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Management and Leadership in Community Gardens

Two Initiatives in Greater Christchurch, New Zealand

A Thesis Submitted to the University of Applied Life Sciences Vienna and Lincoln University

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of

MASTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & ECOLOGICAL ENGINEERING

Wien, 2009
The more one gardens, the more one learns;  
And the more one learns, the more one realizes  
How little one knows. I suppose the whole of  
Life is like that: the endless complications,  
The endless difficulties, the endless fight  
Against one thing or another, whether it be  
Green-fly on the roses or the complexity  
Of personal relationships.

_Vita Sackville-West_
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ABSTRACT

Over the last century, a rapid process of urbanisation was evidenced throughout the world. This process resulted in significant land-use changes, environmental degradation, changes of lifestyles and society through increased dependency on the labour market for paid work, dependency as well as on supermarkets and processed food, social isolation and alienation from nature. As this trend continues on a global level, demand for public places for gardening, local food supply and social (re)development increases. Community gardens are examples of local approaches that carry the potential to meet multiple needs of rural as well as urban area’s dwellers in an increasingly urbanised world.

This research is concerned with community gardens in urban areas as important assets to a city, in particular to Greater Christchurch, New Zealand. It traces the historical developments and shifts in urban ecology and land use change on a global, but mostly, on a local (Christchurch, New Zealand) level, the planning regulations regarding the city of Christchurch, New Zealand, and outlines their impacts on both society and the physical environment. The history of community gardens gives evidence that they have the potential to be effective local approaches for human and natural resources management, and hence can contribute to the social and environmental sustainability of urban environments. An investigation of leadership and group dynamics theories was undertaken that highlights the importance of strategic organisation of local initiatives such as community gardens. The thesis then grounds its discussion on merits of ‘effective’ leadership and management and related outcomes in a detailed study of different leadership concepts in two different community gardens in Greater Christchurch, New Zealand. The analysis of leadership and management in community gardens aims to provide understanding of interrelations between leadership performance and social, environmental, cultural, and economic ‘effectiveness’ of community gardens on a community level.

Expected findings argue that leadership and management effect interrelationships on multiple levels within a local community, but also within a wider social and physical urban environment. ‘Effective’ leadership is hence essential for making community gardens relevant to urban dwellers, with the major focus of this thesis being on those people living in Greater Christchurch, New Zealand with its implications on the whole ‘western’ industrialised world. Community gardens are more than examples of agricultural alternatives to the current political and capital economy as they potentially contribute to sustainable urban development (socially and environmentally) and planning.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.......................................................................................................................... II
ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................................................ III
LIST OF FIGURES ....................................................................................................................................... IX
LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................................................................................ IX
LIST OF ABBREVIATION ......................................................................................................................... IX

1 INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................................... 10
1.1 This thesis: Overview ............................................................................................................................ 11
1.2 Hypothesis ........................................................................................................................................... 11
1.3 Aims and objectives ............................................................................................................................. 11
1.4 Research question ............................................................................................................................... 12
1.5 Indication of key terms used .............................................................................................................. 12
1.6 Expected contributions of the study ................................................................................................. 13

2 SETTING THE SCENE ......................................................................................................................... 15
2.1 Community gardens: More than just urban agriculture ................................................................. 15
2.2 Legitimating context .......................................................................................................................... 23
2.3 Core theoretical framework .............................................................................................................. 30

3 CONDUCT OF THE RESEARCH STUDY .......................................................................................... 46
3.1 Research design and methodology .................................................................................................. 46
3.2 Discovery of action research ............................................................................................................ 47
3.3 Discovery of grounded theory (and the complexity of social behaviour) ...................................... 48
3.4 Data gathering .................................................................................................................................. 49
3.5 Rationale for the research ................................................................................................................ 54
3.6 Ethical considerations ....................................................................................................................... 56

4 TWO CASE STUDIES ........................................................................................................................ 58
4.1 Introducing the two case studies: Same but different ...................................................................... 58
4.2 Case study 1: Linwood Resource Centre – Te Whare Taonga O Nga Iwi Katea .............................. 65
4.3 Case study 2: Lyttelton Community Garden .................................................................................... 89
4.4 Conclusion: Common benefits and organisational advantages for and in the two organisations ....113
4.5 Summary: People, leaderships, visions and goals ...................................................................... 114

5 COMPARATIVE FINDINGS ................................................................................................................ 116
5.1 Organisational leadership and project management in the two case studies ................................. 116
5.2 Reviewing in detail: Commonly emerging issues and difficulties .................................................. 116
5.3 Leadership: Personalities, gender and behaviours ...................................................................... 123
5.4 Contextual leadership ....................................................................................................................... 124
5.5 Two community garden projects: Two post-transformational leaderships ................................. 130
5.6 Followership perspectives: (Community gardeners) small groups as ‘essence for leadership’ ....132
5.7 Conclusion: Responsibilities, leaders’ positions and group dynamics ...................................... 136
5.8 Group-shared, participative to autocratic: What should community garden leadership be like? ...137
5.9 Summary: People, leaders, visions and goals ................................................................................ 137

6 CASE STUDY RESULTS IN BROADER CONTEXT ........................................................................ 139
6.1 Real effectiveness of leadership: What is best? ................................................................................. 139
6.2 Leadership constructs nurture effectiveness with skills and qualities ......................................... 140
6.3 Effectiveness of leaderships in context ............................................................................................ 143
6.4 Grounded theory: Leadership and management in community gardens .................................... 145
6.5 Conclusion .......................................................................................................................................... 154
6.6 Key principals that emerge from the study ..................................................................................... 158
6.7 Summary ........................................................................................................................................... 161
6.8 This research ..................................................................................................................................... 162
6.9 Final comment .................................................................................................................................. 163
6.10 Limitations of this study ................................................................................................................ 163
6.11 Implications for future research .................................................................................................... 164

REFERENCES ......................................................................................................................................... 167
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .......................................................................................................................... II

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................................................. III

LIST OF FIGURES ....................................................................................................................................... IX

LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................................................................... IX

LIST OF ABBREVIATION ............................................................................................................................. IX

1 INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................................................................... 10

1.1 This thesis: Overview .............................................................................................................................. 11

1.2 Hypothesis ............................................................................................................................................ 11

1.3 Aims and objectives ............................................................................................................................... 11

1.4 Research question ................................................................................................................................. 12

1.5 Indication of key terms used .................................................................................................................. 12

1.6 Expected contributions of the study ....................................................................................................... 13

2 SETTING THE SCENE ........................................................................................................................ 15

2.1 Community gardens: More than just urban agriculture ........................................................................ 15

2.1.1 Urban community gardening: The global history ............................................................................ 15

2.1.2 Resurgence of community gardens .................................................................................................. 16

2.1.3 Community gardens in New Zealand ............................................................................................... 18

2.1.3.1 The history of New Zealand’s community gardens .................................................................. 18

2.1.3.2 New Zealand’s community gardens of today .......................................................................... 19

2.1.3.3 Community gardens in Christchurch, New Zealand ................................................................. 20

2.1.3.4 Community gardening and local government policy ............................................................... 21

2.2 Legitimating context ........................................................................................................................... 23

2.2.1 Urban ecology: Theory and practice ............................................................................................... 23

2.2.2 Urban land use change over the last 50 years ................................................................................. 24

2.2.3 Urban planning regulations in Christchurch, New Zealand .......................................................... 25

2.2.4 Community-based environmental management ............................................................................ 25

2.2.4.1 Definition and terminology ....................................................................................................... 25

2.2.4.2 A historical perspective ............................................................................................................ 26

2.2.4.3 Practice of community-based environmental management ....................................................... 26

2.2.5 Urban agriculture ............................................................................................................................ 27

2.2.6 Community: What it is ..................................................................................................................... 29

2.3 Core theoretical framework .............................................................................................................. 30

2.3.1 Small group theory ......................................................................................................................... 30

2.3.1.1 Group development .................................................................................................................. 32

2.3.1.2 Communication in small groups ............................................................................................. 32

2.3.1.3 Membership ............................................................................................................................ 33

2.3.1.4 Group cohesion ........................................................................................................................ 34

2.3.1.5 Norms .................................................................................................................................... 34

2.3.2 Leadership theory in small groups/organisations ........................................................................... 35

2.3.2.1 Definition of leadership .......................................................................................................... 36

2.3.2.2 Six theoretical views ............................................................................................................... 36

2.3.2.3 Leadership constructs .............................................................................................................. 37

2.3.3 Leadership in practice ...................................................................................................................... 42

2.3.4 Leadership-group performance evaluation ....................................................................................... 44

3 CONDUCT OF THE RESEARCH STUDY ..................................................................................... 46

3.1 Research design and methodology .................................................................................................... 46

3.2 Discovery of action research .............................................................................................................. 47

3.3 Discovery of grounded theory (and the complexity of social behaviour) ............................................ 48

3.4 Data gathering .................................................................................................................................... 49

3.4.1 Sampling ......................................................................................................................................... 51

3.4.2 Thematic analysis ............................................................................................................................ 52

3.4.3 Methods to enhance quality ........................................................................................................... 52

3.4.4 About the researcher ....................................................................................................................... 53

3.5 Rationale for the research ................................................................................................................... 54

3.6 Ethical considerations .......................................................................................................................... 56
5 COMPARATIVE FINDINGS

5.1 Organisational leadership and project management in the two case studies

5.2 Reviewing in detail: Commonly emerging issues and difficulties

5.3 Leadership: Personalities, gender and behaviours

5.4 Contextual leadership

5.5 Two community garden projects: Two post-transformational leaderships

5.6 Followership perspectives: (Community gardeners) small groups as essence for leadership

5.7 Conclusion: Responsibilities, leaders’ positions and group dynamics

5.8 Group-shared, participative to autocratic: What should community garden leadership be like?

5.9 Summary: People, leaderships, visions and goals
6 CASE STUDY RESULTS IN BROADER CONTEXT .......................................................... 139
6.1 Real effectiveness of leadership: What is best? ......................................................... 139
6.2 Leadership constructs nurture effectiveness with skills and qualities ...................... 140
  6.2.1 Strengths and weaknesses .................................................................................. 141
  6.2.2 Seeking for social interactions ........................................................................ 141
  6.2.3 Working as project communities ..................................................................... 142
  6.2.4 Attempt at a definition: ‘Effective’ leadership ................................................ 142
6.3 Effectiveness of leaderships in context ................................................................. 143
  6.3.1 Case study 1: Leading in a sustainable manner ................................................ 143
  6.3.2 Case study 2: Collectively enhancing sustainability ......................................... 144
  6.3.3 Leadership constructs in their contexts .......................................................... 144
6.4 Grounded theory: Leadership and management in community gardens .................. 145
  6.4.1 Why is it important to have leadership in a community garden? ....................... 145
  6.4.1.1 Visions and hope ......................................................................................... 145
  6.4.1.2 Leadership supports management and vice versa ....................................... 146
  6.4.2 How are leadership, management and the community garden entity interrelated? 146
  6.4.2.1 Expectations towards the participative community in relation to time pressure and financial matters 147
  6.4.2.2 Sense of ownership and the complexity of an organisation.......................... 149
  6.4.3 Leadership affects small group dynamics ....................................................... 150
  6.4.3.1 Leaderships actively communicate with small groups ................................. 150
  6.4.3.2 The leader’s vision for the group ............................................................... 151
  6.4.3.3 Leaders as final decision-maker ............................................................... 151
  6.4.3.4 Sovereignty of leadership ......................................................................... 152
  6.4.3.5 Leaders direct and maintain groups (of volunteers) .................................... 153
  6.4.3.6 Leadership involvement in this research .................................................... 153
6.5 Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 154
  6.5.1 The ideal community garden does not exist!? .............................................. 154
  6.5.1.1 Community gardens as complementary lifestyle ....................................... 154
  6.5.1.2 Available land for development is essential .............................................. 155
  6.5.1.3 Strong group identity ................................................................................ 155
  6.5.1.4 High productivity ..................................................................................... 156
  6.5.1.5 High level of personal commitment ......................................................... 156
  6.5.1.6 Offer of diverse activities for the community ............................................ 157
  6.5.1.7 Lower complexity for easier access ......................................................... 157
  6.5.1.8 ‘Best’ practice of leadership and management .......................................... 157
  6.5.2 Key principals that emerge from the study .................................................... 158
  6.6.1 Appropriate structure: ..................................................................................... 158
  6.6.2 Multiple levels of communication: ............................................................... 158
  6.6.3 Financial pragmatism: ................................................................................... 159
  6.6.4 Maintaining team ethos: ................................................................................ 159
  6.6.5 Political pragmatics: ...................................................................................... 160
  6.6.6 Maintaining social cohesion: ........................................................................ 160
  6.6.7 Faith in small changes: .................................................................................. 160
  6.6.8 Fellow travellers: ............................................................................................ 160
6.7 Summary ............................................................................................................ 161
6.8 This research ....................................................................................................... 162
6.9 Final comment ..................................................................................................... 163
6.10 Limitations of this study ...................................................................................... 163
6.11 Implications for future research ......................................................................... 164
REFERENCES ......................................................................................................... 167
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Engaging people's passion: Effective leadership (Sims & Quatro, 2005) ........................................................ 45
Figure 2: (1) Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) – Te Whare Taonga O Nga Iwi Katoa, perspective from the street (above); (2) Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) with view over harbour basin of Lyttelton (below) ............... 60
Figure 3: Global, national and regional New Zealand (ref.: www.emeraldinsight.com; www.localcouncils.govt.nz/Canterbury_rev3; 2009) .............................................................................................................................................. 61
Figure 4: Catchment areas of the two case studies in the city of Christchurch and suburban neighbourhood (based on the map of the Christchurch Community gardens Association): (1) Linwood Resource Centre, (2) Lyttelton Community Garden .............................................................................................................................................. 62
Figure 5: Population profile table (left), distribution of ethnic groups (right) ................................................................. 62
Figure 6: Occupational profile table (left), Age and education profile (right) ................................................................. 62
Figure 7: Provision of households .................................................................................................................................. 63
Figure 8: Organisational structure of the LRC .................................................................................................................. 71
Figure 9: Community development scheme, LRC ........................................................................................................... 77
Figure 10: Organisational structure of LCG and its umbrella organisation ................................................................. 95

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Involved participants in case studies 1 and 2 ................................................................................................. 63
Table 2: List of activities taking place in the LRC ........................................................................................................ 68
Table 3: Responsibilities for tasks at Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) ................................................................. 72
Table 4: Personal skills and characteristics that members contributed to their LRC community ................................ 80
Table 5: Activities taking place in the LCG .................................................................................................................. 93
Table 6: Responsibilities for tasks at Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) ............................................................... 97
Table 7: Personal skills and characteristics that members contributed in their LCG community ............................. 105

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

LRC   Linwood Resource Centre
CD    Community developer
LCG   Lyttelton Community Garden
PL    Project Lyttelton
AGM   Annual General Meeting
CBM   Community-based environmental management
CCC   Christchurch City Council
1 INTRODUCTION

Almost half of the world’s population and 85% of New Zealanders call cities and towns their home. Cities and towns hence appear to be crucial for sustainable management and development of human and natural resources, whose availability is limited in urban areas. However, in an increasingly globalising world, local management of natural resources as well as issues of involvement and empowerment of local communities have gained in importance.

