

Time for a new social contract

For the second session in the series, we will focus on how the crisis is mobilising new kinds of citizen engagement and altering the social contracts of society. How do we best understand the ways in which people are mobilising in this time of crisis? And what teachable moments do they offer us that we should hold on to?

Grappling with this will be [Panthea Lee](#), the Exec Director of Reboot, [Penny Hagen](#) Director at Auckland Co-design Lab + The Southern Initiative & [Louise Pulford](#), Executive Director of Social Innovation Exchange and [Angie Tangaere](#) Social Intrapreneur, The Southern Initiative.

• [Watch the recording of this call](#)

If this link breaks tag me in a comment and I will sort:
james@states-of-change.org

This is collaborative. How you can help.

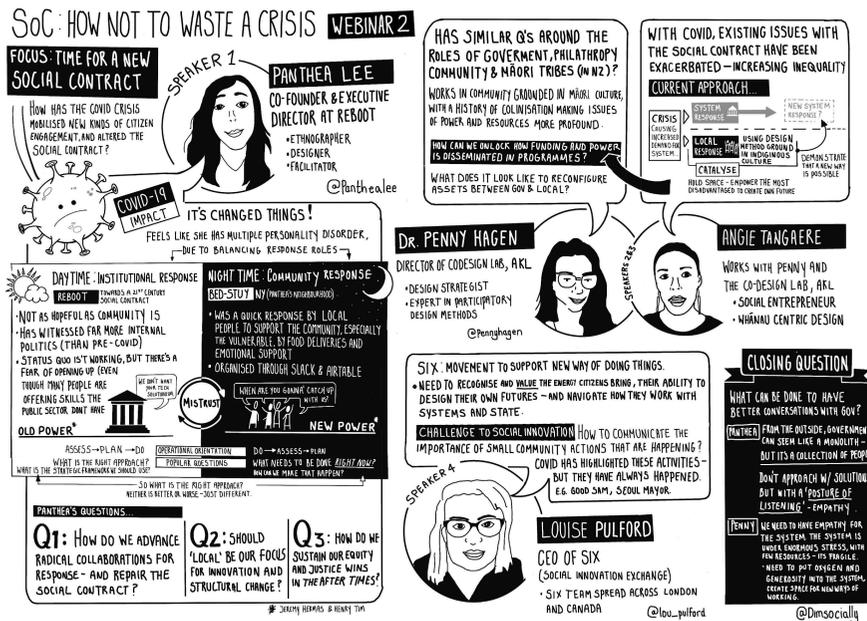
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Notes from our other sessions:

1. [How not to waste a crisis](#) with Geoff Mulgan, Gabriella Gomez Mont and Marco Steinberg.
2. [Time for a new social contract?](#) Panthea Lee, Penny Hagen, Angie Tangaere and Louise Pulford.
3. [Leadership in a time of crisis](#) with Andrea Siodmock, Christian Bason and Sam Hannah-Rankin.
4. [Experimenting in a time of crisis](#) with Hefen Wong, Giulio Quaggiotto and Mikko Annala.
5. [Playing with the future](#) with Noah Raford and Anab Jain.
6. [Slowdown and the future of living](#) with Dan Hill, Charlie Leadbeater and Cassie Robinson

Notes!

Kelly Duggan aka @DimSocially drew these great sketchnotes for us:



Meeting began with 5minute check-ins in breakout rooms.

Panthea's blog [rebuilding a Compassionate Social Contract in the Face of COVID-19](#).

[How to Respond to a Pandemic When Our Institutions Can't](#)

Panthea: Intro - from reboot, leading a team of organisers, designers, strategizers who work at the intersection of social movements, society

groups, media and international organisations to design and create things together that they wouldn't do on their own. How do we bring people together to create radical courageous change.

Or at least, that was the focus in the “before-times”.

By day - team is working with gov, organisers and researchers to understand what response options there are available.

By night - working with groups and activists to deliver mutual aid and urgent responses to those in need.

Trained as an ethnographer, designer and organiser and facilitator - all those roles are needed and being played right now.

