



SYSTEMIC CONDITIONS FOR BELONGING

Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship 2022

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Executive Summary

Dr. Antony Iton's powerful insight that, "the opposite of racism is belonging" forms the cornerstone of this paper's exploration of systemic conditions and their impact on societal issues, particularly concerning Pacific populations in New Zealand and South Auckland people. Dr. Iton's perspective highlights the importance of creating belonging as a fundamental lever and guide for addressing long-standing complex problems faced by minority groups.

This paper delves into the significance of belonging and examines how systemic conditions shape outcomes for marginalised communities. It emphasises the need for public policy and interventions to be designed with genuine intent to foster belonging, which can lead to improved health, social and economic outcomes for Pacific people in New Zealand.

Through insights gained from the California Endowment Fund, FSG, the Lupton Centre, Stanford University and the Aspen Institute, this paper highlights approaches to address systemic conditions:

- 1. Belonging as a lever for change:** This perspective challenges a prevailing narrative that attributes negative outcomes to individual or ethnic shortcomings.
- 2. The role of systemic conditions to create belonging:** using the Waters of Systems Change framework to identify systemic conditions that uphold persistent societal issues as well as being areas of opportunity to create more effective policies, practices, and fostering a stronger sense of belonging.
- 3. Community empowerment:** genuinely allowing communities to leverage their strengths and knowledge to lead community driven solutions at policy, practice and funding levels to address persistent and complex issues. Utilising approaches such as human-centred design and validating cultural expertise to involve individuals in developing solutions to be more effective and reflective of the needs of the community.

Dr. Iton's perspective underscores the urgent need to prioritise belonging as a guiding principle for policy and intervention, offering a transformative path towards addressing systemic inequalities and fostering positive outcomes for Pacific populations in New Zealand and South Auckland people.

“The opposite of racism is belonging.”

- Dr. Anthony Iton

Introduction

Based on his lived experience as an African American, a medical practitioner and his public policy work in the United States of America (USA), Dr. Anthony Iton, Vice President of the California Endowment Fund, shared a simple yet profound thought to resolving persistent societal problems faced by many minority groups: the opposite of racism is ‘belonging’.

Dr. Iton explained, if public policy and everything surrounding public policy, was genuinely designed to help people to truly ‘belong’ then there would be significantly less poverty, health issues and improved social and economic outcomes for all. Particularly for minority populations.

This paper and learning journey set out to acquire a greater understanding of systems approaches, design methods and place-based approaches from organisations in the USA. The learnings were to contribute towards identifying key levers for addressing long term problems facing Pacific people in New Zealand and South Aucklanders. However, what transpired overwhelmingly for me was the need to connect technical learnings towards an elevated urgency to developing ‘belonging’ for Pacific people and for South Aucklanders in the work I am involved with.

As a result, the way this paper been set out has taken on a markedly different path then I had planned prior to leaving New Zealand: away from a traditional report or academic format towards a more story telling layout focused on ‘belonging’ and highlighting the powerful role systemic conditions can have on outcomes for Pacific people and South Aucklanders.

In addition to highlighting key learnings from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship, this paper will lay out why these learnings can support shifting systemic conditions to create stronger ‘belonging’ and better outcomes for Pacific people and South Aucklanders.

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results.

Background

The above quote is generally attributed to Albert Einstein. This line of thinking could also summarise the substantial amount of resourcing, strategies, programmes and plans that Central Government, Local Government, the not-for-profit sector, community groups, philanthropic organisations, and individuals have invested in to address persistent problems facing Pacific people in New Zealand and South Auckland residents. Despite the major investment by successive governments and the good intentions of many groups, general outcomes for the Pacific population and people in South Auckland across health, economic, education and social indicators continue to be poor¹, or in some instances have worsened.

Regardless of the different names, when you scratch the surface of these interventions you will find many of the strategies and programmes implemented over the decades have tended to be the same and centred on the same causes. This may explain why there have not been different results in outcome indicators?

