many options available. Often we're only told here's what's at university. It's not only about whether you do a degree or not; you could do a university degree *and* other things.

Acknowledging the Enviroschools Foundation and its people

Several of the young interviewees wished to stress the important role that Enviroschools has played in their own personal journey towards regeneration. Although some came from families with traditions of environmental activism, others had only become interested and involved in environmental work and youth leadership through school. School environmental groups and clubs, and conferences and

I first got involved with [the ReGen] crew through Youth Jam in 2008. That's probably how I got to come up again because they knew of me.

gatherings like Auckland Regional Council's MAD (Make a Difference) camp and Enviroschools' Youth Jams had been of huge significance for the young people. All four of the interviewees expressed their respect for the Enviroschools Foundation and/or Te Mauri Tau. Several stressed the personal growth and development that had emerged from their involvement with Enviroschools and expressed concern that many other young people might miss out on these opportunities in view of the recent Government decision to cease national funding for Enviroschools. They felt called to action.

> *For me it started with MAD, without that kind of support it won't help to create people like me who are passionate. Enviroschools helps young people to become more aware and sustainable—when they grow up they are going to remember that…We really want to get John Key to see this—show as a future generation we really want this. I feel like sustainability is just a huge thing for the future. We can't depend on oil forever. I feel that if we don't have that environmental education in mind we won't be able to do that … I feel like Enviroschools gives me a lot of support. Since the MAD camps, I feel like it helped me to develop my skills, English and writing. It is a fantastic programme. I REALLY want to do something about it. I will spend my holiday planning for the campaign [to restore national Enviroschools funding]—me and my friends going to talk to John Key.*

> *… through the first Youth Jam I was introduced to a more positive way of attacking things as such. So that kind of just launched me to do more. [In the future I want] to keep working with Enviroschools because it's been really important for me and I think it's important for so many other people … It is really important, especially for students who sometimes feel isolated in their schools, or are even bullied because of their beliefs. Enviroschools is so important to them, and it was really important to me and it still is really important to me.*

> *My family are supportive but they don't initiate anything. I'm the one who does it, makes sure we're composting and recycling … I have a variety of friend groups; my male friends aren't interested, most people at school aren't. At times it's demotivating. It's nice having contact with people who are motivated.* [Do you know what led to you getting interested then?] *In Year 9 I just joined the envirogroup at school, I don't know why. Then going to Youth Jam [in 2008] I was excited. I got even more out of ReGen because it wasn't just environmental, it was self-worth as well.*

Summary

This chapter has illustrated some of the outcomes that participants perceived to have emerged from their ReGeneration '09 experience. We have shown that nearly all participants indicated that they had learnt a great deal through being part of the hui, and were, in many ways, different people because of it. Four months later four interviewees still felt inspired and energised to take on, and create, regenerative actions in their communities. They also believed that they had gained new skills, knowledge and connections to help them on their way. Over the course of the hui participants shared and strengthened their intentions for localised regenerative actions, and many new ideas and plans were sparked. The four interviewees had been involved—often in leadership roles—in a wide range of regenerative activities since the gathering. They had continued their involvement with the extending network, in part through the Ning and the ReGeneration "road trip". Making and maintaining connections with the people in their local communities and national networks was a strong theme in all of their narratives. Participants had a hopeful outlook for the future, balanced against their belief that building community resilience is an essential for riding—and creating—the wave of major change that they are predicting. Many aspects of this chapter highlight how emergent change has come about in this network. We turn to this next.