Personally - very surreal experience. Generally, I feel very lucky to be able to talk to all these different groups, but now it's more like having a multi-personality disorder. And so, hopefully together we can figure out what's going on, you thought you were joining a blue-sky thinking call but actually you're just here to help a confused canadian in new york city.

[You can find Panthea's slides here.](#)

Community level observations:

Bed-Stuy context - Panthea's neighbourhood.

They've started a local mutual support group and had 2600 people. Started tracking local issues on Airtable. Things like getting food to ppl in need. Also that people needed things like a chat, not just 'necessary goods' (that stuff's important too).

Backend - sign-up group to come in, join up via slack, then there's a data management system via airtable to track & manage the needs, responses and relationship, then use paypal/venmo for money transfer.

Success that they're seeing already:

Groceries to 1000 neighbours.

Sourcing healthcare workers

400+ check-ins with vulnerable neighbours

Community fundraising made this possible

This has been invigorating to be a part of, but this is done in the evenings, weekends and feels in conflict to what's being done in the 'day job'.

Institutional level observations:

- Less 'hope giving' than I'd wish.
- So much internal politics. Dialed up to 11. A crisis hasn't seen people move beyond previous grievances etc. Lack of rallying around the issues.
- People scared of opening up 'the mess' to 'outsiders'.
- Mistrust of outsiders and 'amateur changemakers'
- The status-quo isn't working. It's been hard to help gov. There's so much local neighbourhood energy, but no direction for it. Ideas coming up from community are dismissed as 'tech solutionism' or amateur-hour.
- Mistrust goes both ways - the outside groups see gov work and philanthropic funding as 'top down' and are equally distrustful of it.

- Local campaigning groups see their role to protest only - lots of 'yelling' less helping.

<< ... tech interlude... >>

I'm making sense of this with the new power and old power perspective.

Questions from 'day-time conversations' from institutions- "what is the right approach?" "what is the framework we should operate under?" vs 'night time conversations' from community questions are "what needs to be done *right now*"

	Institutionally-Driven Change	Community-Driven Change
Operational Orientation	Assess → Plan → Do	Do → Assess → Plan
Popular Questions Right Now	"What is <i>the</i> right approach?" "What is the strategic framework we should operate under?"	"What needs to be done <i>right now</i> ?" "How can we do our best to make th happen?"
Believes Answers Will Come From...	Governments and "systems change" in the abstract—at present, one inconclusive Zoom call at a time	Individuals and "systems change" in the concrete—one completed action a time
Outputs to Date	Planning calls, briefings, data models, papers, tweets	Essential needs met, businesses saved, livelihoods stabilized
Approach to Radical Collaboration	Fearful: "What if they see how messy we are behind the scenes, behind 'the professionalism'?" Yes, but...: "We know we need help from different partners, but we need new partnership frameworks and protocols in place first. We're not sure how, so let us ask around..."	Enthusiastic: "This is all a mess, and excited to have another set of hands figure it out together. What are you good at and when can you start?" Yes, and...: "Ready to help? Great, let's get you going. We trust you to c your best, and we'll figure things out we go."
Target Change	Impact—at as great a scale as possible	Impact—one human at a time
Sense of Urgency	"Let's give it a bit more time and see. The right solution, partners, and collaboration channels (that we are suited to work within) will emerge..."	"We must act now—who knows wha tomorrow will bring? We can't let perfect be the enemy of good-enough for now."

[How to Respond to a Pandemic When Our Institutions Can't](#)

Ory Okolloh Mwangi on twitter asked "What is a government?". Responses were illuminating. This has brought out the deep mistrust of government.

Insert from the chat:

From Rachael McGuinness to Everyone: (07:25 pm) in terms of internal politics, fear of opening up etc being heightened at

this time - i wonder, is this something specific to American context, are others outside of the US experiencing this?

*From Matt Leach to Everyone: (07:23 pm)
Amazing stuff - with staggering tech backbone compared to local communities I'm working with in the UK (where distributing Kindle Fires to facilitate online communications is cutting edge). Does the neighbourhood have a significant middle-class skills base to draw on? How typical is it of other places, with perhaps less access to resource, skills, capacity?*

How can gov be better at 'being helped' as well as 'doing the helping'?