Contemporary understanding of ‘natural resource management and ecological engineering’ is inseparably linked with patterns of human dimensions and social development. Within a broad field of applications, community gardens stand as examples for an innovative idea to contribute to a better social and environmental neighbourhood. As local approaches, they carry the potential to enhance the quality especially in human-built environments in towns and cities of the world in multiple ways: Primarily, community gardens offer opportunities for local natural resource management (food production, recycling, renewable energy generation, etc.) but particularly for economic activities, environmental awareness-building processes, encouragement of individual creativity and for a neighbourhood’s beautification. They are places where people can go, interact and learn; they can create work and support; people can meet friends, deeply breath in or just have a break from rushing life.

The idea of community gardening in the city is not new but continues to benefit urban dwellers, once a place to garden has been found. As such, they seek to gain relevancy for people and their neighbourhoods, the urban environment and to contribute to the global ‘sustainable movement’ in urban life. The starting point for this research were a few simple observations and a straightforward question:

*Change is likely to be most easily achieved in a small neighbourhood. The good will of any community gardener can be appreciated for its contribution in a community project. However, to keep a community project running, the physical garden site, the budget, personal intellects and the whole community itself require intensive maintenance. So then, how can one manage and lead development in a community garden most effectively?*

This thesis is not just about community gardens. It is about socially and environmentally sustainable development in a wider social context, about the understanding as urban environments, urban gardening projects, including their management and their cultural contexts of unique small groups, and the leadership constructs seeking for change. Underlying dreams, visions and realistic goals of project initiators, the way which community gardens have been established, managed and led differ from one to another gardening project. Built on a theoretical framework, this research draws upon the reported evidence of two community garden projects in the city of Greater Christchurch, New Zealand, hereafter referred to as Christchurch, to
determine why leadership is necessary; what are the interrelations of leadership, management and a community garden entity; and overall what real effectiveness means in a community garden.

1.1 This thesis: Overview

Following this introductory chapter, in chapter 2 the study on management and leadership in two community gardens in Christchurch is put in the relevant framework of environmental studies by a given reflection of available literature. Familiarising understanding was gained by reviewing literature with regard to urban ecology, urban land use change over the last 50 years, and specifically in Christchurch, urban planning regulations in Christchurch, community-based environmental management, urban agriculture and community gardens, and community gardens especially in Christchurch. With respect to this theoretical background, the practical part of this research project was accomplished by glancing through the lens of management, leadership and small group dynamics in two community gardens in Christchurch. Chapter 3 details how the study was conducted. The two chosen case studies are then described in an informative manner and in detail in chapter 4. Chapter 5 approaches interpretations concerning the organisational internal matters as well as interpretations which merge the two case studies as community garden projects. Theorising processes and final conclusions are applied in the last chapter 6.

1.2 Hypothesis

Every community garden embraces a dynamic system. A community and its physical garden site(s) creates a dense network of interrelations. A community is made up of people involved in leadership, management and both active and passive participation. The resulting compositions of people, activities and outcomes in unique community garden entities (that were subjects to this research) confront leadership and management of the community gardens with various requirements. If leadership and management are effective, community members are empowered to influence (actively or passively) organisational patterns so that they can meet their own needs, which go beyond just growing food. Under these circumstances, effective leadership undergoes a constant change of roles as it tries to adapt specific skills, behaviours and actions in different situations, under different conditions and overall by following different visions. That means that the entity of a community garden is directly influenced by correlations among the organisational body, the community (active and passive participants), the physical garden site, the surrounding neighbourhood, and even the wider social and physical urban environment.

1.3 Aims and objectives

This thesis aims to show that there is no best way but there are effective ways and opportunities to run a community garden. It is therefore imperative to understand the complexities of existing (or missing) interrelations among the people in the community gardens, including the leader(s), the management and the
community members as well as their relations to the local surroundings. Effectiveness is then reflected by the group’s dynamic, and is observable by the diversity within the group and its activities. Overall, the aim is to show the importance of leadership, not as a ‘blueprint’ leadership but rather as one which reacts to situations based on goals, visions, the characteristics of the community and the personality of leadership itself.

This thesis will discuss the role of effective leadership in two community gardens, grounded in investigations of aspects of urban ecology, land use change and in this context relevant urban planning regulations in Christchurch as well as in theories of leadership and group dynamics. Theoretical understanding of these current patterns in an historical context help to achieve the overall aim of this thesis: to highlight the importance of effective leadership and management and implications for community gardens.

This thesis aims furthermore to outline the worthiness of the combination of qualitative and quantitative research in the field of social and environmental studies, which are in most of the cases inseparably linked with each other. Multi-methodological research shall enforce the perspective that both human society and its physical environment are part of a whole dynamic system – of nature – even, or especially, in urban areas. It shall hence be able to draw a ‘big picture’ in regarding effectiveness of leadership and management in community gardens, to verify given assumptions underlying this research and to enhance the relevance of this study.

1.4 Research question

Why is leadership in small groups important? What are the roles of leadership and management in a community garden, in particular in Christchurch? And, how do different leadership concepts influence the network of interrelations at levels of the actively involved community, the local social and environmental surroundings (the immediate neighbourhood that has potential access), (primarily public) funding institutions and city-wide community gardens among each other (linked for instance through the Christchurch Community Garden Associations)? Why is it important that leadership and management be ‘effective’?

1.5 Indication of key terms used

_Urbanisation_ is the process which leads to a growth of urban areas and populations by shifting and migrating people from rural to urban areas, and that is closely linked with development of civilisation and technology.

‘Ecological’ is a principle that embraces patterns of holism, sustainability, diversity, equilibrium.

A _community garden_ is a place where people can go and grow foodstuffs in order to take advantage of a range of benefits which reach far beyond simply growing food.
Sustainability means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This term considers social, environmental, economic, community and cultural aspects.

Urban sustainability is understood as the integration of the requirements of environmental management, social equity and economic opportunities into all decision making processes in order to manage and use resources, technology and institutional services. Future as well as present needs can hence be met.

Sustainable development in the community garden considers the development of a gardening project that meets the needs of present users without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A sustainable community garden is shaped by appropriate purposes for the users.

A community is a collection of people who interact, communicate and meet over time, creating a sense of belonging for every ‘member’.

A group is the smallest unit of a community, consisting of two or more people who interact and communicate with each other.

Leadership is a concept of guiding and influencing people in stable and changing situations to meet desired goals.

A leader is a person who influences and guides other people. In this study, a leader is understood as a person who is part of the leadership construct, which can be autonomous, democratic, or group-centred, formal or informal and who works towards (positive) change in the community.

Management concerns itself with actually bringing about specific goals. It organises and is responsible for creating and executing the related processes.

Effectiveness is the achievement of a desired result and can be seen as the indication for success.

1.6 Expected contributions of the study

After an initial review of the literature of multiple media sources, I am currently not aware of any comparable study with its focus centred on leadership and management in community gardens. It appears moreover that leadership and management patterns have not been researched in context of combined action research and grounded theory.

This research is potentially relevant on four different levels: Primarily, people who are directly (actively and passively) involved in the examined community gardens. Organisational staff as well as volunteers and visitors could potentially benefit from this project by exchanging information and participating in the research process, rather than just learning from the final research document itself. Additionally, people who are interested in establishing or leading small-scale community projects can read this document to raise their
awareness of the interwoven social aspects of such projects, especially in the environmental management sector. Thirdly, this study can provide guidance and organisational understanding for local councils and other public and private funders and decision-makers. The study can support the assessment of merits emerging from local community projects such as a community garden by qualifying and quantifying roles of ‘effective’ leadership and management. Finally, this study shall contribute to the growing body of academic knowledge about community gardens and related patterns of leadership and management in particular, resulting in an emergence of new questions and a call for further research required in this field.
2 SETTING THE SCENE

Drawing upon multiple sources, an initial literature review was undertaken to develop an understanding of the research topic. Within the complexity of literature, a range of ten literary fields emerged, which helped me to become familiar with key concepts and current theory related to this study. The literature review revealed evidence for the worthiness of answering questions concerning effective leadership in small groups, such as the community in a community garden.

2.1 Community gardens: More than just urban agriculture

*Although various community gardens may share the same impetus – to bring people and land together to garden – they can take a variety of forms.* (Laura C. Lawson, 2005)

The literature defines different types of community gardens such as urban gardens, community garden programs, neighbourhood garden (Lawson, 2005) or city community gardens (Wakefield, 2007), workers gardens, family gardens, allotments, colony gardens (Williamson, 2002). The term ‘community garden’ dates back to at least World War I (Lawson, 2005: 3), when it was seen as a practical form of urban agriculture. When I refer to the term ‘community garden’ in this paper, I mean the following:

A community garden is a place in the city that provides space and resources to dwellers. They share land, water and sunlight with the purpose of cultivating vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers. A community garden can provide individuals with their own plots yet share in the garden’s overall management (Lawson, 2005), or let people grow food in a communally organised project. Most such gardens rely on contributing organisations and programs that coordinate gardeners, manage land, and facilitate educational or social activities. They might be located on institutional grounds, public land or private land. Some gardens focus solely on vegetable gardening, while others provide multiple outputs to the community. This appears to depend highly on the needs and aims of the group that established the community garden. These gardens can serve a variety of purposes and have been perceived as having many different participants and uses ranging from improvement of human welfare, to environmental restoration or community development (Watson, 2006). However, it takes many people to nurture a garden, committing individuals and the wider community: Participation is generally voluntary. Leaders, financial contributors and land donators are typically not directly involved in garden activities (Lawson, 2005).

2.1.1 Urban community gardening: The global history

Urban community gardens as a form of urban agriculture have helped people around the globe to supply themselves with fresh vegetables, especially during economic depressions (Lawson, 2005). So-called
‘allotments’ date back to the eighteenth century in English history (Local Agenda 21, 2006). People shared land in order to graze their animals and grow food. With the advent of the industrial revolution, whole communities were uprooted from their traditional rural lives as they moved into towns and cities to work in the new factories. Due to increasing housing density and poor transportation, the infrastructure for obtaining food, including especially fruit and vegetables, became inadequate and local food became hence expensive. People, mostly the poor, then had the opportunity to cultivate a piece of land where children and adults would go and spend the day together while doing different beneficial activities. Moreover, allotments and community gardens were seen as providing pleasure, improved health and well-being in times of financial crisis, as well as an alternative to drinking alcohol and other ‘unworthy’ activities that the poor could end up becoming involved in (Moyes, 1999, in Watson, 2006).

Earlier in Germany, school gardens were started for preschoolers, serving as environmental education tools for the children. In the United States, community gardens emerged at the end of the nineteenth century and were, similar to England, a helpful response to poverty and unemployment (Williamson, 2002).

Before and during World War II, community gardens gained significant importance for food security reasons but also for patriotic reasons as gardens could send more food overseas to support the military (Williamson, 2002). Alone in the United States, 23 million households participated in subsistence garden programs (Lawson, 2005: 2). However, these gardens and their land use were viewed as being temporary rather than serving a real and sustaining purpose (Warner, 1987, in Watson, 2006). Community gardening has been discouraged outside of emergency periods as there was no need for rationalising food anymore, more land for housing was required (Lawson, 2005; Watson, 2006), and overall, in the wake of industrialisation, local food supply was not in the interests of the agriculture and food industry (Trotman & Spinola, 1994: 11). Post-war urban sprawl and individual gardening reinforced the trend towards decreased importance of community gardens for food supply. Moreover, because people could afford to pursue leisure interests like travelling, watching television, shopping and going to sports events, they spent less time participating in local food production.

### 2.1.2 Resurgence of community gardens

*If gardening is only about the food produced, in many cases it would be cheaper and easier to go to the store or fast-food restaurant. For the gardener, the process of growing food and flowers entails both a responsibility to nurture and an opportunity to be nurtured.* (Laura Lawson, 2005)

Today, myriad garden programs exist as neighbourhood community gardens, children’s gardens, horticultural therapy gardens and entrepreneurial gardens. The justifications urban garden projects have consistently remained the same over the past hundred years: social, environmental, economic, ethical benefits, all at the same time. ‘Not only do people want to grow better, more interesting vegetables and fruit – they want to
enjoy the experience, too!’ (Lawson, 2005) The perspective of ‘growing food together’ has changed from allotments to community gardens, from gardening for sustaining food security to a pleasurable activity, from mainly lower class members being involved to participation of rich, poor, old, young, students, inmates and people with special needs.

The interest of the industrialised world in community gardening returned only in 1960 during the environmental and cultural movement as a reaction to the political economy. People with a modern city lifestyle were concerned about the environment, the quality of food and the increasing amounts of annual consumed energy (Watson, 2006). This decade can be acknowledged as the decade when resurgence of interest in community gardening took place. The urban and rural commune movement of the 1960s in Europe, North America and New Zealand was characterised by self-sufficiency in growing food communally. Along with the inflation of the dollar, people were seeking alternative urban ‘back to the land’ communities (Lawson, 2005; Gottlieb, 2001) with a sense of ‘nature, community rootedness and power’ (Moscovich, 2006) as well as the ‘success from overseeing an operation from inception to fruition (Williams, 2002)’. The Digger movement in San Francisco in 1967-1970 relied on redistributing unwanted food from restaurants and shops but there was still a grow your own ethos amongst hippies.

Community gardening had spread all over the industrialised countries during this time after the 1970s. They re-emerged especially in the cities of the U.S. during the City Beautification Movement, when hundreds of acres of vacant land were cleaned up (Watson, 2001; Lawson, 2006). According to Keel (1999), more than 740 community gardens were built on unused land in New York City alone, predominantly in poor areas. These were partly initiated by activists such as those known as the ‘green guerrillas’. The gardens also have provided also poor communities with multiple benefits: Stronger, safer communities in now more attractive neighbourhoods were built; places for education and job training as well as for emotional and environmental restoration was created; and cheap (or often free), fresh, and nutritious food was produced. Ironically, as these community gardens increased the attractiveness of city districts, the neighbourhoods became more expensive (Lawson, 2005).

As unique as the histories of establishment of the single gardens were, so were the policies followed by them different: Over the years, the community garden structures reached from ‘grow and give’ and ‘food for everyone (who asks)’ (Keel, 1990) to donation-based food supply and ‘members only grow and share’ (Lawson, 2005) or individually grown and harvested policies.

By the year 2000 nearly every city in the U.S. had some form of supportive community gardens programme that had been established by individuals, philanthropic groups, educational and social reformers, civic

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1 For more information about ‘guerilla gardening’ see www. www.guerrillagardening.org.
improvement groups, governmental agencies, environmentalists, and others (Lawson, 2005). However, in the wake of neoliberal economy, many gardens face the threat of eviction to make place for new housing. Nevertheless, the role of community gardening and food security programs has gained importance, not in the least because many de-industrialised countries face problems of unemployment, homelessness, ethnic separation and food insecurity.

As a typical example, the city of Birmingham in England was heavily affected by de-industrialisation. In response, the city supported local gardening projects in an effort to enhance the quality of life for many of its citizens (Depledge, 1997, in Pauling, 2001). In Tokyo, yabo (wild farmers) have taken up community gardens to oppose the increased liberalisation of the today Japanese economy.

Western Australian community gardens are further examples of sustainability and the Local Agenda 21 in practice. Stocker & Barnett (1998, in Pauling, 2001) contend that they succeeded not only by producing, conserving and recycling, but above all through their education of the broader public about what is possible. They found that they achieved awareness most effectively through a system of ‘embodied participatory democracy’.