Unfortunately running parallel to the continuous poor outcomes for Pacific people and South Aucklanders, there will be several narratives and research to provide commentary on why these outcomes continue. Inspired by my interactions with Dr Iton, I thought I would share my own lived experience of the narratives communicated to me as a New Zealand born Samoan either directly, indirectly inferred or through non-verbal communication: maybe these poor outcomes for Pacific people are because Pacific people or South Aucklanders are just not smart enough, healthy enough, make too many poor choices or are too lazy as individuals and as population?

This may not be the norm to write such a thing but ultimately, it is a narrative that I have been a recipient of, and it is a narrative that many believe. Whether people or organisations externalise this is another thing.

This is a very long way from the 'belonging' Dr. Iton talked of.

Key Learning One: Belonging?

As a professional who has worked in the public sector for two decades with a post-graduate level understanding of the machinery of government, the idea of 'belonging' in areas of public policy is hazy, vague at best.

¹ <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2023-04/ap23-01.pdf>

So why did Dr. Anthony Iton, a medical doctor who trained at one of the leading medical institutes in the USA, with a PHD in law, experience as an attorney, public health officer and a senior executive emphasise the importance of belonging as key lever for change?

Dr Iton recognised as medical practitioner that there were larger influences or determinants to people's health outside of an individual's behaviours or ethnicity. To the point where in California, he shared with me his articles² highlighting an individual's postal code was more indicative of health outcomes rather than their ethnicity or genetic code.

He relayed to me one of his greatest tensions as a young medical student was learning about the latest health research and treatments in the hallowed halls of John Hopkins Medical School, while at the same time African American's were literally dying on the doorsteps of the University. They suffered from poverty, homelessness, addictions and mental health distress. This tension haunted Dr Iton as it became more evident that these outcomes were influenced by chronic systemic conditions and not necessarily just because people had made poor choices, were lazy or just not smart enough.

Sound familiar?

What do systems have to do with belonging?

Systems thinking is now a widely accepted approach that allows individuals and organisations to understand the complex inter-relationships and contexts surrounding social issues to best influence and navigate the system³.

Through my work at The Cause Collective, a Pacific Non-Government Charitable Organisation based in South Auckland, we utilise the Waters of Systems Change framework⁴ to guide some of our work. One of the underpinning concepts of this framework recognises complex and persistent societal problems are held in place primarily by six systemic conditions: policies, practices, resource flows, power, relationships and mental modes.

This framework shifts the centre away from dominant narratives about an individual's poor choices, motivation, or intelligence levels towards recognising the role systemic conditions have in reinforcing problems, and therefore the continuation of poor outcomes. A move away from the traditional focal points in turn, changes where the planning, policies and interventions are placed. As an example, in one of their largest projects the California Endowment Fund focused on the impact of income levels on health outcomes for minority communities (African American and Latino) in California.

Established in 1996, the California Endowment Fund's mission is to expand accessible health care for underserved individuals and communities to promote fundamental improvements in

² https://www.tonyiton.com/files/ugd/dbd0b9_c562912ba0f5435db5ed940dadad9de9.pdf

³ <https://www.fsg.org/resource/systems-thinking-toolkit-0/#:~:text=Systems%20thinking%20allows%20individuals%20and,influence%20and%20navigate%20the%20system.>

⁴ https://www.fsg.org/resource/water_of_systems_change/

the health status of all Californian's. Since its inception it has funded over 10,000 groups exceeding \$1.4 billion total grants to date guided by three bold idea categories of: people power, reimaging institutions, and a 21st-century health system for all.

Influenced by this lens, as the Vice President of the Californian Endowment Fund Dr. Anthony Iton worked with organisations that placed greater attention on deterrents of health and less obvious systemic conditions such as school education suspension policies.

Yes, school suspensions were a systemic intervention to improve health outcomes.

This was identified as a primary target to improve health outcomes due to the link between lifelong income levels for minority groups in California and school dropout rates. Lower education outcomes generally resulted in lower household incomes, which equated to poorer health outcomes. To some this may seem like common sense however, repetitive policies and strategies indicate no real appetite to change the repetitive cycles, or the systemic condition of 'practice'. This change in focus taken by the Endowment Fund also acknowledged that the 'health intervention' here was not focused on individuals, rather further upstream to system conditions that were contributing to and holding this part of the problem in place.