*From Sarah Holliday to Everyone: (07:29 pm)
What is the ideal scale for mutual aid groups? Tech and \$ is really useful to scale and make the process more efficient, but is that more effective? Especially thinking about long term sustainability of groups (including post-covid)*

My tortured questions:

- How do we advance radical collaborations for response - and repair the social contract? nb. social contract is not just between state and citizen. Many more actors than that.
- Should 'local' be our focus for innovation and structural change? The dice have been loaded in favour of big lobbyists. How can we work around that?
- How do we sustain our equity and justice wins in the After Times?

Leave you with this:

From Kristin Wolff to Everyone - The Zoom I left for this one was a brainstorm that ended with the first two questions.

*From Louise Pulford to Everyone: (07:37 pm)
@James and Kristin - This is my biggest question now. How do we start to link all these conversations so we can make sure we are building*

Penny Hagen

Also asking similar questions, thanks for sharing your work Panthea. As intro - Kia ora koutou katoa - hello everybody - I'm speaking from Tāmaki-makau-rau, Auckland Aotearoa, it's early here!

Our questions too - what's the role of government, of philanthropy of community, and for us what is the role of iwi - maori tribes, groups who have particular connections to parts of New Zealand and they play a strong role from a legal stand-point in the Treaty context but also in terms of our covid-response.

It brings up questions around sovereignty - and hopefully my colleague Angie can jump in and share her perspectives on this later too.

Local is where we are starting. Our little lab sits between central gov and local gov, and have our feet on the ground here in South Auckland, in a community which is grounded in the culture of the Maori and Pacific population that live here, and the history of this

piece of land is that it's confiscated from Maori by the crown so the equity question that was always here really comes forward in this context, the history of colonisation and the on-going affects of that are made more profound by what we're currently seeing. Bringing an even more powerful lens to the question of power sharing - and who gets to decide how the resources flow.

Something we were interested in, prior to this time, is unlocking the way that funding and resources and power is configured around services, and this idea that formal programs and services (usually government contracted) is our standard response to "solving problems", yet there is so much more that can come from community and families - skills and expertise that is not well recognised within our current service system. The default service response also really hasn't worked for a long time for a lot of people. And it continues to be not the optimal solution in a time of crisis either!

The work that we've been trying to do and understand is what does it look like to reconfigure those resources, take the strengths and assets of government and the strengths and assets of community and reconfigure them differently.

The government system is immature in being able to do that, we heard some from Panthea about why that might be.

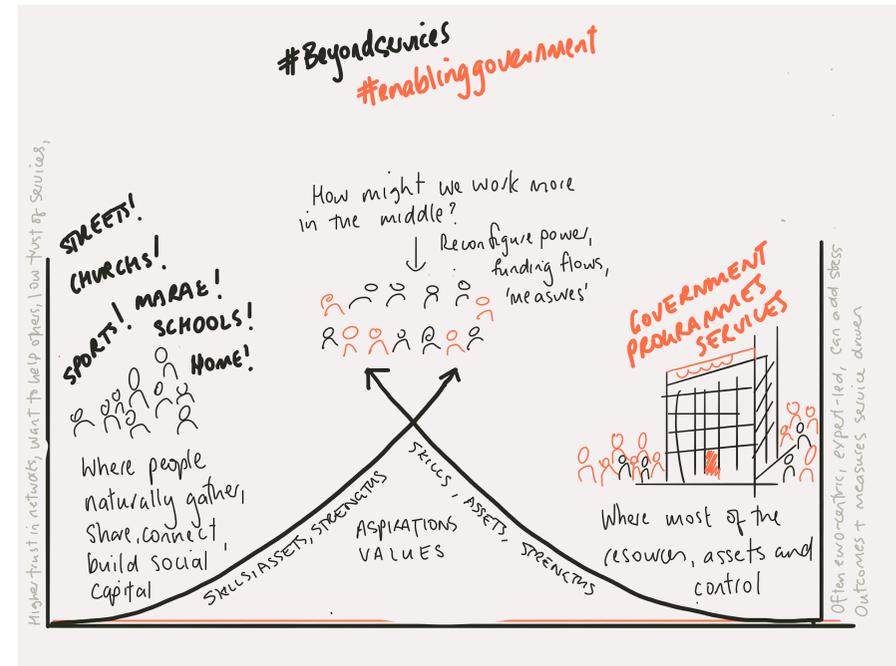
What we've seen here - is a much more dynamic landscape, real responsiveness from philanthropy and some really fast action from government and a huge influx of response from community, iwi and marae as well.