2.1.3 Community gardens in New Zealand

2.1.3.1 The history of New Zealand’s community gardens

Maori, New Zealand’s initial tangata whenua (people of the land), have been gardening communally for centuries, where they have used imported plant species and local flora and fauna (Trotman & Spinola, 1994). Their communities consisted of only a few to more than 500 people and were organised around food resources, cultivations and water. Farming was a primary activity in their lives. Food was grown and gathered through farming practices that were developed and tailored to the environment. One of their principles of community gardening was that the harvested food was shared among the settlement (Watson, 2006). The colonisation of New Zealand by the Europeans affected the traditional practices of the Maori, as they were often forced to abandon their land to the pakeha (New Zealander of European descent) whose agricultural practices quickly became focused on agriculture as a business (Pauling, 2001). Social, economic and environmental consequences can still be felt today.

There has not been a strong history of community gardening in New Zealand in post-colonisation times due to the fact that the country of New Zealand has been predominantly a nation of private and industrial farming for the last 120 years. Additionally, urban family ‘quarter acre sections’ have generally been large enough to accommodate individual gardens even in cities (Pauling, 2001; Trotman & Spinola, 1994). Moreover, cheap food prices and high living standards have not disinclined people to establish community gardens (Pauling, 2001). The need for places to garden increased only when urban areas grew rapidly, housing became denser.
and land got commercially developed. Effects of these neoliberal reforms consequently changed lifestyles and perspectives of people. (Trotman & Spinola, 1994)

A considerable number of community gardens have been established in the recent past, aiming for different objectives, mostly for social and educational purposes rather than only for food production. Some local authorities have already recognised the benefits of these gardens (Pauling, 2001; Watson, 2006) and support gardeners with their public policy and information. Auckland experienced a revival of food production in the city in the early 1980s which built social networks and provided employment (ACC, 2008). In the city of Nelson, the Nelson Organic Gardens Trust was founded with the intention ‘to create a safe, community organic garden that demonstrates and promotes sustainable living practices’ (Nelson Community Organic Gardens Trust, 2000, in Pauling, 2001). A community garden in Upper Hutt provided work skills training for people on periodic detention while growing vegetables for the local food bank. In Christchurch, the Packe Street Community Garden, established in 1996, was apart from a place primarily for growing food, a community park with a playground and ornamental plants and sculptures (Pauling 2001; Watson, 2005).

2.1.3.2 New Zealand’s community gardens of today

Community gardens in New Zealand are still relatively rare but their numbers increase. They are generally small scale, low investment neighbourhood gardening ventures. The gardens commonly use vacant or non-dedicated open spaces, either in a public domain or owned by another organisation such as a church or a public housing body (Auckland City Council, 2008). Similarly to community gardens around the world, they are set up as communal gardens some with individual plots and others with individual plots within a communal area or just one big communal plot (Trotman & Spinola, 1994). The gardens vary in their philosophies which underlie their gardening methods, such as organic growing, permaculture or biodynamic gardening (Watson, 2006) as much as they differ in their ways of organisation.

The functions of community gardens in New Zealand are largely influenced by the overall purpose for the range of various users (Watson, 2006; Lawson, 2005). Commonly, they all provide services for education, training, charity and the local community. Depending on a community’s needs, community gardens in New Zealand are hence sites of unique combination of activities and can provide its users many life opportunities, such as food production, recreation, training, education, learning life skills, socialisation, cultural exchange and relaxation; development of open space, community spirit, and competence (Watson, 2006); reconnection and enclosure of the feeling with earth and natural environment; setting for communicating and sharing of traditional skills and knowledge; saving of household food expenses; more independence from bought food (Williamson, 2000, in Pauling, 2001); and bridging the gap of human beings and nature that urban life often entails. Watson (2006) concluded that every aspect of the garden including the choice of plants, the practiced gardening method and the way of organising and maintaining is decided by the group as a whole.
As to Watson’s conclusion, it should be said that total democracy and shared decision making in a community garden will be analytically perceived as a ‘romantic idea’ than practicable reality. The two case studies in the following chapters provide detailed information on the management and governance of two community gardens in Christchurch.

2.1.3.3 Community gardens in Christchurch, New Zealand

_Erected fences and growing hedges was only a habit and people should be encouraged to get rid of it. The most beautiful gardens were those without fences._ (Irving Sladen, judge in the 1938 Christchurch garden competition)

First attempts at community gardening in Christchurch were made during the 1970s in the Avon Loop area. But it was only in the late 1980s that the practice began to proliferate in the city. Finally in 1999, community gardens attracted the attention of the Christchurch City Council (CCC) as a new way of addressing social and environmental sustainability in the city. Garden policies focused on waste minimisation, especially on composting, recycling and reuse (Growing Communities: Organic Resources for Social Needs, 1999, in Pauling 2001). They also addressed social isolation, self esteem, the sense of belonging for the inhabitants and the fresh produce requirements for the people in the city who are most in need (Community Development and Social Well-being Policy, 1996; Park, 1999, in Pauling 2001). A pilot scheme involving four community gardens was established in the wake of this supportive policy (Park, 1999, in Pauling, 2001).

Today, there are 13 community gardens in Christchurch. Most of them are located on land that is owned by the local city or district council which was vacant or unused land before. Gardeners mostly work together on communal plots, growing mainly fruit, vegetables and herbs. Nearly all of the gardens follow organic farming principles to avoid chemical inputs. They also collect green waste for processing compost and bring together the three “R’s” – waste reduction, recycling and re-use of materials. In doing so, they help to improve the environment of urban areas and hence play an important role in the social and environmental sustainability of the city (Pauling, 2001).

In Watson’s study (2006), she found that community gardens in Christchurch were established primarily for one of the following reasons: Social interaction; education and training; therapy, support and rehabilitation; community development; providing food to people in need; health and well-being. Many of the community gardens end up meeting multiple needs. The multiple purposes of community gardening benefit not only active gardeners but also the wider community (Watson, 2006).

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2 The actual number is not known; while some in the process of closing, others are developing.
A problem in a community garden is like a troublesome weed it’s best to get rid of it when it’s small and easy to deal with. (Sommers, 1984)

What appears to be challenging for the gardens is that a garden requires ongoing work and therefore a number of dedicated volunteers. Like the other community gardens, those in Christchurch have sometimes too much work to do and not enough volunteers, depending on the season and the weather. Some gardens have buildings included in the community garden sites, where people can go to participate in indoor workshops for seed saving or creating artwork for the garden. Some gardens have been victims of vandalism and theft, yet only rarely. Some community gardens have been affected by patterns of land tenure security and/or have difficulties to gain financial stability. More support by the Government is desired throughout all community gardens which were surveyed by Watson (2006).

It can be concluded here that community gardens in Christchurch can encourage waste reduction, reuse, and recycling and with it potentially change consumption patterns. Hence, these projects can contribute to a reduced ecological footprint of the city. Furthermore, needs of the poor, the long-term unemployed people and at-risk youth are addressed. Issues of class and race that have caused the marginalisation of people within the community can be challenged in a community garden. Trust among the people within a community is likely to grow, social isolation can be bridged and a higher level of democratic participation in community gardens supports the reinvigoration of grassroots politics (Pauling, 2001).

2.1.3.4 Community gardening and local government policy

As mentioned, the basis for co-operation with local governmental policy has been created and community gardens receive good support as well as some funding from the community, the city as well as their district council (Watson, 2006). Yet, most community garden organisations request increased financial support from the public councils.

a) Funding and support

The Christchurch City Council (CCC) provides none of the city’s garden groups with regular financial support. Instead, community gardens of Christchurch can apply for public funding which vary from year to year. Some of them are allowed to use council owned land rent free or for ‘peppercorn’ rental. Some gardens are provided with environmental grants or resources like water, expertise and facilities. Funding also helps to establish community waste minimisation schemes, to obtain gardening tools or to organise workshops to teach people skills like composting, seed saving or weaving. In some cases, the Christchurch Community Garden Association (CCGA) also assists by helping find a garden manager or coordinator (Watson, 2006). As mentioned before, the CCC has seen community gardening as a tool for increasing the city’s sustainability and is starting to recognise and support the gardens in a substantial way (Watson, 2006).
b) Other government departments

Other departments apart from the CCC have also shown interest in community gardens and support the gardens, for example, by referring able-bodied and willing people to them to help out with the garden maintenance (Watson, 2006). The Department of Corrections sends people to work in community gardens to serve their community service sentences. Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) send people there to learn life skills and gain a reference that can help them gain employment. The Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) value community gardens as beneficial for therapeutic and rehabilitation reasons (Palmers & Patterson, 2006). The Ministry of Social Development also benefits from support services which the gardens essentially provide. However, more financial support for the community gardens from these departments, for example, would help offset the heavy costs of the time and effort that troubled or injured people need for help (Watson, 2006).

Community gardens of Christchurch receive funding and support from several other organisations. Though, the sources of further (financial) support might vary from garden to garden. Among all, the Lotteries Grant Board and the Lions Foundation as well as charitable organisations such as local churches or surrounding communities are important to mention. Some local businesses, like hardware stores, have been supportive by donating materials, providing facilities or even some of their own time (Watson, 2006).

Commonly, community gardens find it hard to survive without funding from external sources. Most of them run at a deficit each year. To become more financially self-sufficient, some gardens sell surplus vegetables to the public and/or run education workshops. Garden coordinators would like to see more support and some basic funding also from the Ministry for the Environment (MfE), Local Councils and District Health Boards (Watson, 2006).

c) Policy, legislation and ‘sustainable development’ planning

Ecologically sustainable urbanisation is a key goal of ‘Local Agenda 21’ activities and is inconceivable without urban agriculture. Compared to other cities in New Zealand like Auckland City or Waitakere, the city of Christchurch does not have any particular legislative or policy programs to establish community gardens in parks or other open spaces. Nevertheless, there are guidelines to assess proposals, and any proposal to establish a community garden needs to comply with relevant District Plans, Reserves Act 1977 and other relevant management plans that had been established under this Act (Watson, 2006). In some cases, the CCC contributes its expertise to the community gardens. Furthermore, the CCGA helps gardening groups with tasks like identifying suitable land, securing this land for use as a garden, dealing with land tenure issues, obtaining facilities and funding a community garden coordinator (CCGA, 2002; OGT, 2006). To legally establish a community garden, the council requires an application in which the community group demonstrates, firstly, a wider community support for the proposal; secondly, that the project will not be a
financial burden to either the community or the council; and thirdly, that all aspects of the project such as health and safety issues, maintenance and aesthetics are covered.

Obtaining long term permission for community gardens is a relatively new idea, rooted in the idea that the success of a garden has been said to depend on securing the best land possible (Trotman & Spinola, 1994). In the past, most community gardens have relied on yearly agreements or short-term leases (Sommers, 1984, in Watson, 2006).

The people involved in community gardening in Christchurch believe that community gardens have an important role to play in the environmental sustainability of the city. In 2001, Matt Morris, CCGA Advocate, said in an interview with J. Pauling that the CCGA has built a strong voice that the CCC will listen to (Pauling, 2001). He did not believe that immediate results on a global scale could be expected, yet he was convinced that evidence of sustainability already existed and was continuing to develop at the grassroots level (Pauling, 2001). However, some studies claim (Watson, 2006; Pauling, 2001; Lawson, 2005; Moulgeout, 2007) that public community gardens had to compete with private economies and to give way to new buildings that were constructed instead. In terms of sustainability, Pauling (2001) found that community gardens are an important asset to the city of Christchurch and also represent an example of an agricultural alternative to the current political economy of agriculture. Only recently, Watson (2006) suggested that community gardens ‘are in fact a great way to use land in New Zealand’. Looking through a critical lens toward the effectiveness and relevance of community gardens on an urban-wide level, the debate of supporting community gardens as permanent assets in community-wide, urban-wide, district-wide, and national-wide urban planning policy might be seriously considered.

2.2 Legitimating context

2.2.1 Urban ecology: Theory and practice

Urban ecology is the study of interrelations between plants, animals and humans in an urban environment (Benton-Short & Benton, 2003). Social norms and moral order are rooted in the relationship between a population and the living territory. Both ecological and socio-economic components and their interactions in urban systems have to be considered in order to understand the process of urbanisation, secularisation and modernisation of societies (Wu et al., 2003; Kleniewsky, 2006; George & McKinley, 1974). Social relations are influenced by the group seize, density, heterogeneity, class division, ethnicity, inequality, and so forth. Various land uses in the city, for example, business areas in the centre, peripheral industry, residential areas, and so forth, can hence be linked to demographic aspects and explain current enviro-societal phenomena. Tönnies (1963), É. Durkheim (1893, in Kleniewsky, 2006) and G. Simmel appear to be the most important
founders of the field of urban ecology. Based on their work, K. Marx, F. Engels and M. Weber have helped with their writings to advance a new paradigm for urban studies.

In practice, a city is a site of biophysical processes which is interwoven with social processes to form into complex webs of human-environmental relations. A city’s ecology is characterised by features of energy flows, urban footprints, natural capital, biophysical cycles and biotic communities (Benton-Short & Benton, 2006). These are constantly under pressure by growth, migration, land-use and social change. In general, contemporary cities rely on fossil fuels, but the energy use varies according to the location, wealth and transportation systems of the cities (Fischer-Kowalski & Haberl, 1998). Since food is very closely linked with social inequality and food production is highly reliant on the use of fertiliser, following the resources and food pathway helps to understand relations between people and environment, energy consumption and changes in supply and demand (Hamm & Muttagi, 1998).

2.2.2 Urban land use change over the last 50 years

The middle of the twentieth century witnessed a complex phenomenon known as the Third Urban Revolution. This movement is defined by Benton-Short & Benton (2008) and Kelly (2004) as the rapid urbanisation and increasing population density due to a migration wave created industrial cities all over the world, especially after the Second World War. This development was characterised by mechanisation and the intensification of the decentralised use of resources. Natural and agricultural areas in particular have been converted to a large extent into highly artificially modified urban land uses (UNCHS, 2001; Guhathakurta, 2003; Wu et al., 2003; Benton-Short & Short, 2008). Pollution, degraded physical environments and the de-industrialisation of city centres and fundamental changes in economic structures enforced the trend to urban sprawling (Benton-Short & Short, 2008; MfE, Manatū Mō Te Taiao, 1994). Business service activities in the city centre increased as comprehensively mixed-use developments were pursued. This process involved the revitalisation of central areas, the creation of multi-purpose areas for community activities (Kelly, 2004; MfE, Manatū Mō Te Taiao, 1994: 11), the integration of light industry, offices, employment, community facilities, shopping, housing, and even the possibility of energy and food production in the suburbs (MfE, Manatū Mō Te Taiao, 1994: 11).

Currently, the city of Christchurch covers the second largest urban area of New Zealand, segmented in diverse areas. The inner-city zones are dominated by commercial activities, surrounded by decentralised, low-density suburban housing areas (Perkins & Thorn, 2000) and suburban retail shopping centres, and industry. Farmland has been converted into lifestyle blocks and smallholdings. Surfaces are increasingly sealed with the construction of roads, buildings and car parks. The coastlines and more prominent open hills of Lyttelton Harbour are coming under pressure of urban development, too (GCUDS, 2005).

As a reaction to extensive growth, ‘place’ and ‘urban sustainability’ are rediscovered as principles of urban planning (Atkinson et al., 1999; Memo & Perkins, 2000; Guhathakurta, 2003; Benton-Short & Short, 2008).
Dozens of environmental groups, civic organizations and governmental agencies promote the following: mixed land uses and the creation of attractive neighbourhoods with a strong sense of ‘place’ or local identity; the revitalisation of old urban centres with commercial and office sectors closely located; planning for walkable, high-density, and socially diverse communities; lowering speed limits for cars in the urban area.