Again, what do systems have to do with belonging?

The work of Dr. Iton and partners discovered that schools across California districts were suspending or expelling minority students excessively against national averages. The Endowment Fund and partner organisations placed emphasis on policy changes and training for schools to manage and work through infractions instead of expelling students. Trainings and policy included acknowledging the role of implicit bias in these processes. Furthermore, a communication campaign ran alongside this work to trumpet a UCLA research stat line of 400,000 suspensions⁵ versus 382,000 graduations across TV, radio, print and billboards. The research based on the Office of Civil rights data brought to light sobering statistics for all to see the enormity and underlying pattern occurring. The communication campaign also attempted to soften dominant negative narratives surrounding individuals and minorities.

What started with a focus on health outcomes quickly revealed the need to target changes in policies further upstream and indirectly towards providing a greater sense of 'belonging' for minority students in their schools and community. Dr. Iton couldn't stress enough to me the importance of connectivity as a fundamental tool to create impactful change.

With education and health outcomes for Pacific people in New Zealand still behind mainstream averages, this raises the question whether our systemic conditions have been set up in a way that truly create 'belonging' for Pacific and South Auckland students? Again, there have been multiple education strategies and investment to support Pacific outcomes but the same population outcomes largely exist. This paper is not advocating for a review of

⁵ <https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/summary-reports/suspended-education-in-california>

suspension policies for Pacific students, rather it is asking whether the systemic conditions currently in place are effective?

How then could policies and practices be different enough to develop a greater sense of 'belonging' for Pacific and South Auckland students?

Key Learning Two: "The key is to let them be themselves."

Dr. Iton has written several papers and been involved with extensive research on systemic conditions and health outcomes. However, with all his experience and technical expertise Dr. Iton believes all it takes for people to 'belong' is to allow communities to be themselves. It is as simple, yet as hard as this. In his own words directly to me, "The key is to let them be themselves."

From a systems perspective, this would involve policy and decision makers giving communities the permission to be themselves in how policies and strategies are set. In my discussions with Jennifer Splansky-Juster of FSG San Francisco, she reinforced points in their Waters of Systems Change framework around the need for prominent stakeholders (for example, government agencies) to fully embrace an approach to systems change, then they must recognise the need for their own ways of thinking and acting to change. This should not be interpreted as allowing a free for all but an understanding that many of the current approaches are just not sufficient to achieve different outcomes.

A rare instance of this occurring at an optimum level for Pacific people in New Zealand was during COVID-19 period in late 2021 and early 2022 where Pacific community leaders were wholly empowered to lead their communities towards vaccination protection.

In August 2021 the COVID-19 double vaccination rates for Pacific people were at the mid twenty percent level. Within six months the double vaccination rate for Pacific people in New Zealand exceeded ninety percent and had even overtaken mainstream double vaccination rates at the time. This was not by accident and would not have been achieved through standard public health messaging. Not even the national COVID crises or lockdowns could motivate and achieve those levels for Pacific people in New Zealand. This came about from proper partnership from Central Government, the Ministry of Health (Te Whatu Ora), Pacific Health Providers and multiple Pacific community leaders who all worked together to attain those levels.

The New Zealand Government and agencies shifted the systemic conditions to enable a greater sense of 'belonging' by allowing Pacific community leaders to be legitimate parts of addressing this public health crises. They shifted the traditional systemic policies, practices, resourcing and power conditions to validate the expertise and knowledge the Pacific community leaders have always had in leading and being able to reach their communities.

As an example, Central Government and Te Whatu Ora released \$2.6 million through our organisation The Cause Collective directly to community leaders to enable them to run their own vaccination events and campaigns jointly with Pacific Health Providers and local District

Health Boards. Pacific church, village, youth, arts and sports leaders brought their flags, music and colourful disposition to run events and workshops that Pacific people felt comfortable with. These events and workshops were their events, where they felt comfortable and belonged.