Whether those things can be sustained as new models of integration is what we're interested in.

For instance - there's been a loosening of how money is flowing. We have a high trust scenario with our government handing over money to businesses, that high trust scenario hasn't necessarily carried over to the social welfare context. In some cases we've been good at saying 'have what you need, do what you need and we'll come back to it later', and in other cases we've kind of reinforced a very low trust system with communities - where they were already been poorly served by government, and that the response has compounded the stress for people.

For example, we're seeing who's taking responsibility for things about who gets in and out of areas, raises interesting questions about sovereignty and who gets to decide how to shut down spaces to protect people. And what does history tell us about how people have or haven't been protected. There's lots of tolerance happening for new ways of working and we're interested is shifting this from instead of tolerating certain things in times of crisis we're welcoming those and seeing them as strengths and opportunities.

We're interested in that space between gov and community:



Notes from Penny:

We are particularly focused on new ways of configuring assets and resources that allow different kinds of community lead responses. What is needed to support working in the middle, new ways of collaborating and supporting different kinds of responses that are family/whānau-led - that build capacity in families and communities to lead their own responses > [working beyond programmes and services.](#)

Questions

- What does enabling government look like?
- What does it mean to support and work effectively with other forms of expertise?
- What different forms of governance, measurement and funding flows are needed?
- What does success, sustainability and scale look like in these settings - is it about professionalisation?
- What is the opportunity now as there is great momentum about working differently?

Normally it's really hard to reconfigure assets and shift away from being attached to programmes and services as the system is too much tied into the BAU - right now this is not so much the case as many standard BAU has been broken down. How can we use this oxygen?

Questions we are asking with our teams as part of weekly reflection on emerging issues, opportunities and practices in COVID19

- How are you doing?
- What are you observing hearing for families/whānau - what are people are feeling? Thinking? Doing? What issues are emerging (short/longer term)
- What are you observing/hearing in our systems partners (business, community organisations, agencies)? What issues are emerging (short/longer term)
- What new norms, behaviours or models are emerging? How might we support those and build systems value and capacity around these?

From Brenton Caffin to Everyone: (07:42 pm)

Crisis can bring people (sectors) together. How do we carry that muscle memory forward to what follows after the crisis?

There's lots of tolerance of things in a crisis how do we push on and do we make this the new normal?

Angie:

Tena Tatou Katoa - greetings from Aotearoa.

Thank you for sharing your work Panthea and I want to acknowledge all the work that everybody is doing.

I found these questions are really thought provoking - as an indigenous person who's people have lived through colonisation we've always had a problem getting a social contract in this country. This situation only exacerbates that.

To add to what Penny was saying, my job is to ask "what are the compelling alternatives to respond and support our families in a radically different way?"

So what I'm observing from systems and institutions level is the crisis interventions is a reaction from the system in much the same was as before the pandemic, just amped up a bit.

What we know is that the system in itself has created a whole lot of inequity for our people and that wasn't working before the pandemic, so my job is to hold some space open so we can do some different

things and figure out how we then sustain them alongside the system response.

So, in my community here in papakura looking at the crisis intervention response, the multi-agency response for our community which is required - need to hold space to empower those who are experiencing the most inequity to lead the design and the implementation for the own solutions to their most complex social and economic problems.

The way we are thinking about doing that, we use a design methodology but it is grounded in a indigenous knowledge framework - that sits at the heart of how we're interacting with those experiencing the most disadvantage.

So what I'm seeing, is the system contracts - and responds in a way it needs to show it's own value, to validate itself. So I'm in that response, I'm trying to influence things within that response but I'm also running alongside that response to support our community in whatever I can to help them create their own alternatives.

What I'm seeing, in the same way Panthea shared, is in the community, there is more goodwill and intent to connect in my community, people want to help, in an authentic way. My job is to catalyse these community strengths that exist right now, in a way that can demonstrate to the system it's a valuable power/way of working/being. Let's ask how do we return back to being people we were in the past? To supporting each other, looking after each other?