2.2.3 Urban planning regulations in Christchurch, New Zealand

Under the Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991 and the Local Government Act (LGA) 2002, the Christchurch City Council (CCC) is responsible for implementing central policy, with the emphasis on the protection of water and air quality, the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values, the protection of natural coastlines from inappropriate development, recognition of any relationships between Maori and their taonga (treasure), efficient use of buildings and infrastructure, the protection of heritage values and the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment in general (Perkins & Thorns, 2000). Regional and local authorities produce mandatory district plans on a local/regional level that are consistent with regional and national planning documents (MfE, Manatū Mō Te Taiao, 1994:12; Jackson, 1997, in Williams, 2006).

The most recent strategic planning initiative in 2008 was the Christchurch Greater Urban Development Strategy (UDS). The strategy outlines managing sustainable urban growth according to statutory documents on a regional level such as the long-term Council Community Plans (LTCCPs), Regional Policy Statement (RPS), Outline Development Plans, Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS), City and District Plans (Greater Christchurch, 2005). Furthermore, the Christchurch City Council signed the Urban Design Protocol, which is a part of the Government’s Sustainable Development Programme of Action and Urban Affairs portfolio (MfE, Manatū Mō Te Taiao, 2005). The protocol is a voluntary commitment among central and local government, property developers and investors, design professionals, educational institutes and other groups to undertake specific urban design initiatives. The protocol identifies seven essential patterns as part of quality urban design: the context of buildings, places and spaces, the character reflection and enhancement, choice and diversity for people, network connections, the encouragement of creativity and innovations, and finally sustainability issues and the importance of collaboration for them.

2.2.4 Community-based environmental management

2.2.4.1 Definition and terminology

Community-based environmental management (CBEM) is understood as a social, grassroots movement with the focus on participatory environmental decision making, emphasising direct management of natural resources (Keller, 1998). It can be seen as a resurgence of interest in bottom-up policy-making and management, democracy, public participation and local planning (Agrawal, 2002). This form of management
allows local user groups and communities to organise and manage local resources effectively. In the related literature, CBEM can be found as collaborative, cooperative, collective, jointing for multi-stakeholders, integrated, self- and co-managing (Berkes, 2002; Memon & Perkins, 2000; Smajgl & Larson, 2007). CBEM plays also a role as a common property regime or community-based management regime (Ostrom et al., 2002). All types of CBEM rely on the sharing of decision-making power and responsibilities between government and the local community (Keller, 1998).

CBEM initiatives are local stakeholders who take a leadership role but are assisted by government...often coalitions of local stakeholders who are assisted by the government but take a leadership role in the planning and management activities (Stern et al., 2002). Common understanding and agreement on rules, monitoring, and enforcement must be created in order to succeed. CBEM can then potentially promote ecologically sustainable use of the environment, social health and cultural sustainability and/or equity of the local population and their economic well-being (Berkes et al., 2002; Ostrom et al., 2002). This is always dependant on the size of resource (Rose, 2002). In other words, natural resource management has to consider the complexity of ecosystems and to adapt to environmental changes (Smajgl & Larson, 2007).

2.2.4.2 A historical perspective

Dating back in history, human beings used natural resources for millennia without degrading them. They shared an understanding of their rights, responsibilities and other means to guarantee that the particular resource would be available to them and to their children (Moran, 2006). While it has been possible for people to use resources carelessly in the distant past, the problem really began when small-scale societies grew in size. Resources were then (and still are) likely to be degraded, especially in times when environmental management issues were determined by top-down approaches by national governments and large non-governmental organisations (NGOs) until a few decades ago.

If communities grow larger, it becomes increasingly difficult to prevent individuals from pursuing their narrow self-interest (Dietz et al., 2002). However, especially since the 1992 United Nation’s Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), policies and programmes increasingly promote the involvement of the community in environmental management and decision making (UNCED, 1992).

2.2.4.3 Practice of community-based environmental management

Cooperative strategies are more likely to emerge and to be sustained in smaller rather than in larger groups (Baland and Platteau, 1996, in Moran, 2006). Furthermore, it is easier to come up with common rules for managing resources in a community if the members of the group are relatively homogenous in their ethnicity, culture and wealth (Moran, 2006). When interests within the community differ, finding self-governing solutions to a common resource may be quite challenging. If narrow self-interest wins out, outcomes such as
‘the tragedy of the commons’ can occur, in which individuals who share a common resource seek their individual advantage even though they see evidence that the resource is collapsing (Hardin, 1968). Despite Hardin’s consideration of only private and public property, successful resource management can also be achieved under other property rights structures, including communal property arrangements (Ostrom et al., 2002). Strategies for sustainable management that involve the community are not new. Many approaches have been documented (Pinkerton, 1989; Feeny et al., 1990, in Keller; Ife, 2001; Agrawal, 2002; Ostrom et al., 2002).

However, if individuals consider the group’s interest in decision making processes, better decisions for the community can be reached (Moran, 2006). That is in line with a new right’s ideology of increased individual responsibilities and reduced state involvement, so as to sustain the resource and their own economic returns from it (Stern et al., in Ostrom et al. 2002). Yet, the local level is not necessarily the best level for environmental management as only national state and supranational associations (e.g., the European Union) are often able to address global environmental problems and politics better.

Contemporary approaches to CBEM are widespread throughout the world. In New Zealand, the institutional framework related to environmental management changed considerably since the enactment of the Local Government Amendment Act (LGAA) 1989 and the introduction of the Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991 (Memon, 1993, in Memon & Perkins, 2000). Community-based approaches for environmental management have increasingly developed in urban areas, operating in a variety of different environments (Memon & Selsky, 1998, in Memon & Perkins, 2000).

The devolution of responsibilities from central government to local authorities created opportunities for more innovative and more participatory approaches. However, when management is too centralised, valuable information from the actual circumstances around a resource is lost; whereas when management is too decentralised, feedback between the user groups or adjacent areas is forfeited (Berkes, 2002). Hence, finding a holistic, adaptive balance requires identifying processes that explain institutional dynamics within complex social systems.

2.2.5 Urban agriculture

In the search for sustainable cities, urban agriculture (UA) has emerged as a useful tool (Pauling, 2001), contributing to poverty alleviation, provision of meaningful employment and supplementary income, and increased food security. The United Nation Development Program (UNDP, 1996) described urban agriculture as a range of activities that includes food grown on rooftop gardens and patios, community and market gardens on vacant lots and fish harvested from tanks, streams and lagoons.
The idea is not really ‘new’ because growing food in cities has been a part of urban and environmental discourse in industrial countries for over one hundred years, especially in Britain (Gottlieb, 2001, in Pauling, 2001). Recently, in 2001, the UNCHS (2001) postulated that the role of urban agriculture in the food supply of cities and towns is becoming an important issue in a globalising world economy. Estimations show that 15 percent of all food that is consumed in urban areas was produced by urban agriculture in 2001, and the percentage is likely to double within twenty years.

Based on the principle of sustainable agriculture, urban agriculture emphasises the utilisation of renewable resources and the importance of nutrient cycles within the local urban ecosystem. It is built on the idea of production for local consumption while the amount of external inputs into the farm system shall be limited. Previously, after the industrial revolution, traditional methods of farming were dismissed as ‘primitive’ and ‘unscientific’. In the meantime, however, we see that much of the sustainability concept, such as urban farming, is based on traditional methods of growing food, which have been utilised for generations (Pauling, 2001).

Similar to sustainable agriculture, organic farming techniques as well as biodynamic farming have been practiced throughout the world as alternative farming system since the beginning of the 20th century (Pauling, 2001). They have strengthened the idea of urban agriculture through further alternative visions. People who use (cheap and) locally available technology are not only provided with their own food but also often contribute to an improved environment. For it, ‘organics’ became a social as well as an ecological approach for reinventing human societies and their relationship with the natural world (Lawson, 2006). While the organic system is driven by progressive ideas of sustainability, organics have been easily assimilated into capitalist consumer society on a large scale as demand and therefore prices have risen (Pauling, 2001).

The disappearance of traditional green grocers in urban city areas and the replacement of those shops by convenience stores that rarely carry fresh or unprocessed products has led to a critical community food security concern (Gottlieb, 2001). Considering the rapid and ongoing process of urbanisation and that more than half the world’s population lives currently in urban areas (UNCHS, 2001), the focus of matters of food security has increasingly been shifted towards ‘green alternatives’ (Pauling, 2001), such as urban agriculture, with the goal of increasing the level of local food supply for people living in urban areas. Ecologically seen, urban agriculture also has positive benefits for the environment in both Northern and Southern countries. Through urban agriculture, urban ecological loops are closed by converting urban waste such as kitchen waste into reusable resources, and under-utilised land can be converted into productive spaces (Smit & Nasr, 1999, in Pauling 2001; Watson, 2006). This supports Gottlieb’s claim (1993) that the environmental movement needs to emphasise sustainability of urban environments on an equal level as wilderness preservation. ‘This call is rooted in the belief that it is urban consumption (predominantly in the North) that is the overwhelming cause of environmental problems.’ (Gottlieb, 1993)
Modern day Cuba demonstrates a successful model, in which the state has given full institutional support to urban agricultural activities. This happened only after the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989-90 that hit the heavily reliant agricultural sector hard. Through the re-organisation of this sector, Cuba now has the most sophisticated and prolific urban agricultural system in the world (Pauling, 2001).

In spite of all the benefits of urban agriculture, it is not the only answer to the social and environmental problems associated with the modern political economy of agriculture. However, ‘it is but one of the many alternatives that radical greens seek to construct’ (Pauling, 2001).

2.2.6 Community: What it is

The term ‘community’ is often used in different contexts, for example the ‘global community’ or the ‘virtual community’, the ‘fishers’ community’ or the local, isolated ‘community’ in a remote valley. Hillery (1955) identified ninety-four definitions fifty years ago and concluded that ‘beyond the concept that people are involved in community, there is no complete agreement as to the nature of community’ (Keller, 1998).

Ife (2002) understands community as a form of social organisation, which is essential from both an ecological justice perspective (holism, sustainability, diversity and balance) and a social justice perspective (equity, empowerment, overcoming of structural disadvantages, freedom to define needs and to meet them, and so forth), and that can be seen as a natural consequence of the premises of each. According to Ife (2002), the following five characteristics are related to his ‘community’:

- Human scale (interactions)
- Identity and belonging (member of the community)
- Obligations (rights and responsibilities)
- Gemeinschaft (opposite of a mass society)
- Culture (unique characteristics of a particular community)

Three further options for defining community are suggested by Hyde & Chavis (2007):

- a community simply in a geographic area, a territory, or locale
- a community with its essence the social interactions that occur within geographic boundaries
- a community as a locality-based social unit

While Adams & Ueno (2007) highlight the overlap of ‘friendship’ and ‘community’, Cnaan & Breyman (2007) found finally that Cohen (2003) defines a community as ‘that entity to which one belongs, greater than
kinship but more immediately than the abstraction we call “society”. It is the arena in which people acquire their most fundamental and most substantial experience of social life outside the confines of the home. Etienne Wenger (1998, in Vanclay et al., 2006) characterises a community of practice through conditions of mutual engagement of its members, a joint enterprise, and in time, a shared repertoire of routines. Kozny (1996, in Cnaan & Breyman, 2007) introduced the intentional community as ‘a group of people who have chosen to live together with a common purpose, working cooperatively to create a lifestyle that reflects their shared core values. The people may live together on a piece of rural land, in a suburban home, or in an urban neighbourhood, and they may share a single residence or live in a cluster of dwellings’.

2.3 Core theoretical framework

2.3.1 Small group theory

The lifeblood of a group is its members; they are the resources through which goals are accomplished. The satisfaction of the members, the degree to which they feel accepted, and the degree to which they want to return are critical to the survival of the group. (R.W. Napier & M.K. Gershenfeld, 2004)

Group dynamics is the study of behaviour within groups in order to gain knowledge about the nature of groups, group development and the interrelations between groups and individuals, other groups, and larger entities. To understand it, we must start by identifying theories that delineate the dimension of effective groups, then we must review the research and then establish the practical value of group dynamics theory and research (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). It is important to note here that a theory is not necessarily ‘true’ but is a well-intentioned effort to explain events (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003).

First, we must distinguish the terms ‘group’, or in this context ‘small group’ and ‘community’. According to Patton & Downs (2003) the most common definition of a group involves two elements: a small number of interacting individuals in interdependent role relations and a set of values or norms that regulate behaviour of (self-)defined members in matters of concern to the group. The existence of a group requires that people are joined together by common issues or concerns, that they share a common goal, influence each other, and overall, that they communicate and interact with each other (Johnson & Johnson, 1991; Keller, 1998; Harris, 2008). The optimum size of a group seems to be five members (Hackman & Vidmar, 1979, in Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004).

A community can be seen as a ‘big small group’ (Reisch & Guyet, 2007) with its smallest unit being a group (Keller, 1998). The role of groups in and the characteristics of communities will be examined in the next chapter. Before, we will focus primarily on the theory of small group behaviour in order to understand the practice and dynamics in real life.
Assuming that we are all different and that absolute objectivity does not exist, Kurt Lewin theorised that our previous experiences influence directly how we interpret, perceive and react in any given situation. This does not just impact us as individuals in a group but also the quality of groups (Patton & Dawns, 2003). Led by already formed stereotypes in our minds, we automatically break down a group, using arrangement, size, sex, race, culture, clothes, and tone of voices, posture and many other cues. This, known as Gestalt theory, helps us to manage and understand our own experiences as well as the complexity of reality. Lewin and other authors (Johnson & Johnson, 1991; Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004) noted that a group cannot be understood by considering only the qualities and characteristics of each member. With this statement, they oppose the approach to group dynamics of the individualistic orientation, which assumes a group’s action as the sum of actions each member has taken separately. For years, small groups were seen as nothing more than a collection of individuals and a group’s success of failure was viewed as related to the impact of certain individuals on the group.

In contrast, the group orientation focuses on the group as a whole in order to understand members’ behaviour. In the eighteenth century, Emile Durkheim (1866) posited that small primary groups such as family and small groups were the building blocks of society (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). A group is defined by such words like ‘interaction’, ‘interdependency’ or ‘harmony’. It networks for the sake of the well-being of the members of the group in form of processes, and a group can then rather be understood as a system. Hence, a group is only one part of a vast, multi-level organisation, and all decisions are interdependent (Patton & Dawns, 2003). This system and its dynamic have a basic structure which underlies change and development over time (Johnson & Johnson, 1991).

The general systems theory provides a structure and vocabulary that illuminate much that happens in small groups (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003: 255). It involves viewing a particular problem not in isolation but in interrelation with other features, just like an ecosystem. Thinking in terms of multiple possible causes is rather new and makes human behaviour much more complex, although at the same time more understandable. L. von Bertalanffy (1968, in Bass, 1999) was the first who highlighted the significance of interrelationships in the functioning of the total organism or system, what he vaguely termed with ‘wholeness’. By criticising mainstream science, system thinking can enhance our understanding of the diversity that people and groups exhibit. Furthermore, it encourages the explanation, description, and clarification of individual and group dynamics (Konigwieser & Pelikan, 1990, in Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003).