7. The emergent regenerative network

> *[Social networks] are self-generating. Each communication creates thoughts and meaning, which give rise to further communications, and thus the entire network generates itself—it is autopoeitic. As communications recur in multiple feedback loops, they produce a shared system of beliefs, explanations, and values—a common context of meaning—that is continually sustained by further communications. Through this shared context of meaning individuals acquire identities as members of the social network, and in this way the network generates its own boundary. It is not a physical boundary but a boundary of expectations, of confidentiality and loyalty, which is continually maintained and renegotiated by the network itself. (Capra, 2002, p. 83)*

This report has described some of what happened during the three days of the ReGeneration '09 hui, including evidence of impacts for participants during, immediately after and several months beyond the gathering. We began with two broad research questions of interest to Enviroschools: What are the personal narratives of people involved in ReGeneration '09? What is the ReGeneration '09 network narrative? We paid particular attention to the individual narratives of the young adults in Chapter 3 and the youth cohort in Chapter 6. Throughout the report we have also built a picture of how the ReGeneration '09 shared narrative developed, with particular insights—especially in Chapters 4 and 5—into the nature of the network being created and the ways that participants collaboratively generated knowledge and ways of being that they deemed important for our current times. Although we have not carried out a formal research process to track the further activities and growth of this network since the first hui, we are aware of some of what has occurred through our ongoing communications with members of ReGeneration and through ReGeneration's online community.[18] The Capra quote in the box above captures one idea about self-generating networks that seems to align with what we have observed.

This final chapter outlines what we and others may learn from this piece of research in relation to our initial overall interest in emergent change and specific interest in "self-generating networks for knowledge building, learning and change".

Why does ReGeneration matter?

A colleague who reviewed the first draft of this report provided us with a question for us to address in our concluding chapter. She asked whether the ReGeneration report was simply reiterating ideas and ways of working "that have been around 'forever' about great contexts for

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[18] http://regen09.ning.com/

learning", i.e., was anything *new* in here, or "maybe these ideas are just more important now?" In short we suggest that there is "newness" in the global context surrounding ReGeneration, the tools and technologies available to ReGeneration, and the ways of thinking-and-doing exemplified by many of the ReGeneration participants.

Whether or not they are *wholly* new, we believe that these ideas are important now. As illustrated by the thoughts and ideas from the literature that is threaded through this report, we see a "zeitgeist" around sustainability, social change, self-organisation and emergence that is visible in contemporary literature, not to mention in the broadcast and online media environment. Significantly, the ideas that contribute to this zeitgeist are emerging and converging across multiple disciplines and cultural boundaries. For example, the authors we have drawn on in compiling this report span areas as diverse as digital technologies (Shirky, 2008), formal education (Gilbert, 2005), sustainable development (UNESCO, 2005), philosophy (Kress, 2008), social psychology (Block, 2008) and design (Reed, 2007), many of which merge with each other in interdisciplinary ways. This work challenges us to think about change processes, and about human relationships with one another and the Earth, in a very different way from those that have predominated in Western society through the industrial age. We see that aspects of ReGeneration give us insight into the kind of paradigm shifts that these and other writers have argued will be necessary if we are serious about meeting the interconnected social, environmental and economic challenges of the 21st century. These texts associate the overall shift from a mechanistic paradigm to a complex systems paradigm. For example, from:

- compartmentalised thinking to systemic thinking (Sterling, 2001)
- hierarchical management to relational networks (Bradwell & Reeves, 2008)
- organisations to organising (Shirky, 2008)
- mass production to mass innovation (Leadbeater, 2005)
- scaling up by replication (more of the same) to scaling up through innovation (more is different) (Westley et al., 2006)
- elected citizen representatives to deliberative active citizenship
- teachers and learners to learning communities (Davis et al., 2000)
- giving answers to posing questions (Block, 2008)
- knowledge consumption to knowledge generation (Gilbert, 2005)
- linear improvement to dynamic transformation
- certainty to possibility (Kress, 2008)
- leaders as instructors to leadership as capacity building (Istance & Kobayashi, 2003).

ReGeneration shows what it can look like in practice when ideas in the latter part of each shift above are intentionally (or intuitively) used as principles for the design of a network for emergent learning and change. While there are many aspects that we could explore in more depth, we highlight here four interrelated design features of ReGeneration that we think are important.