Vital to the setup of this approach was not just making the resourcing far more accessible for the community leaders through the funding, it was the underlying validation of the Pacific leaders and approaches that have seldom been acknowledged by the traditional health and policy 'technical experts'. Put more simply, the experts knew that was not achievable without the Pacific community leaders.

The result again, double vaccination rates for Pacific people within six months superseded mainstream results. To further contextualise this, no other vaccination or immunisation programme within New Zealand has achieved this type of result where Pacific rates were higher than mainstream. The key to belonging, as Dr Iton stressed, is let them be themselves.

Disseminating 'Belonging'

The question then must be asked, what would happen if this same approach was taken across wider facets of New Zealand public policy and systems? The learnings I have taken from the Winston Churchill Fellowship is helping the organisation I work for answer this question in tangible ways.

The Cause Collective⁶ is a Pacific community organisation based in South Auckland that focuses on developing breakthrough solutions to complex and persistent problems. The organisation is not a service delivery provider of traditional social services as there are several great organisations who offer the needed services to support Pacific and mainstream populations.

The Cause Collective (TCC) utilises three disciplines to underpin their approach for developing breakthrough solutions for large scale social change: systems thinking, critical thinking and design approach. The three disciplines are weaved together by the cultural frameworks of our different Pacific ethnic groups. I have been able to share my learnings from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship (the Fellowship) and organisations such as the California Endowment Fund and FSG in the TCC Fakaako sessions. 'Fakaako' is a Niue word and concept that represents to learn or to teach. It is the name of our internal development sessions to support TCC staff and the overall organisation in the work for social change. Along with the organisational disciplines, the sessions help support staff to ensure we are not employing the same strategies that have been applied over the decades to address persistent problems.

In addition to the sessions I have led, I have been able to weave the learnings of the Fellowship throughout my role and responsibilities as an executive manager in TCC which has oversight of most of our social change movements and technical disciplines.

⁶ <https://thecausecollective.org.nz/>

TCC works closely with executive and regional management, and policy groups of organisations such as the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Ministry of Pacific People and Local Government where I have also been able to implement and share my Fellowship learnings to create greater 'belonging'.

Key Learning Three: A Neighbourhood Approach to Belonging

As noted previously TCC is not a traditional service provider and focuses parts of its work on shifting systemic conditions such as policy change or resource flows to support social change. This type of work cannot occur in isolation without the lived experience and true partnership with communities that are affected; communities who are frequently not invited into the decision making and development tent.

One of TCC's key pieces of work is the 'One Love' South Auckland neighbourhood initiative. This initiative recognises the importance of working together with residents to grow the social capital (strengths, knowledge and expertise) and social infrastructure that many South Auckland neighbourhoods already hold. However, whether they are utilised by prominent stakeholders outside of token consultation or restricted co-design is another thing.

The Lupton Centre or its community arm FCS (Focused Community Strategies), is an organisation in Atlanta that has similar approaches to neighbourhood work and social change. Their attention is on the historical neighbourhoods of South Atlanta which are predominantly populated by African Americans. It is also recognised as having some of the poorest neighbourhoods in the state of Georgia.

Several of the residents in South Atlanta are the direct descendants of African slaves of the area. Many of whom continue to suffer from trauma because of the historical and existing systemic conditions in place since the abolition of slavery. While many overt and explicit negative systemic conditions such as the infamous 'Jim Crow' laws have long been abolished, Dr. Shawn Duncan of FCS reports that many African American's still do not feel that they 'belong' in the neighbourhoods their families have lived in for generations.

As the Director of the Lupton Centre, Dr. Duncan reinforced similar themes from FSG's Waters of Systems Change and Dr. Iton's sharings, that many of the current problems in South Atlanta have been intentionally caused and not the result of ethnicities or individual choices.