Roles and norms exist, no matter which organisation, society or culture it is. While roles differentiate responsibilities of people, norms integrate members’ efforts into a unified whole (Johnson & Johnson, 1991).
2.3.1.1 Group development

The structure of a group changes over time. A group’s structure is evaluated on the basis of how well it facilitates the achievement of the group’s goals. In other words, the structure exists to ensure that the group is effective. (David W. Johnson & Frank P. Johnson, 1991)

Groups develop as its members interact. Whenever two or more members interact, structure is created. However, groups change over time; they often move through various stages, or experience that issues which were never completely resolved can recur later (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). Sequential-stage theories specify the order of five ‘typical’ stages in a group’s development (Tuckman, 1965, in Johnson & Johnson, 1991):

- In the forming stage, members become oriented toward each other.
- In the storming stage, members often find themselves in conflict and its management becomes the focus of attention.
- In the norming stage, a role structure and a set of group norms are formulated.
- In the performing stage, the group works as a unit to achieve the group’s goals.
- In the adjourning stage, the group disbands.

Recurring-phase theories specify the issues that dominate group interaction which reoccur again and again. A balance between task-oriented work and emotional expressions has to be established to build better relationships among group members.

In 1951, Lewin developed a goal-oriented systems view by mapping out a group’s progress toward a particular goal. In this work he identified barriers that he found essential to understanding how to define efficient and productive route to a goal:

- Ineffective communication patterns
- Norms block the effectiveness
- Individual goals versus group goals
- Individuals feel a lack of membership

2.3.1.2 Communication in small groups

Communication as the basis for all human interaction is a complex interrelated and potentially all encompassing concept. It can be defined as ‘the management of messages for the purpose of creating meaning’ (Harris, 2008). This means that this concept involves the giving and receiving of messages. ‘Every action, every silence is a communication’. (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003) For communication, ‘there is no beginning and no end’ (Johnson & Johnson, 1991).
The literature on communication identifies three aspects of communication: the nonverbal aspect (body language and gestures are determined mostly by culture and personal background), the emotional aspect (mood or feelings), and the content or verbal aspect (again influenced by culture and personal background). Importantly, one’s mood, the style and way of messaging, the relationship between sender and receiver (power), as well the gender aspect also shape a communication. Furthermore, clarity of roles, goals, and procedures are essential for a team to function well whereas unclear, vague, excessively broad purpose statements cause frustration and confusion.

Communication in groups is most significantly influenced by members’ previous experiences with groups especially when scepticism that success in a group is even possible is present (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003). A group’s success is further found to depend on the accuracy and amount of information available to the group, the amount of effort to reach a decision, and the quality of thinking in collective ways. Active listening and understanding others’ viewpoints is the key to effective communication (Johnson & Johnson, 1991; Patton & Dawns, 2003) and essential for the group and its decision-making.

The communication in a quality group, that is, a group that functions efficiently and productively, is characterised by an informal atmosphere, a common understanding and acceptance of objectives, decision-making through consensus, and group leadership that does not dominate the members (Patton & Dawns, 2004). When individuals do not trust the group, communication is damaged. Moreover, the size of groups affects interpersonal relationships and behaviour (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003), and hence, the communication participation and the quality of interaction (Johnson & Johnson, 1991: 138). As the group grows, multiple potential relationships emerge, communication becomes difficult, and self-awareness, morale and sense of how to behave in front of the group declines.

2.3.1.3 Membership

Membership is central to our thinking about ourselves. Whether explicitly defined or not, we are all members of groups. The first membership we enter – our family – teaches us who we are, how to relate to others, how to express emotions, and how to resolve problems.

Patton & Dawn (2004) suggest that society has recognised that groups provide an appropriate structure for the implementation of strategies formulated to deal with performance demands and to address changes needed by the members and the group. Apart from psychological reasons (e.g. low self-esteem), people might feel the need to belong, or join because it is ‘good business’, others join for self-serving and political reasons, while again others want to meet people and share interests, like the task or activity of the group, or believe in self-enhancement through participation (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003).
Types of membership can be classified into formal membership (the boundary conditions are clearly defined), aspiring membership (those not formally within the boundary of the group), and marginal membership (those within the boundary but not actively involved). In organisations, there is usually some overlap between those members who have formal membership in the formal decision-making body and those in the informal group that holds decision-making power (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003).

Each of us holds multiple memberships. However, Back (1951) found that why a person joins does make a difference in the functioning of the group. His experiments lead to the generalisation that the nature of group life varies with different sources of attraction.

2.3.1.4 Group cohesion

The cohesion of a group is the extent to which group members like and interact with the other group members. Cohesion is induced by attraction (the quality of interest) which a group holds (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003). The greater the attractiveness is, the higher is the cohesion (Nattawut, 2004). The attractiveness of a group can be increased if members are aware that they can fulfil their needs by belonging to that group. A group’s cohesion is also understood as the unity of action and purpose (Harris, 2008), or as all the forces (both positive and negative) that cause individuals to maintain their membership in specific groups (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). Hence, Napier & Gershenfeld (2003) contend that how a group functions, depends on how attractive it is to its members. This is reflected in the energy which members spend on reaching their goal, how easily they attain it, and how satisfying the outcome and prestige will be. People are more inclined to join groups or continue as members in groups that are successful.

A cohesive group is characterised by trust, dependability, cooperation, respect, openness among members; and the ability to work together as a team (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994, in Nattawut, 2004). The group cohesion can be reflected in levels of attendance by members, whether members arrive on time, the trust and support present among group members, the amount of individuality accepted in the group, the amount of fun members have; also by whether they like one another, whether they want to continue their membership, and whether they are sure they can work effectively with the other group members in the future (Johnson & Johnson, 1991: 463).

2.3.1.5 Norms

Roles and norms define the group’s structure. (David W. Johnson & Frank P. Johnson, 1991)

Norms (along with roles) define a group’s structure, as Johnson & Johnson (1991) explain. They explain the norms of a group as the group’s common beliefs regarding an appropriate behaviour for members. Based on reciprocity, norms can be understood as unspoken rules and standards that guide a group and define
acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by the group’s members in order to accomplish a task. Norms are not only rules about behaviour in a group but also ideas about patterns of behaviour (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003; Johnson & Johnson, 1991). We can learn about a group’s norms by watching, perceiving, and inferring verbal or non-verbal meaning from the behaviour of others. Members of a group are typically blind to many of the norms they adhere to, whereas the invisible group norms are only visible for newcomers.

Society, institutions and small groups are often established with the goal of being democratic and egalitarian and to maintain effective communication (Harris, 2008). What is called the cultural relativism is when insiders are so familiar with group expectations and rules that they do not know these norms exist. In real life they are just taken for granted; this phenomenon is most pronounced in family systems (Johnson & Johnson, 1991).

We are all affected by group norms, even though we may believe in free will and self-determination. Learning the rules of social contact is a basic condition of social life and social survival. The basic rule in social contact is to fit in (Harris, 2008). Hence, group norms take shape. In other words, norms exist in all social contacts and develop through communications with others, but each group has its own history (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003).

Different kinds of norms can be determined: written rules, explicitly stated norms, non-explicit and informal norms, and norms beyond awareness (Johnson & Johnson, 1991; Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003; Harris, 2008). The more cohesive the group (members’ desired needs are met) the greater is the likelihood that members will conform to the group norms. To evaluate the norms of different groups, these standards of behaviour can be classified in at least four dimensions (Parsons & Shils, 1952, in Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003):

- How effective are the relationships?
- Who controls, makes decisions, and how are the authority relationships?
- Why and in what way do relationships exist among members?
- Is the achievement–success relationship based on personal qualities or professional skills?

Norms are intimately related, either directly or indirectly, to group goals. While individual goals often remain in stated norms, normative goals, although often unidentified, are motivators of a group (Bettencourt et al., 1996, in Keller, 1998).

2.3.2 Leadership theory in small groups/organisations

The literature underlying this section was reviewed with a focus on different theoretical and practical approaches of different types of leadership, but in particular on ‘traditional leadership’, ‘cultural-based leadership’, ‘dispersed leadership’ and ‘group-centred leadership’. The purpose of the review was to gain an
understanding leadership constructs and effective leadership performances as well as in exploring the relationship between leadership power and outcomes.

2.3.2.1 Definition of leadership

There is a profound difference between management and leadership, and both are important. To manage means to bring about, to accomplish, to have charge of or responsibility for, to conduct. Leading is influencing, guiding in a direction, course, action, opinion. The distinction is crucial. ... Leaders are people who do the right things and managers are people who do things right. Leaders are interested in direction, vision, goals, objectives, intention, purpose, and effectiveness – the right things. Managers are interested in efficiency, the how-to, the day-to-day, the short run of doing things right. (Bennis, 1997)

In the debate of understanding and defining leadership, Bennis & Nanus (1985, in Mastrangelo, 2000: 5) recognised over 850 definitions of leadership that occur in the related literature. They explain that ‘like love, leadership continued to be something everyone knows existed but nobody could define’. Yet, some definitions are predominate in the literature. Napier & Gershenfeld (2004), for instance, understand leadership as a concept that has a chameleon’s ability to take on a new appearance with every new occasion. Manz & Sims (2001) contend fundamental leadership as a role in addition to the characteristic of having influence over people.

2.3.2.2 Six theoretical views

Six main theoretical views on leadership appeared most often in the literature: Here are brief explanations of these views:

Leadership as power or trait theories focuses on action, getting things done or making things happen that which would not occur without the intervention of leadership. ‘Power’ can be gained through reference, legitimacy, expertise, rewarding, or coercion (French & Raven, 1960, in Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004).

Leadership as behaviour or style theories considers leadership qualities as intimately linked to personalities and traits. The focus is also on training and education, experience and practice. (1939; in Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004: 206). The ‘big five’ taxonomy described by Hogan et al. (1994, in Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004) reflects the five areas of qualities for effective leadership personality: sergeancy, agreeableness, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and intellect.

Leadership as influence (Yukl, 1998) or organizational theories (Terry, 2001, in Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004) suggest leaders’ and members’ roles are clearly defined in bureaucratically/hierarchical structures. Except in revolutions, they ensure some degree of efficiency and predictability through control, order, and discipline.
what might otherwise be chaos. For non-bureaucratic leadership, Bailey & Adams (1990, in Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004) proposed identifying concerns such as innovation vs. stability, efficiency vs. accountability and empowerment vs. control in order to avoid mistrust, dishonesty and inefficiency, but to gain higher group cohesiveness and performance once the objectives of management are accepted.

*Situational theories or contingency theorists* assume that there is no one best way, style, or behaviour for leaders; that virtually anyone can become a more effective leader. Human beings are considered as ultimately being able to learn the techniques of leadership by mastering certain skills and knowledge. The challenge lies in knowing which behaviour to use in what situation. Different leadership situations require different leadership styles. Nevertheless, the ability to move between the task of a group and relationship dimensions is essential. ‘Good’ leaders are described in terms of how a leader adapts to the needs of a situation.

*Visionary leadership* or leadership as providing directive (Mastrangelo, 2000: 5) is often seen more as ‘management’ and focuses on identifying future needs and mobilizing resources, idealism, and hope to reach projected goals. Because of its capacity to energize others to pursue a vision, this view of leadership is currently the most popular (Manz & Sims, 2001). It involves purposefully exploring societal needs and drawing public attention to the future. Such leaders commonly cooperate with effective managers who handle day-to-day operations and problems while they focus on the bigger picture towards realizing the vision. For example, Martin Luther King, Jr. influenced others to share their vision with him.

*Ethical assessment* is the view of leadership that defines leaders as inducing followers to act for certain goals which represent the values and motivation (the wants and needs, aspirations and expectations) of both leaders and followers (Burns, 1978, in Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004). Such leaders are morally and ethically concerned, driven by a conscious awareness of the public good and a desire to serve the interests of their constituencies (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004). Typically, their first task is to raise the group’s consciousness, and therefore, raise both followers and themselves to higher levels of performance and achievements.

### 2.3.2.3 Leadership constructs

In our daily lives real, effective leadership involves the integration of most of the theoretical types of leadership mentioned previously. The following leadership constructs are the most relevant to the context of this study and they will be discussed in detail in this section:

a) Traditional leadership: Transactional and transformational leadership
b) Culture-based leadership
c) Dispersed leadership
d) Group-centred leadership
a) Traditional leadership: Transactional and transformational leadership

Traditional leadership relies upon a leader–follower relationship, based on a set of exchanges between leaders and followers (Manz & Sims, 2001). Synonymously with ‘managing’, in most organisations a fundamental leadership focus is on getting things done (Hunt, 1991, in Nattawut, 2004).

A transactional leadership construct clarifies roles, expectations, standards of work, and performance measurement and offers rewards in order to meet desired outcomes. Transactional leadership can be characterised by three different components (Gordon, 2002; Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004):

- Contingent reward: The definition of clear goals, negotiation of resources and objectives of work, active and positive transaction of rewards for supported goal achievement.
- Active management by excepcion: Active monitoring of performance and correction of actions (if necessary), control and effectiveness by enforcing rules.
- Passive management by excepcion. Leaders do not monitor followers’ performance as they wait to act until a problem is brought to their attention. Only then, corrective action or punishment is taken.

Transformational leadership or principled leadership (Larson & LaFasto, 1989, in Patton & Downs, 2003) is based on a set of personal abilities that allows the leader to recognise the need for change, to create a vision to guide that change and to execute the change ‘effectively’ (Bass, 1985, in Nattawut, 2004). Believing in certain attitudes, values, and behaviours promotes motivation and supports ongoing change since the group is kept in a ‘work mode’. As a result of this influence, trust and respect and consequently greater commitment can be gained towards the leader/s. To become a transformational leader, a person must have three characteristics: (1) an absorptive capacity for being open for new and willing to learn, (2) an ability to become increasingly adaptive in order to respond quickly and (3) managerial wisdom.

Transformational leadership comprises five further factors (Gordon, 2002; Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004; Manz & Sims, 2001):

- Idealised influence or attributed charisma makes up the emotional construct of leadership. Followers’ self-interests are then directed toward the collective interest of a group in a confident, powerful way with transcendent ideals.
- Idealised influence or behavioural charisma, which means that values and a sense of mission are represented in actions of the leadership. The belief in and the building of trust in the leader in a confident way promotes ethical and moral considerations in followers.
- Inspirational motivation encourages followers to high standards as their expectations rise optimistically, and attainable goals are communicated. The leadership construct presents an idealized
future and inspires and motivates followers on a higher level of support to accomplish desired, clearly defined objectives.

- **Intellectual stimulation** supports the leadership construct that helps the followers become more innovative and creative because traditions and beliefs are tested and challenged. Leaders do not publicly criticise individual followers’ mistakes, review cultural norms, nor openly explore differences.

- **Individual considerations**, where the leadership construct acts as a coach or mentor, considering individual needs and interests, abilities and aspirations. Followers’ personal development are supported and encouraged.

A transformational leader is viewed as a higher order construct relative to a transactional leader, because the transformational leader looks for potential motives of followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engaged the full person of the follower. Whereas transactional leadership focuses on the business of getting things done, based on steady exchange between follower and leader, a transformational process focuses on mutual needs, aspirations and values that produce positive social change. In contrast to Burns (1978, in Nattawut, 2004), Bass (1998) and Terry (1987) see leadership on a continuum from transactional (or means oriented) to transformational (or ends oriented).