Four interesting design features of ReGeneration

Planning for emergence with enabling constraints

As we have already discussed in this report, the environmental and social challenges of the 21st century are complex, and neither the solutions to these challenges, nor the processes through which they might be addressed, are self-evident. In other words, these are genuinely open-ended challenges, and solutions are likely to be emergent. However, the concept of emergence presents a design challenge for educators. How does one design a learning environment if one doesn't know the precise outcomes one is aiming for? This report shows us that there is a big difference between making things completely open where "anything goes", and structuring for emergent change. ReGeneration '09 was a carefully orchestrated event designed to maximise the contributions that each individual might make and to provide conditions for connections to form between people and between ideas. Some have called this a chaordic space—where there is a productive coexistence between chaos and order. Davis et al. (2000) discuss the idea of teaching for and with complexity by designing with "enabling constraints".

We observed enabling constraints in the design of the workshops, the selection and contributions of the organisers and older youth and mentors, the culture of the hui and the online platform and national planning beyond it. One example is the presentation of four "calls to action" by the organisers (discussed further below). Participants were constrained into thinking about ReGeneration through the "lens" of each and then choosing one of these four, and joining that group for a discussion. Their second enabling constraint was to consider how each of these four calls interconnected with one another, opening up an expansive possibility space in which participants could collectively build ideas that integrated each person's own motivation for regenerative action with those of other people in the room. The enabling nature of these and other constraints permeate the next three principles.

Building from difference, and building for difference

In this era of globalisation, competing world views—and the conflicts that can arise because of these—are part of the mix of tensions that thread through 21st century environmental and social challenges. However, diversity has also been recognised as an essential feature of intelligent systems (Davis et al., 2000). Educators writing about learning for the 21st century suggest an important capability will therefore be learning not simply to *tolerate* difference, but to seek out and work with difference to generate something new and to address complex and deeply-rooted challenges. As Gilbert (2009) suggests, this requires processes which:

> … mak[e] difference visible, not so it can be assimilated, but to allow it to just 'be', to express itself, not in relation to dominant norms, but on its own terms. There is also a focus on 'third spaces', on relationship-building between different groups—in ways that allow the partners to acknowledge and recognize their differences as *differences*, not deficiencies. Justice, in this model, is achieved by 'working difference together'.

ReGeneration was structured in a way that did seem to allow for, and welcome, difference. The backgrounds and stories that each young person brought with them were noticed and valued. The facilitated workshops were set up to encourage people to inquire into their personal meaning making, and it was not suggested that there was a right understanding or a right way to be. The four calls to action (see Chapter 4) are one illustrative example. In presenting these four calls, the four organisers' different motivations for engaging in regenerative action were made explicit, and participants were invited to explore the possibilities in the creative connections and tensions between them. This balance between attention to difference and attention to interconnection enabled a sense of a community to continue growing around threads of commonality, without assuming that everyone or every local community should therefore become more alike. However, while a number of those we interviewed commented on ReGeneration as allowing for and welcoming diversity, we note that a few people specifically mentioned various tacit assumptions and rituals embedded in the gathering that they felt could be further unpacked (see, for example, some of the quotes on pages 13–14, Chapter 3), or areas where particular differences could be underlined more strongly for particular purposes.

This opportunity of building from and for difference not only relates to people, but also to projects and initiatives. The ReGeneration organisers did not set out to have attendees replicating previous initiatives or signing up to a single cause. They set out to build and strengthen networks so that learning could happen amongst people and catalyse any number of actions not yet dreamed of before the gathering, but with the potential for learning and inspiration to be shared across and among people with similar interests. People in intergenerational and intercultural relationships supported each other to become intentional, to envisage what might be possible and to create joint projects in their communities and in the world.[19] On the second day there was emphasis on skills and tools that young people might draw on and adapt to be used in their own missions. This appeared to strengthen the capacity of individuals and collectives to continue to collaborate, learn, innovate and contribute to change together. This diversity of possible outcomes generated by the hui is also relevant to the next principle.