To combat and shift these conditions, or hidden forces as the Lupton Centre describe it, Dr. Duncan and his organisation work with residents in South Atlanta to empower neighbourhoods by leveraging the unique attributes of the people, the place and some the systems that shape them. A key emphasis of their work in neighbourhoods is on genuine connection: between residents and stakeholders, and amongst residents themselves. Connection between South Auckland neighbourhoods and Pacific community groups in New Zealand, to organisations and government agencies is fragile. Despite the good intention and language of the different groups and government organisations who have worked with South

Aucklanders and Pacific community groups, the saviour or hero⁷ mentality is still a prominent thread in their approach. Therefore, the depth of connection between residents and stakeholders will only go so far.

Stacy Brungardt, Lead Advisor at the Lupton Centre, showed me around a few of the South Atlanta neighbourhoods they worked in. She shared a central tenet of their connection focus was to firstly be invited into the neighbourhood. That is, they will not work in a South Atlanta neighbourhood unless they are invited in by key formal and informal neighbourhood champions.

This was evidenced further as I met directly with residents in these neighbourhoods and was joined by Ken Akbar. Mr Akbar is the Civic Lead Director of Historic Joyland Park who volunteered his time to be with me due to his trust in the work of the Lupton Centre. As a resident of Historic Joyland Park, Mr Akbar validated the connection focus provided by the Lupton Centre and how they worked together with residents to truly empower and leverage unique attributes of the people and place. This is a stark contrast to local or central government organisations who create strategies and expect South Auckland neighbourhoods to be part of their organisational strategies.

On the other hand, the Lupton Centre had many examples of joint initiatives formed with their residents. For example, the establishment of the Carvers Market grocery store and the Community Grounds café.

The Carvers Market grocery store was established together with residents as South Atlanta was seen as a food desert requiring residents to travel out of their neighbourhoods to access staples such as fresh fruit and vegetables. These products were simply not accessible without taking an hour-long return bus trip. The Carvers Market allowed many of the low-income families in the area to access staples within walking distance. It also provided sustainable employment for several residents.

As with the marketplace, the Community Grounds café also provided sustainable employment for residents. In addition, it served a dual purpose for residents, it provided them another venue and opportunity to connect with each other socially. Like the marketplace, access to something such a café was not within reach of this community. These two ideas were not the sole brainchild of the Lupton Centre organisation. These were developed in strong connection with residents in South Atlanta to address some of the issues brought to light.

The Lupton Centre in their own way were shifting systemic conditions to help South Atlanta residents to feel more like they 'belong' to the neighbourhoods they were born into, rather than feeling as if they needed to leave dying neighbourhoods.

It is difficult to describe some of the neighbourhoods I witnessed in South Atlanta as many were filled with abandoned or condemned homes. A comparison would be the equivalent of seeing a regular suburb of Auckland or Wellington half abandoned. However, the approach

⁷ <https://youtu.be/ef28YkeaySM> Shawn Duncan Tedx Talk on Changing Charity for Good

taken by the Lupton Centre has been very measured as they are also aware that development without residents, leads to displacement. Or, more commonly known, as gentrification of neighbourhoods. Fortunately the Lupton Centre has strategies in place with residents to combat and ensure there is a mixed model in place that avoids the displacement of current residents while growing the area and sense of pride in belonging to the neighbourhood.

Key Learning Four: True Connection is a Path to Belonging

In visiting South Atlanta Dr. Duncan's explained that their organisation did not follow the same template in each neighbourhood and instead followed the mandate given to them by the neighbourhood they worked with. On one level this could be viewed as 'co-designing' or 'co-developing' which is in sync with the approach that many organisations in New Zealand have taken over the last five to ten years.

Human-Centred Design approach, or 'co-design' as it is more commonly known is an approach using multiple stakeholders (including users of a product or those affected) to design solutions to problems. Historically the design approach would normally have technical experts who would design the solutions. However, the co-design method has a more elevated role for users or affected members of the problem as collaborators in the development and testing of solutions. This is an approach that many private and public sector organisations continue to use. In between my visits with FSG, the California Endowment Fund and with the Lupton Centre I was able to visit Stanford University's Hasso Plattner Institute of Design School.