**Transformational and transactional leadership**

According to the related literature, transformational as well as transactional leadership can be easily compared, as they fall both into nine single-order but somewhat interrelated components (Bass & Avolio, 1993, in Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004). From a practical point of view, some results can be drawn from this literature:

Firstly, Bass & Avolio (1988, in Mastrangelo, 2000) identified two major issues: absence and avoidance of leadership (passive vs. active). Secondly, the combination of the five transformational categories were more critical to successful leadership then the combined three transactional behavioural components. Thirdly, leadership that is both transactional and transforming leads to an augmented effect, and the right combination can hence be complementary (Bass 1990, in Mastrangelo, 2000; Guastello, 1995, Misumi, 1995, in Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004).

The advantages of transformational leadership become more apparent in the today’s increasingly globalising and rapidly changing world which is characterised by, for instance, the current and ongoing communication revolution. The organisational (and within this paper in particular communitarian nature of community gardens) requires management that is team based, cooperatively focused, openly communicative and participative (Bass, 1997, in Mastrangelo, 2000).
Gordon (2002) remarks from a more critical perspective that the leader–follower relationship is of central importance within both transactional and transformational approaches. In both constructs the leaders occupy a position of privilege, and they are considered to be superior to their followers, either through natural ability or the possession of appropriate attributes. The argument being that if leaders were not superior, people would not follow them (Manz & Sims, 2001; Gordon, 2002). Because of common characteristics, Gordon defined the trait, style, contingency and new leadership approaches as traditional in their orientation.

b) Culture-based leadership

The theory of *culture-based leadership* sees leadership constructs as being culturally specific. ‘Good’ leadership therefore depends on how a leader influences his or her organisation’s culture. The place and time in which leadership is created influences how the leaders and followers go about co-producing leadership. Leadership is hence embedded in the context. The researchers who have highlighted organisational context in their leadership studies commonly acknowledge seven influential components: (1) the goals/purpose of the organisation; (2) the composition of its people; (3) the organisation’s core processes; (4) the state/condition of the organisation; (5) time; (6) the organisation’s structure and, finally, (7) its culture/climate (Jackson & Parry, 2008).

Criticism of culture-based leadership theory points to previous research which was entirely based on attitude survey questionnaires. Not all dimensions are well grounded in the theory, while negative attributes are lacking. Cultural leadership aims to improve the organisation’s culture. The better a leader is able to represent group beliefs, values and norms, the more likely is the leader able to influence his or her group’s culture. On the other hand, some researchers have expressed doubts about the real influence that leaders can and should exert on forming a culture as opposed to letting change happen by itself (Trice & Beyer, 1993, in Patton & Downs, 2003).

c) Dispersed leadership: Theory and practice

*Dispersed leadership* or *distributed leadership* has emerged in contrast to traditional leadership. This construct is characterised by flatter, more organically oriented structures. ‘Whichever way we articulate it, quite simply, it is all about the other people you work and interact with.’ (Jackson & Perry, 2008) It can be seen as a theoretical and practical response to the widespread use of empowerment strategies by today’s organisations whose focus is mainly on the followers, who can use their abilities to lead themselves and others by liberating leadership.

The theory of dispersed leadership is fundamentally different from traditional views. It highlights that the sharing of power appears to be of central importance. Leaders and members direct the influence toward themselves to organise and motivate own behaviour, thoughts and performance. The organisation’s
management will willingly transfer power to team leaders and, in doing so, will have no overriding influence on the nature of this transference or its ongoing management (Gordon, 2000). The leaders’ task becomes that of helping followers to develop their own self-leadership skills to contribute increasingly to the organisation. The followers are encouraged to be initiative, self-responsible, self-confident, self-goal-setting, positive opportunity thinking and to solve problems by themselves. Rather than giving orders, Super Leadership assures that members have needed information and knowledge to exercise their own self-leadership (Bennis, 1999; Manz & Sims, 2001). Credible leaders develop hence a capacity in others and have the capacity to turn their ‘followers’, ‘co-workers’ or ‘co-producers’ rather than perceiving ‘recipients’ of leadership into leaders.

Dispersed leadership can operate on different levels of the interpersonal, the team, the organisation, and the personal. Because of this, empowerment can be implemented through following strategies:

- **Interpersonal strategies** take place on a day-to-day basis through interpersonal verbal and non-verbal communication between leaders and followers.
- **Team strategies** implies the opportunity for a team to be a potential, useful, primary vehicle to empower others, for instance as a project team, task force or cross-functional team.
- **Organisational strategies** push the responsibility onto all members and this enhance the empowerment and self-leadership of others.
- **Self-leadership strategies** include self-set goals, management of cues, rehearsal, self-observation, self-rewards and self-correcting feedback.

Patton & Downs (2003) contend that this style of leadership often does not consider evaluating the performance collectively. In addition, Gordon (2002) found that, contrary to expectations, the construct of power turns out to be not central even to development. But ‘deep structures’ (the organisation’s historically constituted codes of order) may prevent its management from sharing power, even if it is its intention to do so. In order to develop an ability to recognise the culturally relevant needs of members, it is essential to ensure that knowledge and information is appropriately placed in an organization. Moreover, the apparent contradiction in leading others to lead themselves requires some mental adjustment. ‘If followers lead themselves, then is the leader really leading at all?’ (Manz & Sims, 2001)

d) **Group-centred leadership**

*Group-centred leadership* agrees with the construct of dispersed leadership in terms of power relations within the group. According to this view of leadership, the group as a whole must share the responsibility for its effectiveness. Maintenance functions are considered as important as task-oriented functions. Bradford highlights that the members, including the leader, own the group and meetings. Moreover, Bradford contends that even better results can be attained through a group-centred approach (Patton & Downs, 2003).
All members, with the leader’s assistance, contribute to the effectiveness. The group is responsible, with occasional and appropriate help from the designated leader, for achieving a decision that includes the participation of all and is hence the product of all. The question is about how the collective entity demonstrates leadership, and not how individuals behave. Furthermore, Jackson and Perry (2008) conclude that everyone can display leadership, and hence the role of the formal leader is reduced. Groups cannot do without a leader, but team leadership reduces the pressure on the formal leader to produce all the leadership.

In group-centred leadership therefore, the leader is a servant and helper of the group. Members of the group are encouraged and supported to take on responsibility for the group’s task productivity, its methods of working, its assignment of tasks as well as its plans for the use of the time available. Feelings, emotions, and conflicts are legitimate facts, and particular situations demand serious attention. The leader believes that any problem in the group must be faced and solved within the group and by the group. Building trust helps. Members come to realise that the needs, feelings and purposes of all members should be met, so that awareness forms the being of the group. The leader helps and encourages (Gordon, 2006).

2.3.3 Leadership in practice

*The final test of leaders is that they leave behind in others the conviction and the will to carry on.* (Walter Lippmann)

Napier & Gershenfeld (2004), Manz & Sims (2001), Gordon (2002) and Patton & Downs (2003) all recognise that the different previously described types of leadership each have their own advantages. All of them can be useful in influencing others. Yet, they can differ in there perspectives about the development of followers.

What seems to predominate in the reviewed literature is the recognition that effective leadership can be taught. A leadership construct’s success can depend on selecting and intervening with a behavioural style fitting to the moment and atmosphere, educating a group and always being sensitive, flexible, discerned, and adaptive; to influence without (direct) authority, to work with a cross-functional team, to understand a rapidly changing, complex system and to be willing to take a risk on people (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004; Manz & Sims, 2001; Parks, 2005; Patton & Downs, 2003). The intentional selection of the correct mix of theory and action will determine an individual leader’s success at any moment, success is determined by a mix of choices rather than any single independent variable, such as cognitive complexity, social intelligence, behavioural complexity, personal experience, absorption, adaptability, managerial wisdom, and so forth, almost endlessly (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004; Bennis, 1999). Yet, theoretical positions (such as those described in section 2.3.2: Leadership theory in small groups/organisations) can be useful for understanding the complexities of the issues around successful leadership. To be an effective leader, Patton & Downs (2003) suggest furthermore that expectations of leaders, members and among each others have to be identified and supportively implemented.
Group awareness can result in ‘leadership emergence’, a process in which leadership develops according to the needs of the group (Patton & Downs, 2003). As the group members become more familiar with each other and continue to work together over time, the members will identify who they think can best lead their particular group toward the completion of a specific task. In contrast to it, ‘intentional leadership’ means that leaders need to be accountable for how they utilize the time and resources of others, which begins with the recognition of responsibility to see each meeting as an opportunity to build successes, good will and future commitments. Bradford (in Patton & Downs, 2003) suggests that the entire group should take over responsibility and commonly own the meetings.

Fostering a vision might result in ‘higher-order outcomes’ (Burns, 1978, in Bennis, 1999), such as providing quality service, meeting certain value-based standards or providing measurable member satisfaction. The creation of positive self-fulfilling prophecies (after assessing the uniqueness of each member) can be part of a larger strategy to help to motivate and to build the confidence of each individual as well as to raise the leaders’ expectations of their own behaviour (Manz & Sims, 2001; Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004).

According to Bavelas (1950) & Shaw (1964, in Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003), a few generalisations can be made about leadership and control of communication in a group: The more people have access to participation, the higher the moral of a group is. Very open groups are ineffective as time is ‘wasted’ by listening to all members. In contrast, groups which focus on a central leadership show the most effectiveness, as they tend to organise more quickly and perform more stably, although this might not be valid in the long term. Positions and roles that individuals take can influence the leadership and cause conflict among group members. To increase the group cohesion (the unity of action and purpose), members’ needs have to be taken into account, because working collaboratively leads to effectiveness (Harris, 2008). Leaders have the ability to strengthen the positive aspects of diversity by moderating potential negative effects of (racial, gender and other) diversity on team communication processes. Sometimes the gender of a leader can play a significant role in members’ perceptions.

It is important to note that ineffective or insensitive behaviour of leaders can result in failure, regardless of how clearly a goal or vision is communicated or how well an action plan is organised. Emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence help to raise personal consciousness (Harris, 2008). Moreover, the literature tells us that self-management, including emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative and optimism, can feed a person’s own sense of competence as well as the confidence that others will have in that person (Manz & Sims, 2001). ‘Ones personal awareness and self-understanding shifts then to a deep and abiding understanding of others, whether individually or in the context of a group or team.’ (Napier & Gershenfeld, 2004) This means that social relationships are reflected by empathy, organizational awareness of a group’s attitudes, feelings, politics or tensions. Service and
communication are driven by the interest of the member or team. Effective leadership is able to understand and communicate the purpose and needs of the group, to vision goals and the way to achieve them as a team, because the leadership has a personal interest in growth and development of members. Because of these factors, relationships can be established.

2.3.4 Leadership-group performance evaluation

What still remains is the question of how to ‘measure’ a leadership’s effectiveness and performance outcomes. The assessment of it seems still to be an unsolved problem in the literature of leadership. Napier & Gershenfeld (2004) contend that the effectiveness of a leadership is dependent on the cooperation of members of a group, community or organisation to the leadership process. Effectiveness is hence reflected by the members’ morale in terms of willingness to contribute their efforts. In other words, a leader must successfully influence the way people influence themselves to be effective (Manz & Sims, 2001). A true leader who realises that positive emotions have to be nurtured and people’s passions have to be tapped for a better tomorrow. This will result in successful and sustainable change, even though feelings of excitement and hope for the future will naturally be coupled with feelings of frustration and confusion. The literature on effective leadership indicates five elements in a core leadership message that make it compelling to engage people’s passion.

![Figure 1: Engaging people's passion: Effective leadership (Sims & Quatro, 2005)](image)

Developing effective leaders is not just good advice for creating a successful organisation, it is a vital prerequisite, especially in the fast-changing, globalising environment that organisations face today, locally and globally. Yet, neither of the performance outcomes rated by the members nor the application of objective
performance criteria help to measure effectiveness validly and accurately as there are many factors that influence the community’s performance but are out of the leadership’s control. (Bennis, 1999; Yukl, 1999)

Patton and Downs (2003) suggest evaluating effectiveness by the size of the group (Is it manageable enough to achieve goals/objectives?), the level of motivation and commitment, as well as trust, and the level of diversity and the extent to which it is taken advantaging among decision-making groups. They found that autocratic leadership led to more productivity than did democratic leadership, but only over a short period of time. On the other hand, the quality of work was consistently better in democratic groups, compared with that in autocratic groups. Moreover, when autocratic leadership was absent, the work tended to ‘fall apart’. This did not happen in democratic groups. Most members are more satisfied with democratic leadership than with any other style of leadership. Studies of supervisory and administrative behaviour resulted in similar conceptual schemes (Patton & Downs, 2003: 99-100).

Nattawut (2004) found in his work that transformational leadership had a strong and positive relationship with subordinates’ perception of group effectiveness. That means that, consistent with previous studies, his results show strong positive correlations in the relationship of behaviours to performance outcomes under transformational leadership. This was true also in the context of a bureaucratic organisation. The results of his work show that, as he had expected transactional leadership based on contingent reward behaviours also correlated positively with group performance outcomes, especially during organisational change. As a main aim of his study, Nattawut found that transformational leadership positively predicted group performance over and beyond the impact of transactional leadership. He gained evidence for what was already shown in previous research: Transformational leadership is complementary to transactional leadership and likely to be ineffective in the total absence of a transactional relationship between leader and followers. Similarly, the amount of effort, effectiveness and satisfaction is expected to be greater when the transactional behaviours are complemented by transformational leadership (Bass, 1985).
3  CONDUCT OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

In the process of this research, an initial familiarising understanding of key aspects of leadership theory in/and small groups was attained through reviewing the literature. Following, a guiding concept was formed. Theory was then implemented into practice with the focus set on two community garden entities in Greater Christchurch, New Zealand.

The practical part of this research project was accomplished by looking through the lens of management, leadership and small group dynamics in two community gardens in Christchurch, New Zealand. The essential nature of leadership is generally conceived as a dynamic procedural relationship whereby leaders and followers relate to one another in order to achieve a common purpose. Hence, this leadership research needed to investigate the nature of this social influence process. It is that process of leadership and management that attention is paid to in the following chapters.

3.1 Research design and methodology

The combination of action research and partial grounded theory allowed approaching theory and conducting exploratory research at times. The combination of these qualitative approaches underlies my belief that quantitative research, e.g. mere questionnaires, is too narrow as a methodology to achieve a comprehensive understanding of leadership in small organisations. The aim of this qualitative study was hence to gather quality data with less focus on quantity. Therefore, qualitative data was enhanced by conceptualising and assessing ‘reality’ in terms of understanding the phenomena of leadership and with them the dynamics of small groups in non-for-profit community organisations.

Especially action research enabled getting an understanding of how interpersonal relationships and small group dynamics interact among management staff, leadership personalities and participants in the community gardens in order to underline effectiveness. Grounded theory is an inductive, theory-discovery method that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations or data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This research method led hence to the understanding of leadership phenomena in small groups in a data-driven manner. In order to achieve quality work, issues of interdependency, communication, decision-making processes, the power of individuals and groups, and the empowerment of people were therefore addressed within the organisational body of the two chosen community gardens. These categories that emerged through the study of the community gardens in practice form the basis for the final conclusion, which nevertheless needs to be tested through further research to determine its relative validity or ‘truth’.
3.2 Discovery of action research

Action research is a qualitative approach to undertaking research and is defined as a ‘family of approaches’ (Reason & Bradbury, 2006; Punch, 2005; Liampittong & Ezzy, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The process is characterised by a participatory and democratic process, which is a personal, political and social one, arguing for acting as a basis of learning and knowing (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005, Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The variety of terms by which the method of ‘action research’ is defined already reflects the emergent diversity in the field. Action research appears in the literature exemplarily as ‘technical action research’, ‘critical action research’, ‘classroom action research’, ‘action learning’, ‘practical action research’, ‘emancipatory action research’, ‘participatory action research’, ‘feminist action research’ and ‘collaborative action research’ (Punch, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). While some approaches differ in the details of practicing, they all have in common that action researchers engage with people in collaborative relationships and draw on many ways of gaining knowledge.