Encouraging local development and action, supported by online and offline networking

While we have described ReGeneration as a "self-generating" network we do not mean that it simply represents individual "selves" being networked with one another or that it somehow sprung up "itself" out of a vacuum. ReGeneration interconnects with many formalised networks and institutions (including schools, the Enviroschools Foundation, Te Mauri Tau and many others). ReGeneration participants were also encouraged to engage/utilise their existing connections and networks to continue their regenerative work. The development of the Ning site provided a means for participants to continue to develop ideas together, share insights and

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[19] Another specific example of an enabling constraint within ReGeneration '09 was the open possibility for a collaboratively staged festival of regenerative activation across the country for 2010 should participants become inspired and skilled up to co-create it.

successes and seek support for and input into their own localised initiatives. New members could also be invited to the online network, extending the range of people who were connecting and collaborating through ReGeneration. This new social technology facilitates quick and thoughtful exchanges in ways that enable new interest and action alliances to form, focus and flex—giving community organising quite different capabilities than were possible a decade a go. In addition, the ReGeneration road trip (see pages 48–49, Chapter 6) provided the opportunity for additional face-to-face networking and reinvigorated the enthusiasm of many of the young ReGeneration participants by helping them to connect up with people and groups in their local communities.

Looking backwards to look forwards

Throughout the gathering, participants were encouraged to listen carefully to knowledge of the past, perhaps regenerating values and practices that have been lost in whānau, communities and nations, and revitalising them in ways relevant for today. The concept of ReGeneration also involves some parts transforming into something quite different from the original ingredients— allowing space for the unpredictable nature of what the young people might help to create.

Where to next?

We hope that the report has conveyed many insights and principles that others could look to from ReGeneration. ReGeneration itself appears to have an inbuilt design to continue to grow and evolve with ongoing input and guidance of mentors and organisers who are honing the leadership capacity of the network as a whole, the younger participants and themselves in the process. We cannot underestimate the skill and wisdom of the organisers and the unique strengths that they bring.

We entered this research partnership with the hope that our involvement with ReGeneration could provide us with new insights into many areas we are interested in as educational researchers, including: sustainability, active citizenship, self-generating knowledge networks, youth/ intergenerational stewardship, future-focused education and cultural/whole-systems transformation. While we believe that we have learnt something about each of these things from ReGeneration, we have also come to recognise that our thinking and experience in these areas are still nascent, and we have much more reading, writing and research to do.

We do not know what will happen next with ReGeneration, but we look forward to following the journeys of the network and its people. In the meantime, we will continue to develop our own thinking around ideas contained in this report. We invite you to join us in this process at www.shiftingthinking.org

> *It is difficult for anybody to see work based on a different paradigm. If people do notice such work, it is often characterized as inspiring deviations from the norm. It takes time and attention for people to see different approaches for what they are: examples of what the new world could be. (Wheatley & Frieze, 2006, p. 7)*

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Appendix A: Information and consent form

P O Box 3237, Wellington 6140

New Zealand

Education House

178-182 Willis Street

Tēnā koe member of *ReGeneration '09*,

This information sheet tells you about the research that NZCER is doing in partnership with the Enviroschools Foundation for *ReGeneration 09*. We will also talk you through the details of this project in person, and you can ask us any questions or give us some feedback at any time throughout the gathering. We are asking for you to consider taking part.

The aim of this research is to understand the personal stories that people bring to *ReGeneration '09* and the shared narrative that is created by participating. Our role is to help everybody reflect on their own and the group's learning process throughout the gathering, and to document some of the shifts that happen (like regenerative understandings, networks, ways of doing things). We will relate this to what other change-makers and theorists have said about transformational change.

We are inviting everybody at *ReGeneration '09* to take part in this research, including Enviroschools' organisers, older youth, and secondary students. To do the research we will:

• ask some of you to take part in individual or small group interviews about your experiences of regeneration (you are welcome to say yes or no)
• ask you to fill out various reflective sheets that we will hand out during the gathering (only fill out what you want to at the time)
• take notes of some key discussion areas or processes that unfold in workshops and group discussions (you can let us know if you don't want us to record something that you say).