Stanford's 'D-School' is known as one of the world's leading design institutions. Many graduates have contributed to Silicon Valley's reputation as an innovation capital for new ventures and problem solvers. In spending time with one of their Senior Designers Nadia Roumani, she was able to take me through some of their methodologies and techniques they teach in the school. I have been fortunate enough previously to have learnt some of the techniques she outlined. What stood out for me with my time at Stanford was Nadia Roumani's emphasis of design really being more a process. This aligned more with what I was learning from the other organisations I visited.

For example, the Lupton Centre, to get to the solution of problems they did not go through a pre-determined amount of 'co-design' workshops as is common with many New Zealand local and central government agencies. They knew connection was not time limited and instead worked at the pace of relationships, that is, it was a process.

The more nuanced key learnings I received from Nadia Roumani was being able to recognise and work through the tension between time and innovation. I believe many New Zealand's agencies acknowledge this tension but still bulldoze through the connection and relationships required to work with Pacific communities. Without this true connection, the depth and effectiveness of the solutions will continue to be shallow and continue to provide the same results we are familiar with.

Key Learning Five: Shifting Today's Conditions for Tomorrow's Future

Interacting with the Aspen Institute's Economic Opportunities Program may appear to be an outlier to the 'belonging' learning that had dominated and been replayed in different forms across my exchanges in the Fellowship. This would be true had it not been for what Dr. Shelly Steward, Aspen Institute Director, had shared with me on her work in Aspen's Future of Work-Economic Opportunities Program.

I had initially planned to learn about this program due to The Cause Collective's own future skills shift initiative. This TCC initiative works off the premise that a large proportion of Pacific people are in 'low skilled' roles and are highly susceptible to technology and automation advances in the New Zealand employment market. As a result, TCC has set out to develop a number of breakthrough solutions to reduce this risk for the Pacific population, particularly the younger Pacific population. This includes the development of the TCC's South Auckland Creative and Tech Hub (SACTH).

In meeting with Dr. Steward I was half expecting to be inspired by grand ideas on technology programmes that Aspen were implementing. What I instead encountered were similar fundamental themes and approaches repeated from the previous organisations I had visited in the United States: systemic conditions were holding problems in place and exacerbating inequalities of race, a focus on workers experience (connection) being vital to advance policy ideas to prominent stakeholders (government agencies), building and activating community leaders to lead workplace protection and building a more inclusive economy.

Hearing this from Dr. Steward was not a disappointment by any means. Instead, it was the final spark that ignited the original fuel laid weeks earlier by Dr. Iton that challenged me at a personal level to accept and create 'belonging' as a legitimate key lever for change. While Dr. Steward explained the different elements of their work and how they were implemented, the underlying concepts kept pointing towards recognising and shifting larger systemic conditions that not only impacted more vulnerable populations today, but also their prospects for the future. Again, a vital ingredient acknowledged by Aspen's Future of Work programme was the connection and ownership of these issues with those most affected.

That is, creating greater belonging.

Conclusion and Recommendations: Systemic Conditions for Belonging is Possible

Within the Waters of Systems Change paper⁸ a story is shared that some people may have read before:

A fish is swimming along one day when another fish comes up and says, "Hey, how's the water?" The fish stares back blankly at the second fish and then says, "What's water?"

Understanding concepts such as systems change can be difficult. The Waters of Systems Change framework developed by FSG is one interpretation to help people see the 'water all around them' and grasp systems change by identifying six primary conditions: policies, resources, practice, relationships, power and mental modes.

Believing that a shift in systemic conditions can have a significant impact on outcomes for Pacific populations can be difficult especially when narratives, whether it be nuanced or overt, identify the persistent problems being the fault of the individual or trait of an ethnic group. All 'they' need to do is work harder, be smarter and make better decisions.

Although once you see the 'water all around you' it is impossible to unsee. It becomes impossible to unsee how systemic conditions detract from a person or a groups sense of belonging. It is impossible to unsee how systemic conditions hold and reinforce certain persistent and complex societal problems; problems often associated with minority populations.