Action research was developed from Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist. He published his own earliest work related to community action programs in the U.S. during the 1940s (1946; 1952, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). A second generation of action research began in Britain and was recognised as being ‘practical’. A following third generation led to more ‘critical’ and ‘emancipatory’ action research, which developed into ‘participatory’ action research, emerging from social movements, adult education, literacy, community development and management research in the developed world, mainly in the USA, Britain and Australia. The major objectives of action research is to solve real-life problems in a community, and therefore to shift the balance of power in favour of poor and marginalised groups in society (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

The sequence of tasks in the process of doing action research is only poorly described in the available literature. Principally, through the rough structure involves phases of planning (through understanding of situation and practice), acting and observing (posing what? how? why? where? questions), reflecting (about communication, production, and social organisation), re-planning, and then acting, after which the process is repeated iteratively by observing again, reflecting again, and so on (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Most frequently utilised data–gathering methods are in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, life history research and observation of participants, community meetings and events. Researchers then need to crosscheck their data by using a mix of methods and talking with a wide range of people. This is known as ‘triangulation’ of qualitative methods (Denzin, 1978, in Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) which further supports the generation of comprehensive and generalised results (Herman & Egri, in Parry & Meindl, 2002).

Action research is increasingly recognised as being a tool for social research especially on a community level and in the health field. Its effective application requires an authentic attitude of mutuality, openness and a commitment to (mutual) learning on the part of all people involved (Gardener & Lewis, 1996; Liamputtong &
Ezzy, 2005), equally of researchers and those who provide them with information. This approach allows the patterns of power in the research process to be addressed and balanced, unlike conventional research, in action research people who provide information have equal power in controlling the research, and are thus prevented from becoming passive objects who have research ‘done to them’. At the same time, the action researcher is required to bring along personal skills of self-awareness and self-reflexiveness, facilitative skills in interpersonal and group settings, political skills, intellectual skills and data management skills (Reason & Bradbury, 2006; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

3.3 Discovery of grounded theory (and the complexity of social behaviour)

In doing research from a sociological perspective in organisational contexts, Glaser and Strauss (1968) created a method for the study of complex social behaviour which they named grounded theory. On the one hand, grounded theory can be understood as a theory derived from data through the process of research by systematically gathering, analysing and eventually theorising (Strauss & Corbin, 1996); on the other hand, it can be seen as a method, approach or strategy rather than a theory at all (Punch, 2005). Within the conflict of defining boundaries of the theory, some authors (Calas & Smircich, 1999; Langley, 1999; Weick, 1999) argue that it is time to move beyond the inductive-deductive, positivist-antipositivist, modern-postmodern debates by acknowledging and utilising multiple perspectives and viewpoints (Gordon, 2002).

Grounded theory argues that theory can be built up through careful observation of the social world (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). A researcher is or should usually be free from preconceived theories in mind, and all the theory as well as most hypotheses and concepts will emerge from the data as ‘grounded’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1996). Grounded theories are hence likely to offer insight, to enhance understanding and to provide a meaningful guide to action, because they assemble their ‘reality’ from data.

Glaser and Strauss developed this emphasis as a reaction to the exclusive insistence on theory verification research of the 1950s. But in fact, grounded theory makes use of pre-existing theory in order to narrow the gap between theory and practice (Gordon, 2002). Furthermore, the reflection of existing theory creates preconceptions which can be then verified in the process of the theory generation (Punch, 2005). In practice this means that new theory is dependent on the verification of existing theory and that, therefore, the distinction does not need to be drawn too sharply. Therefore, grounded theory building occurs in an ongoing dialogue between pre-existing theory and new insights generated as a consequence of empirical observation (Blaikie, 1993; Strauss & Corbin, 1996; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Punch, 2005).

The collection and analysis of data is different from traditional research. Grounded theory requires an integrated process of data collection, coding and analysis: Guided by some research questions, the researcher will collect a first set of data. S/He will analyse it, gather a second set of data, analyse again, gather a third set of data, and so on. This continues until theoretical saturation is achieved and the new data is not showing any
new theoretical elements (Punch, 2005). Overall, grounded theory analysis aims directly at generating abstract theory to explain what is central in the data (Punch, 2005). In doing so, there are different ways of applying grounded theory analysis (Strauss & Glaser, 1996; Marvasti, 2004, in Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

However, it is essential to find a core category, at a high level of abstraction but still grounded in the data. This can be achieved in three steps:

*Open coding* is the primary stage of finding conceptual categories in the data at the first level of abstraction (substantive codes). For this purpose, data is ‘fractured’ or ‘broken open’ in order to raise the conceptual level of the data.

*Axial coding* involves the task of finding relationships between the categories explained above. Theoretical codes are then described based on theoretical codes. Selective coding is the conceptualising and accounting for these relationships at a higher level by concentrating on the basic social process which becomes evident from the data. The level of abstraction was raised again to the core category (core code), which has this been elaborated.

The sequence of conceptualising, defining categories, and developing categories is followed by the theorising phase. Two types of theories can finally be generated which are then related to categories through hypotheses or statements of relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1996): the substantive theory in a specific context and the formal theory at a higher level of generality. While it is possible to borrow categories from existing theory (Blaikie, 1993; Glaser & Strauss, 1968), the founders preferred that new categories are developed. Otherwise researchers might tend to fit data to expected categories rather than to produce new categories. Strauss & Corbin (1996) also highly recommend the alignment of memos and diagrams as they are essential research procedures for theory building because they enable researchers to keep a record of the analytical process.

### 3.4 Data gathering

The methodical procedure of combining conversations, participation and observations enabled sensitive interpretation of the social interactions that occurred. During this time, I actively participated in gardening activities in two chosen community gardens in Greater Christchurch, New Zealand. After the first introductions, I looked for contracted community gardeners in both community gardens. My interest was positively received and I could introduce myself and my research to the community garden member at these garden meetings. Those who were not present during the meetings were usually told about my research intentions afterwards.

Active participation in both of my chosen community gardens allowed me, as researcher and volunteer, to gain an understanding of the informal ‘ways of doing things’ directly in the research setting over a period of
more than two months during July and September 2008. My attendance was limited to certain days during the week, during which I could observe gardening activities directly. Being accepted in the community gardens as volunteer worker was essential to experience excerpts of everyday life. This gave me the opportunity to get to know the project facilitators (formal and informal leaders), users of the community gardens and a number of visitors, as well as their intentions and personalities. This enhanced my understanding of the interrelations and constraints of the group. In addition, I attended formal meetings (e.g., trust board meetings), one fair day and three feasts, where I could observe certain proceedings.

As an essential supplement to participant observations, most interviews, group discussions and conversations took place in an informal setting at the community garden site both during gardening activities and at lunch breaks or teatimes. The conversations were mainly of informative character, and I deliberately did not use a voice recorder, except during one formal, in-depth interview. With this approach, I wanted to create a talking atmosphere as unconstrained as possible. I tied in the practise of everyday life chats, in which I addressed subjects such as gardening activities, the projects as community gardens, experiences in the community gardens or the planted vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers: I encouraged participants to describe their own experiences in relation to their involvement in the community gardens and interactions in the social influence process. At the same time, I repeatedly tried to integrate my own impressions and experiences in conversations in order to ease the positions of questioner and responder. During this time I also got helpful information for the later analyses.

Both community gardens also provided written sources such as pamphlets, informational sheets such as invitations to community events, organisational reports about management and finances, minutes of previous meetings and even updated homepages and/or newspaper articles. The amount of available written sources of information reflects the openness within and the ‘publicness’ of the organisations.

I collected and organised relatively large amounts of data in order to create a valid and ‘objective’ base for my later analysis. I made sure to capture participative observations and informal conversations, which lasted between ten minutes and one hour, immediately after they occurred and in as much detail as possible in the form of memory protocols and contemporaneously by taking notes. I noted then contextual statements, descriptions of situation-specific progressions of conversations, general new information as well as the process of approaching contact and my subjective perceptions. Formal and in depth interviews were transcribed directly into MS documents. At the same time, I added notes and worked out questions if further explanations were required in any given area. Moreover, I kept a research journal where I documented reflections on the fieldwork progress, notations on the context and any insights and further observations that I had.
Relations remained uncomplicated although I clearly stated the research/the rote I was occupying. Yet, I felt that the majority of the community gardeners enjoyed talking to me. Conversations turned out to be diverse in content, and the willingness to disclose information, and my individualised exploratory questions varied somewhat with each research participant. I tried hence to keep clear sight of my central interests in the conversations but adjusted each specifically to the situation, on the one hand, to give my talking partners as much freedom as possible and, on the other hand, to remain open for any inanticipated aspects which might bring worthwhile input for my analysis. Every individual who was actively or passively involved in one of the two community gardens during the time of my fieldwork was a potential research participant. These included formal and informal project facilitators, staff, volunteers and visitors. Though my interactions with all these people, I learned about the specific roles of individuals, their skills, behaviours and interrelations as well as general information, which make up the culture of each single community garden.

After gathering sufficient data (that is when new data was no longer contributing new information), I analysed all my field notes piece by piece and organised them into categories, which are known as profile codes: Who said/did what? In a further step, the axial coding phase, I tried to find relationships between these categories and to identify thematic codes that reflected more abstract but still descriptive matters on this research project. In a third step, I conceptualised thematic codes. This allowed me to theorise my findings within the community gardens’ specific contexts. Applying the same identical thematic analytical concept, I analysed the data from each community garden independently from one another. By conducting abstract findings of both case studies only in the final part of the analysis, I as the researcher, was able to end up with some emergent theory approaches and core codes on leadership and small groups in both specific settings of community gardens in Christchurch.

### 3.4.1 Sampling

The area of Christchurch is home to at least thirteen community gardens.\(^3\) They have been all established for different purposes, for different people, by different initiators. Hence, each forms a unique entity. I selected the two case studies within Christchurch for the fundamental research for this study, based on my intuition about what would be suitable for this study as well as on personal interest. Hence, focused on the following community garden sites:

- Linwood Resource Centre – Te Whare Taonga O Nga Iwi Katoa – Local House and Garden
- Project Lyttelton - Lyttelton Community Garden

\(^3\) The exact number is not known, as some gardens are likely to be in the development stage while others are in the process of closing.
The diversity of both community gardens and different levels of my personal involvement as researcher and volunteer (time and activities) made direct comparison impossible and thus avoided competition between the organisations within this research. Since I aim to show that a best community garden does not exist, I rather focus on entity-specific activities, involvements and interrelations. Yet, I will assess the final abstract and generalised assumptions and theory approaches with consideration to the similarities and differences.

### 3.4.2 Thematic analysis

Primarily, a grounded background is provided on each community garden in this chapter as well as in chapter 4 as a non-profit organisation and community project. The chapters and sections that follow give project-specific information on the socio-physical environment, the organisational structures, current activities and project rationales towards sustainability, rules/norms and harvesting policies as well as an overview of the patterns of how the general garden community is involved. In one section, the focus is on the management bodies, their visions, tasks, communication, decision-making processes, cooperation, finances, expectations and goals. Each group of community gardeners as a small group is described in terms of membership, its involvement, needs, provided skills, aspects on individual lives, interrelations, group communication or self-awareness in the set context as well as aspects of group cohesion. Leadership is primarily described in an historical context of the projects. The current leadership body is reflected by an insight gathered on personalities, leadership-specific knowledge, success and self-awareness as well as leadership actions and influences on the small group.

### 3.4.3 Methods to enhance quality

Reliability and validity in qualitative research are basically evaluated through trustworthiness of the research process. Reliability is traditionally described as the extent to which the endeavours and findings can be replicated. However, validity refers to the extent to which findings of a research can be considered as true. It is debatable whether the terms reliability and validity can be applied to qualitative research. Yet, the trustworthiness of this research process can be indicated by the following:

- Intensive and prolonged engagement with the gathered data material and the discussion of findings and processes with others helped to understand and to replicate the data within a final theoretical context. Reliability of this study entails ‘grounding’ the interpretations by using individual examples in the data to support abstractions or higher-level theoreis.

- Furthermore, the data material was regularly discussed with several research participants, with my internal supervisor and a number of other feedback partners with different backgrounds. Additionally, 4 Only if they would remain anonymous.
a self-reflective journal was kept and the process and data organisation was discussed with a colleague to ensure consistency.

- Community gardeners from both community projects, and especially those who were involved in the active governmental and management body, have expressed the worthiness of the research as it has encouraged further improved group development as well as organisational development. Experiences of ‘change’ within the groups during the time of fieldwork have been brought up, whether it can be contributed to the practice of action research or other circumstances independently from my research activities.

### 3.4.4 About the researcher

I am a 'Natural Resource Management & Ecological Engineering’ student from Austria with a background in landscape planning and landscape architecture. My primer interest lies in social and environmental sustainability, locality and complementary decentralised (infra)structures, alternatively to neo-liberal global economy and centralised (infra)structures. I assume that my personal interest for the ‘environment’ origins from the fact that my Austrian hometown next to the Rheine river is named ‘Hard’. The word hard has its origins in the Germanic language and means forest. Unfortunately, not much actual forest is left in Hard apart from minimal protected areas at the borderline of the township. Since my early childhood in Hard, I witnessed change in our human-built environment.

My passion to work with social and environmental sustainability and decentralised structures on an international/global level was evoked primarily from numerous formative encounters and conversations with European and non-European people who have experienced (drastic) changes due to the process of globalisation and the development of neo-liberal economies. I also have had personal exposure to non-Western cultures. M. K. Ghandi’s Rural Production as a constructive program for supporting subsistence enterprises in India reflects feasible aspects of long-term sustainability at all levels — economically, socially and environmentally — and has inspired me to focus even more on locality and supporting local economy and agriculture; also because my home region is a currently relatively wealthy, urbanised and booming area for the tertiary service sector, previous secondary industrial production shifted to countries with low-wage labour.

My family has taught me to live a simple life with little emphasis on material wealth and to appreciate the richness of available natural resources, such as having untreated drinking water, clean water bodies to swim in, fresh air to breathe, fertile land to cultivate on or the beauty of the landscape. My New Zealand stay in 2008 has strengthened my belief in a holistic lifestyle. Having experienced lives both in a rural area as well as in urban environments, I have found differences in terms of cultural lifestyles.
Finally, my motivation for community projects is strengthened by my belief in democracy on community, local and regional levels: that local initiatives and issues matter; that people can gain back the confidence to act with the aim of fulfilment of their basic needs; and that people stop complaining about ‘we cannot change anything about it’. M. K. Ghandi once said, ‘We must be the change we seek to create’.

In academic words, my emergent worldview is one that can be characterised as systemic, holistic, relational, feminine, experimental and overall participatory, contemporarily criticising positivist science and scientism, supporting the liberating perspectives on gender and race, the practices of experiential learning and some types of spiritual practices. Action research and grounded theory responds to practical and often pressing issues in lives of people in organisations and communities, regarding local knowledge and lived experience (Gardner & Lewis, 1996; Reason & Bradbury, 2006). My research here aimed primarily to gain understanding of (by then for me personally) unexplored fields of socio-environmental studies: community gardens as community initiatives for environmental management as well as leadership/small group dynamics from a social perspective. This field of interest opened up my first opportunity to gain experiences as a practical field researcher and to explore qualitative research methodologies of action research and grounded theory.