What you share or we record will be used in three ways:

1. NZCER will write a report for Enviroschools that helps to document and learn from the *ReGeneration* retreat. This could be kept as an internal report for Enviroschools or it could be [web] published by NZCER and/or Enviroschools. You will be given the opportunity to read this report or a summary of it.

2. We will give a copy of the data we collect (like notes, interview recordings, etc) to Enviroschools so that they can use it as a base for some follow up research over the next few months (or even years). If you say anything that you do not want to go back to Enviroschools with your name on it,

let us know. NZCER probably won't do this future research, and so Enviroschools will give you more details and invite you to participate closer to the time.

3. We will use the data to feed into a wider project we are starting at NZCER on future-focused education in New Zealand. This wider project is made up of mini-projects (including *ReGeneration '09*) to help us build up a picture that will be useful for teachers and schools. If we substantially draw on the *ReGeneration '09* for any presentation or publication as part of the wider project we will send a draft copy to Enviroschools for their comment/review.

NZCER will not include your name with anything you said/did in any public presentations or documents, unless we give you a draft to consider. You are welcome to receive a summary or copy of any publication/media that comes out of this project.

If you wish to receive more information about the research (like the research questions that are guiding this work) or want to discuss anything about the process we are using please talk to Josie, Rachel, Billy, or a member of the Enviroschools crew that you feel comfortable with.

Thank you for considering our request, and we look forward to the *ReGeneration* journey!

Rachel Bolstad and Josie Roberts

Emails: rachel.bolstad@nzcer.org.nz, josie.roberts@nzcer.org.nz

ReGeneration '09 Research Consent Form

I have read the information provided about the ReGeneration '09 research and have had an opportunity to discuss it or ask questions. I am happy to take part in any or all of the following:

- Doing an individual interview
- Taking part in a focus group interview
- Completing reflective handouts
- Allowing researchers to take notes of my contribution in workshops or discussions

I understand that I can ask for more information before or during any of any of these components, and decline or withdraw from any of these during the gathering by letting Josie or Rachel know.

Yes / No—I would like to receive a summary or copy of the report about ReGeneration '09

Please sign here to be included in the *ReGeneration '09* Research project.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Schedules

Individual/focus group interview schedule

Where do you come from?

Thinking about your decision to [come here] what are your intentions for ReGeneration '09?

- What are you hoping to get out of being here?
- What do you feel that you are contributing to the hui?
- What can you imagine yourself doing once you get back to where you live?

Thinking back on your life, what do you think led to you being at ReGeneration '09?

- Family/education/community experiences
- Passions, interests and involvements

What is your personal take on what ReGeneration is all about? What do you think are the most interesting or important things about the way ReGeneration works?

- The hui/network (e.g. what do you think/why did you design the way the hui has been planned, the workshops so far, who has come here, etc)
- The concept of regeneration (e.g. in your own words how would you describe regeneration to someone who has never heard of it?)
- The youth focus

What are your dreams for your own piece of the regeneration jigsaw?

- For your whānau?
- For your school?
- For your community? etc

Thinking back over the gathering so far, when do you think you experienced the deepest shift in your relationship with regeneration?

- What was happening/being facilitated?
- How were you taking part?
- What did others do to help you get there?

Have you heard of the future-focused issues in the new curriculum—sustainability, globalisation, enterprise, and citizenship? If so…

- What do you think about them?
- What opportunities do you think they provide to schools and students?
- What would you hope happens with them next?

Discussion questions for youth-led small groups

1. How would you describe this gathering to someone back home?

• What is best thing about it?
• What are you hoping to get out of it

2. Are you learning here?

• What are you learning?
• How are you learning?

3. How would you compare this to what and how you learn at school or uni?

Reflective "starter statements"

Something I've noticed about the facilitation/the workshops is………………..

I've realised……………………….

I'm inspired or motivated to………..

Something I'm wondering (or confused about) is……………….