In New Zealand, whether people want to acknowledge this or not, systemic conditions have had a significant impact on Pacific populations and South Auckland people. The decades of endless policy, strategy, resources and interventions have clearly been ineffective for large scale impact and positive outcomes for Pacific people.

My learning experience enabled by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship exposed me to many learnings and allowed me to develop a number of recommendations. However, by the end of my visit to the United States, it was one simple sharing from Dr Anthony Iton which superseded them all: the opposite of racism is belonging.

To shift the persistent and complex problems faced by Pacific populations and South Aucklanders, the six systemic conditions of: policy; practice; resource flows; relationships; power; and mental modes, must focus on helping these populations to 'belong' more. 'Belong' with policies that are more accepting of Pacific world views, 'belong' with more understanding in organisational practices by validating Pacific approaches to practices, 'belong' by resourcing the things that truly matter to Pacific people, 'belong' by establishing true relationships that are not defined by organisational or financial parameters when working with Pacific people or community leaders who are the trusted representatives of

⁸ https://www.fsg.org/resource/water_of_systems_change/

Pacific communities, 'belong' by ceding organisational or traditional technical expertise to Pacific knowledge basis, and 'belong' by changing mental modes or mindsets to believe Pacific people can truly thrive if they are given the full chance to.

Shifting these conditions is not restricted to the New Zealand Government or government agencies, it can be supported by many regardless of a person's profession or position in an organisation. It can even be supported at a neighbourhood level. My role and work with The Cause Collective will continue to plan, strategise, disrupt, advocate and highlight my learnings attained from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship in all facets of my work and every initiative I am involved with including 'One Love' and the Future Skills Shift.

It is hoped the simple narrative shared by Dr. Iton to help people to belong, will help readers of this report to also see the 'water we are swimming in' and the significant influence this has on Pacific populations in New Zealand and South Aucklanders.

As I commented earlier in this paper, I acknowledge advocating for 'belonging' as a policy lever is not the most pragmatic advice. However, considering the learnings in this paper, I recommend to policy makers, decision makers, strategy developers, budget allocators that have influence on Pacific people in New Zealand, the following as practical steps to support their work:

1. Review why successive policies and strategies over decades in your specific field have failed to shift population outcomes for Pacific people.
2. Overlay the findings in recommendation one, with the question, "in my field/sector, what would it take to create a policy or funding decision that develops greater belonging for Pacific people?"

Appendix

Travel Summary

Date (2022)	Location	Organisation	Primary Connection-Focus Area
6-7 Oct	Los Angeles	California Endowment	Focus: systemic health determinants, health policies. Dr Anthony Iton
10 Oct	Depart Los Angeles		Flight to San Francisco
11-12 Oct	San Francisco	FSG	Focus: systems thinking, approach and practice. In addition, Collective Impact approach. Jennifer Spluster
13-14 Oct	Stanford	Stanford University	Focus: design approaches and social innovation methods Nadia Nouma
15 Oct	Depart San Francisco		Flight to Atlanta
17-20 Oct	Atlanta	Lupton Centre - Focused Community Strategies	Focus: community and economic development, place-based initiatives. Dr. Shawn Duncan
21 Oct	Depart Atlanta		Flight to New York
24-25 Oct	New York	Aspen Institute	Focus: economic development and financial security programme Dr. Shelly Steward



Figure 1: Dr Anthony (Tony) Iton, California Endowment Fund



Figure 2: Nadia Roumani, Senior Designer Stanford University



Figure 3: Dr. Shawn Duncan, Lupton Centre (FCS), Atlanta



Figure 4: Dr. Duncan and South Atlanta Residents



Figure 5: Stanford Hasso Plattner Institute of Design ("D. School"), Stanford University



Figure 6: Community Grounds Cafe, South Atlanta



Figure 7 Stacy Brungardt, Lupton Centre, Atlanta



Figure 8: Examples of abandoned homes and buildings common in South Atlanta



Figure 9: Ken Akbar, Civic Lead Director of Historic Joyland Park, South Atlanta