And then once we've done that, how do we reconfigure those options and services and reflect it back to the system.

Back to the opening question, the social contract has been problematic for us from the start, I don't have the answers. But what I do know is that - start local.

Because as humans we've got to connect in with other, and look after each, valuing each other, acknowledge each other - and that's driven from an indigenous knowledge standpoint for local.

So we're thinking about that for systems change in locality.

We've tried systems change from the usual mechanisms, in government and institutions. For the most part, our inequity continues, so we're trying to create those compelling alternatives at a local level to demonstrate their viability and feasibility and reflect that back to the system at the local level.

Louise

I've got as many more questions, so I'll go quickly. Here at SIX we are a movement to support new ways of doing things, and this for us, is social innovation. It's about recognising and valuing the energy that citizens bring to the lives of our cities, the energy that citizens have as designers of their own futures, and navigating how citizens work with systems and states, and as you say Angie, holding the system and the community responses as one system contracts.

And something that came up in all your conversations, is the values of this - particularly when thinking about governments and foundations.

One of the challenges of social innovation, for many years has been how do we communicate how important these community actions are when used collectively together. And actually the covid-19 current crisis is all about seeing these things with a magnifying glass, amplified and really connected, really highlighted all together in a very short space of time.

These things have been happening before, just more spread and distributed and it takes foundations and governments taking risks and backing things to really get going.

Three examples:

GoodSAM in the UK. Platform that connects medical officials in an area to someone in need, if there's an medical emergency. This platform is now being used, in 24hours, to mobilise ½ million volunteers in the NHS. Wouldn't have imagined that even 6 months ago. That came about through specific investment of 'social innovation'. It existed before all this, and it happened because it was backed by Nesta and governments, they took a risk.

Mayor of Seoul. Mayor Park Won-Soon has been championing from a city government perspective, community initiatives for years. He's been criticised, for not choosing big built infrastructure, and he did a cost benefit analysis on all the smaller initiatives he's done all over the city, but he's built social infrastructure and muscle memory in community.

Athens - they've had a crisis a couple of years ago. So interested in seeing how they built their muscle memory from Athens, and what can we learn from them? And what can we all do to build some systems and initiatives, for these amazing community efforts and have seen in the past and will continue into the future.

Question from Jesper: Let's get practical - what can be done right now from governments (capacity, comms, collaboration) to make the engagement with citizens better?

Panthea: sometimes to people on the outside, government seems like a monolith. But government is human, it's a collection of individuals. But the narrative can be "it's all wrong. Everything is broken." But how do you come to this from a "posture of listening" - and engage with gov with more empathy. Show up as an actor in good faith.

I've been inspired by the craftivism - quiet, gentle activism.

Penny: what comes to mind as Panthea was speaking, a mantra we have for ourselves to stay collected is "we need to have empathy for the system" - it's easy to feel outraged a lot of the time. But what we are consistently faced with is a system that is under enormous stress and the resources are thin and there is plenty of fragility. And this comes out in multiple ways with multiple payers, and we get to create spaces in between.

And **we get to create oxygen and put generosity into the system.** And that takes different forms, sometimes it's time, money, buying out roles so that their job can keep functioning while they have different

bilateral conversations, so it's that in-between creating spaces for different ways of working. At the heart of it, we're having to come back to having empathy for why the system is acting in a certain way.

And let's also remind people really gently that oftentimes we want to fix things in the world, we also need to look back at the system and see internally what we're doing that's compounding the external issues.

That's a gentle process. To ask, don't go out there to find what's wrong externally, instead look at what's happening internally. And that's a brave thing to do, so I'll leave you with that.

Full session ends with thanks to presenters - invitation is to stay on and keep chatting over a Q&A session:

*From Kristin Wolff to Everyone: (08:02 pm)
Wish I could stay, this is really great - thanks so much... Just adding a thought. Right now, many rules and policies have been broken in the short term with the intent of going back. How do we not go back?*

Immy:

Question to Angie and Penny - wanted to ask about the difficulties of the social contract. With that colonised history - there's so much mistrust 'the system' from communities (rightly so) - how do you act as a bridge between the mainstream system and the community you're from and serve? How do you navigate that?