Observation guide

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR:

Conversations/ideas that further the groups/our own understanding about the following concepts:

- Sustainability
- ReGeneration
- Knowledge generation
- Knowledge networks/learning communities
- Youth stewardship
- Youth transition
- Future focused education

Observations/reflections on facilitation techniques, such as:

- The way facilitators model what they hope participants will do/learn
- How it relates to the role of a teacher
- Large group methodologies being used (e.g. dialogue, world café, bus stops) and how we think they are going.
- Intergenerational aspects to the learning/teaching process

Key turning points/a-ha moments for the group:

- Points of tension
- Points of uncertainty
- Points of clarity

WHAT WE WILL RECORD:

To record (as much as possible):

- Time…………
- Workshop………….
- What was happening……………..
- What was said………………
- Who said it (if possible/appropriate)……………

ReGeneration '09 Evaluation Form

1. I am…

¹O A school student   ²O Post secondary school   ³O Enviroschools organiser

***Please circle one number per line to show
how much you agree or disagree with each statement.***

2. How you found the ReGeneration '09 Jam:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a) The Jam was an enjoyable learning process	1	2	3	4	5
b) The Jam was a collaborative event	1	2	3	4	5
c) The Jam was a new way of learning/working for me	1	2	3	4	5
d) The Jam modelled how I would like to work with my school, community, etc	1	2	3	4	5
e) The Jam was well facilitated	1	2	3	4	5

3. What you learnt or how you changed because of the ReGeneration Jam:

Because of this Jam….	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
f) …I feel more able to take action around regeneration	1	2	3	4	5
g) …I have a greater awareness about sustainability issues	1	2	3	4	5
h) …I have a different or deeper understanding of regeneration	1	2	3	4	5
i) …I have a more positive approach to sustainability and regeneration	1	2	3	4	5
j) …I have learnt new and useful skills	1	2	3	4	5
k) …I know where and how to access resources or people to help	1	2	3	4	5
l) …I feel more aware of how future challenges will be felt in my local area	1	2	3	4	5

4. What you intend to do next:

I intend to…	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
m) …communicate with others about regeneration	1	2	3	4	5
n) … get more involved in local regeneration networks and processes	1	2	3	4	5
o) …work towards the 2010 ReGeneration Regional events	1	2	3	4	5

Finally, write in the blank spaces to answer each question below.

5. **Thinking across the whole Jam, what did you most like about how it was organised or facilitated?** (e.g. it might be something about the people who came, or a particular workshop, or something about the way the facilitators worked, etc...)

6. **Thinking about your learning from when your arrived to now, how have you changed the most over this Jam (**e.g. it could be something you've learnt, or a new way of thinking about things, or something you feel more confident about..)

7. **Imagine leaving here and look forward to the few months ahead, what are <u>three</u> specific things that you intend to do in relation to regeneration? (**e.g. it could be an action plan, or a new group you want to start or join, or a new way of communicating with people..)

8. **If there was to be another ReGeneration Jam like this one, what could the organisers do differently to help people learn even more or feel even more motivated to regenerate their communities?**

Questions for ReGen youth 4 months after the Jam

Where do you come from?

Thinking back to the ReGen Jam…

- What did you get out of it?
- What do you think led to you being at Regen '09? (Family/education/community experiences; Passions, interests and involvements)
- For you, what's been the most significant thing for you about being part of ReGen?

Thinking about the time since the Jam (to now)…

- What have you been involved in since Regen? (with the network/whānau/school/community)?
- Have you had further contact with any of the people who were at ReGen? How?
- Do you think you'd be doing this if you hadn't been to ReGen? (What influence do you think ReGen has had on what you're doing, or how you're going about it?)
- What have you used the Ning for? Have you invited others?
- How would you describe the ReGen network to newbies?

Thinking into the future…

- What do you see yourself doing in the next two or three years? And beyond that?
- What else can you imagine for the future of New Zealand/your community?
- Do you see the ReGen network as part of these? (How?)

There are four future-focused issues in NZ curriculum—sustainability, globalisation, enterprise, and citizenship.

- What do each of these things mean to you?
- How do you think schools could focus on these?