Angie: the way I try to reconcile this is in my own practice.

That's why being on a local level is so important, locality. I'm a translator. I try to hold that space open. Between people who have experienced centuries of colonisation and a powerful system who has control of resources. I hold that middle ground by culturally grounding my practice. Those most disenfranchised by the system, see themselves in the process and get to lead the process. They can reclaim that. Guide it. It's servitude leadership. They own their story and place. Create space to empower people. So they can lead, or design solutions, or ways of being they might not have been able to live.

They don't see themselves as the norm. I help them see what they are or do as normal.

*From Panthea Lee to Everyone: (08:11 pm)
@Imanddeep - I find the work of Sarah Lewis on the Vision & Justice project, and Antionette Carroll on Equity-Centered Community Design really inspiring. Might be helpful references for the question you're grappling with?*

*From Ioanna Elabd to Everyone: (08:11 pm)
Ioanna Elabd here from Athens, Greece. Any thoughts on how to facilitate/expedite the rebuilding of citizens trust both between citizens and gvt and from gvt to rely on civil society for change management solutions and innovation*

Trish:

How might we use this period to deeply reflect on indigenous ways of being. We'd all benefit enormously by reflecting on our ways of being. How do we do that?

Angie: I try to reflect back to the system how our indigenous knowledge drives the innovation in our system.

Penny: the models that we are seeking are often demonstrated already. But these groups are not the ones who aren't also the most reviewed and audited. Our auto system response is to try and control these things. For some of us, it's just a matter of getting out of the way. Values can consistently be demonstrated regardless of the moment. To make connections, to ask how are you? Before demanding something'. How do we do this on all the most simple, 'small' interactions?

From Brenton Caffin to Everyone: (08:18 pm)

This is next on my reading list:

<https://www.textpublishing.com.au/books/sand-talk>

Sarah: the scale of mutual aid groups. We're trying to scale to get as many ppl as possible. Communities are responding in their own ways and wouldn't engage with it. Can we embody those ways of working, that super local level? Is it best to scale these things?

Panthea: we just try to do as much as we can, where we can. Huge questions around just things like digital divide. So we put up posters for example. Most folks don't have computers etc. Massively gentrified areas - how do we step into that space. Small details about how not to take the space over. Looking back to history and how it

changes what people feel they have or haven't e.g. Kodak. Photography isn't a neutral thing. Kodak only adjusted how brown people were shown in photos after chocolate and wood manufacturers lobbied in the 60s.

Karen Prokopec: we haven't seen gov activate like this in all the years i've worked in gov. How do we leverage this moment?

Penny: Things that were tied really tightly have come undone. What or where are the places that are going to be the most important restructuring?

Some things are moving real fast - but they are the same as before, just at a faster speed. What is actually shifting in the system. What are we seeing today in the system, what has the response been? What's the motivation/methods that've been activated?

There's a lot of risk being pushed down to the most vulnerable. The risk has to be shared across the system. Who's taking that risk on?

Panthea:

We're seeing a lot of reasons gov is getting a bad wrap. We're - the people - are told that policy is something you cannot understand. So we shift attention to things like the Kardashians. Everyday we're seeing stimulus measures discussed. People are getting involved. Policy is important. Service delivery matters. We need to help gov figure out the minutiae.

Where does this live. Where's the space? Co Creation is always commission. Its led by the institution. How do we create that space (that isn't led by the org).

From Anke Gruendel to Everyone: (08:17 pm)

I have a question for Angie and Penny, picking up on the question about indigenous knowledge and world making practices: You mentioned earlier that you use a design methodology. Is there any friction with indigenous practices at any point? How do you manage to combine these two?

From Angie Tangaere to Everyone: (08:33 pm)

@Anke yes there are tensions. In terms of our innovation methodology I hold the design methodology lightly and contextualise through the indigenous knowledge. In terms of my practice, I hold indigenous knowledge at the heart of everything that I do.

Brenton - Happy to help in organising the festival (if helpful) on twitter
I'm @DavidBuckster