### 3.5 Rationale for the research

Currently, nearly half of the global population lives in cities, which makes the world to an urbanised place. The rapid process of urbanisation due to population growth and globalisation especially over the last fifty centuries is affecting the long-term outlook for humanity. With 2010, approximately sixty percent of the world’s population will call the city their home. Urban areas have continuously been the centre of global economic activities, where everything can be bought and sold, a place less concerned with the rhythms of nature. The ever increasing process of accumulation of people in cities results in significant land-use changes, environmental degradation, unemployment, lack of urban services, finances, and deterioration of existing infrastructures, changes of lifestyles and societies through increased dependency on the labour market for paid work as well as on supermarkets and processed food, social isolation and human alienation from nature.

*For better or for worse, the development of contemporary societies will depend largely on understanding and managing the growth of cities. The city will increasingly become the test bed for the adequacy of political institutions, for the performance of government agencies, and for the effectiveness of programmes to combat social exclusion, to protect and repair the environment and to promote human development.* (United Nations Centre of Human Settlement, 2001)

As cities continue to grow, more housing has to be built and hence residential areas become more densely populated. The densification of housing, on the one hand, is unlike the expansion of urban areas because of its effective urban land use, yet, on the other hand, it leads to the loss of public open spaces, decreasing sizes
of parcels of land and backyards. As a consequence, social conflicts and with it alienation of the people within
neighbourhoods increase. Previous studies show that poverty, the lack of private garden areas, social isolation
and/or raising ecological awareness led to an increase of the demand of urban dwellers for public places for
gardening, local food supply, environmental amelioration and/or social (re)development.

Over the last century and many current examples worldwide, especially in North America and Cuba, give
evidence that community gardens are examples for local approaches as modified solutions to the problems of
urbanisation. For dwellers in an increasingly urbanised world, community gardens have the potential to meet
multiple needs, well beyond growing food. Only recently, new projects have mushroomed within the local
and regional area around the campus of the Lincoln University, too. Yet, past and current experience have
shown us that public community gardens require intensive maintenance, not only of the physical gardening
site and plants but also of the social community, organisational body and a budget. This is the only way that
local initiative can be kept active and relevant.

Previous studies of community gardens that were undertaken in New Zealand (Trotman & Spinola, 1994;
Pauling, 2001; Jefferies & Everingham, 2006; Watson, 2006), Australia (Gelsi, 1999; Brisbin, 2003) and the
American (Lawson, 2005; Macias, 2002; Lackey, 1998; Maugeout, 2007). All found that community gardens
contribute to a city’s sustainability on multiple levels. Newly, the idea of community gardens attracted my
attention because they are innovative community initiatives. At the same time, I was interested in what makes
a community garden ‘successful’ and unique. Every community garden project, its members and its gardens
are a dynamic and unique system. This is reflected by a complex network of interrelations, this network seems
to contribute to the success or failure of a community garden. As to this, I hypothesised that patterns of
leading, managing and governing such a community project are crucial for the achievement of goals beyond
food and hence influences the social dynamics of a community garden’s members and the organisational well-
being. When the leaderships lack this awareness, a community garden initiative is more likely to fail, or at
least, is more difficult to sustain in the long run.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no literature available that focuses specifically on management,
leadership and their correlation to small group dynamics in community gardens. Yet, countless other
resources exist on community leadership and non-profit organisations. I felt challenged to explore these
untapped sources of study with regard to the phenomena of management, leadership and small groups in
complex and not yet institutionalised organisations that take productive actions on a community level to bring
about change in their individual, local, regional and/or wider environment. In particular, I decided to examine
the day-to-day lives in two community gardens to gain insight and understanding of the challenges and
constraints involved, and also their potential for and realisation of ‘effectiveness’ and value within the urban
areas in which they operate.
This study attempts to gain an understanding of the roles, responsibilities and importance of patterns of leadership and management needed to sustain a community garden once a site has been established and is flourishing. It is worth pointing out that a community garden is a complex, unique and dynamic entity with its core being the leadership (whether this is intended or not). However, writing the study, the assessment of reality and its expression through words and numbers was also an enormous challenge. Remember here that this study does not aim to compare different leadership concepts in order to valuate them in terms of profit, production, available money or even numbers of active participants. Rather, it aims to show if, how, and if applicable, why not community gardens are heading toward realising their visions, with or without the help of their leadership.

During the process of action research, self-awareness increased among leadership and most members of the community gardens studied. The principle idea of being aware might be also valid for other innovative, local small-scale projects in different fields of society and its environment that equally seek to add value to the quality of ‘nature’ in a collective way, rather than individually.

In the most urbanised regions of the world, however, where they have evolved from centres of trade into expressions of culture, cities have become objectives of national respect, pride and even affection. There is nothing inherently evil about the city – the most complex and potentially rewarding of human artefact.... The city may be taken over by corruption, vice and all forms of poverty, but only if the people in control allow it....Providing the opportunity for citizens to participate in making the choices that affect their lives is the first principle of good urban governance. (United Nations Centre for Human Settlement, 2001)

3.6 Ethical considerations

The focus of this study developed over time, after I had gathered initial information and an insight through participating, observing, talking, discussing and listening. As soon as my research intentions were given relevance in the settings, I was able to construct a hypothesis and make some rough assumptions.

I found that it was mostly leaders who welcomed my research intentions, but some other members of the groups also showed interest and willingness to participate in the project. I welcomed any interest shown by people involved in the gardens, and, if asked, I was pleased to give information about my current observations and share thoughts and feedback about their particular garden project. I also let them know that I was grateful for every disclosure and that I hoped to have the opportunity to keep on learning from them through my active research.

The participation of community gardeners in this study was voluntary, and the risk to participants of physical, psychological and social harm was minimal. Participants were informed about the intentions of my research
and also that of the information would be used for a final, written thesis. This research has been informed by valuable feedback from the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee.
4 TWO CASE STUDIES

Two case studies were chosen for this research study: (1) Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) – Te Whare Taonga O Nga Iwi Katoa / Community house & garden and (2) Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) as part of the Project Lyttelton (PL).

This chapter covers the data that is grounded in participants’ experiences and my own observations. Interpretations and assumptions were made only according to available data. Yet, this chapter is primarily of descriptive nature. Since I entered both community gardens at a random stage and spent only limited time there, I do not claim that this verbal reflection completely describes the ‘reality’ of the community gardens studied.

Firstly, however, general information about both community garden projects is provided and the geographical and demographic scenes are set. In a next step, the description of the process of data gathering and involvement of participants in the two case studies follows. Both case studies, the Linwood Resource Centre House and Garden and the Lyttelton Community Garden differ from each other and all groups show a wide diversity of participants.

4.1 Introducing the two case studies: Same but different

Both the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) and the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) projects are part of charitable, non-profit trust organisations. Independently from each other, both community gardens were initiated in Christchurch around the same time between 1998 and 1999 on vacant land. Their physical production sites are both provided by the Christchurch City Council (CCC) and have minimum sizes of 1000m². Today they both provide a range of services from which the organisations, volunteers and the wider community can benefit. Gardeners follow organic gardening practices and grow varieties of vegetables, fruits, berries, herbs and flowers in communal plots. Some plants are even unavailable in supermarkets. However, only the LRC provides individual plots. Gardening and producing food is the heart of each case study. The LRC House and Garden aims for sustainable community development with a focus on people. The LCG as a vehicle of Project Lyttelton (PL) puts the PL emphasis on sustainability into action to bring about a sustainable world locally. Yet, their organisational structures differ considerably in part.

The Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) is a trust and operates on the basis of the community development model for community empowerment and betterment. It currently unites a community house with offices and rooms for gathering as well as productive and recreational garden sites in Linwood.
In case study 2, the current Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) runs under the umbrella of Project Lyttelton (PL), a values-based community organisation. This organisation has initiated a range of complementary projects, which are linked with each other within a loose organisational structure. The LCG is one of those. It consists currently of garden sites, the community resource building (which is also the site of the PL headquarters) and socialising place. The LCG networks especially with the Lyttelton Time Bank, Grow Lyttelton, the Lyttelton farmers market and Lyttelton News.

Management (of a community garden) is understood in the literature as fulfilling the task of organising land, labour and capital. Due to different organisational visions, goals and philosophies, the two case studies differ in some of their views of the role of management. Management and leadership are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they overlap frequently, and in these two specific case studies, they also do.

Leadership in the two projects was taken on by different people in different constellations for tasks and responsibilities. The group and personal philosophies in each project underlie the ways in which (active and passive) leaders involved themselves in the process. While dealing with people and other resources, they had to recognise, reflect about and articulate their positions, on different organisational levels and in relation to other participants.

Community gardens are public places, where different people with different ages, with different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds come. Both projects underlay certain behavioural directing guidelines to avoid anarchical conditions and to keep the places safe. In both community gardens, anybody is welcome to do some sort of volunteer work. Operating hours are on at least four days per week when the resource buildings are open. The resource buildings include administrative offices, rooms for indoor activities and social
gatherings and provide toilets, tap water and kitchens. During communal gardening days, volunteers gather for a shared cup of morning or afternoon tea, for shared lunch or even for dinner. All volunteers who commit to doing some gardening, they rewarded afterwards with fresh produces from the garden. The gates of the LRC are locked outside the office hours, whereas the LCG is freely accessible to the public at any time, for gardening or private activities.

4.1.1 Setting the locations

4.1.1.1 Geographical locations

The fieldwork, which underlies this study, took place in (Greater) Christchurch, New Zealand. Christchurch is the largest town in the South Island with a population of 340,000 people in 2001. This makes up in total 121,833 households and 81,408 families. The population growth is currently 2.3 per year. On average, a Christchurch resident earns $17,400, lower than the average New Zealand income of $18,500.

The city itself lies in relatively flat area that is characterised by typical dry foehn wind from north-west, which is strong, stormy, and very dry or can bring fog, especially in summer. The warmest month is January. Winters occasionally bring frosts with them. Snowfall, except infrequent cases, is light. Hail on very rare occasions has caused damage to glasshouses and gardens in the district.

As already mentioned, Greater Christchurch accommodates currently minimum 13 community gardens in different urban areas. The following map of Christchurch and its neighbourhood shows the location of the two community gardens that are subjects of this case study. They both cover more or less wide catchments. However, it is impossible to precisely delineate the boundaries of catchment areas. While case study 1 (LRC)

Figure 3: Global, national and regional New Zealand (ref.: www.emeraldinsight.com; www.localcouncils.govt.nz/Canterbury_rev3; 2009)

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5 Dinner was shared in the LCG, and on exceptional occasions in the LRC.
is situated relatively close to the city centre, case study 2 (LCG) is located in Lyttelton on the other side of the Port Hills in the harbour basin.

Figure 4: Catchment areas of the two case studies in the city of Christchurch and suburban neighbourhood (based on the map of the Christchurch Community gardens Association): (1) Linwood Resource Centre, (2) Lyttelton Community Garden

4.1.1.2 Demographic statistics for relevant catchment areas

The Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) covers the Linwood community and is in the figure above indicated with the number 1. It embraces in detail additionally to Linwood the communities of North Linwood, East Linwood, Woolston West, Bromley and Phillipstown. The Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) was established for the Lyttelton community.⁷

### Population profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population profile</th>
<th>Linwood</th>
<th>Lyttelton</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person/household</td>
<td>4,131</td>
<td>876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwellings owned</td>
<td>6,462</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>4,131</td>
<td>876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population growth</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>6,462</td>
<td>1,260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5:** Population profile table (left), distribution of ethnic groups (right)

**Ethnic groups**

- European
- Maori
- Pacific peoples
- Asia
- Other

⁷The community division of the particular catchment areas base on the information provided by Statistics New Zealand – Tatauranga Aotearoa. Detailed Community Profiles have last been updated in 2001. Later statistical data was gathered in 2006, but covers only regional information.
The LRC covers a relatively wider area than the LCG. The Linwood community appears to be the place for a higher percentage for diverse ethnic groups, whereas both but especially the Lyttelton community, are home to a higher percentage of European people than overall in the New Zealand (80.1%).

### Occupation profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Linwood community</th>
<th>Lyttelton community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most popular</td>
<td>Service and sales</td>
<td>Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occupation</td>
<td>workers (19.7%)</td>
<td>(21.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income of people</td>
<td>$15,200</td>
<td>$21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual spending</td>
<td>$34,681</td>
<td>$41,777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per household</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesses</td>
<td>1110</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whereas both the catchment areas in the case studies show approximately a similar age distribution of the population, fewer people in Linwood have any post-school education than in Lyttelton and all New Zealand (32.2). At the same time, the unemployment rate is highest there, too. Hence, people living in the Linwood area appear to earn and spend less. In contrast, people in Lyttelton earn more than the national average in New Zealand ($18,500). They also have the highest rate of post-school educated people. However, an average New Zealand household spends $43,682 per year, more than the community in either of the case studies.

While almost everyone in the selected communities have access to telephone at home, only a low number of households in Linwood have internet access. The percentage of Lyttelton households with internet access exceeds not only Linwood but also the national average. Lyttelton residents also have more opportunities for private and public transport than the people in and around Linwood.

### 4.1.2 The community gardeners and volunteers

Community gardeners are classified in this research as people who I met as a researcher at least twice on-site in the community gardens, while they were active in a physical or social manner. I saw volunteers coming and going in both projects during my time of fieldwork. In case study 1, I exclude the community developer (CD)
and external staff from this group. In contrast, in case study 2, I see the formal LCG coordinator and the PL chairperson as part of the community group since they see themselves as equal to all other volunteer gardeners. This perception of themselves is reflected in their flat group structure that has no explicit ‘head’ of the group. The following table gives a profile of the people involved in each group.

Table 1: Involved participants in case studies 1 and 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Case study 1</th>
<th>Case study 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LRC small group</td>
<td>LCG small group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active female community gardeners</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active male community gardeners</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent volunteers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent volunteers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid garden and house workers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-locals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present min. 2 days / week</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>min. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present 1 day / week</td>
<td>min. 5</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of active people at weekly meetings</td>
<td>min. 8</td>
<td>min. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age span (years)</td>
<td>21 – 73</td>
<td>2 – 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of community gardeners’ involvement:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 6 months</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 12 months</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – &lt; 3 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 3 – 6 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9\textsuperscript{10}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 6 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardeners who have children</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardeners who are otherwise employed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirees, home parents</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>min. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of active participants</td>
<td>11min. 22</td>
<td>min. 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sizes of the community garden groups strongly depend on the seasons and predominating weather conditions. Numbers of willing participants are lower during wintertime and higher in summer. Numbers of

\textsuperscript{8} In reality, the facilitator is, of course, part of these groups. However, they take special positions and are regarded individually in this work - as part of management and leadership.

\textsuperscript{9} The validity of the data is limited to the time frame of the fieldwork.

\textsuperscript{10} See also section 4.2.3.5 Sustainability keys in the LRC.

\textsuperscript{11} For general demographic information see section 4.1.1.2 Demographic statistics for relevant catchment areas.
actively involved people increased with visits of school classes, garden clubs or casual visitors, but these are not considering in the previous table.

Case study 1 has more people involved as well as more people who are unemployed, retired or are stay-at-home parents. However, most community gardeners in the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) have children at home, a job or are retired.

4.1.3 Data gathering in the case study 1: Linwood Resource Centre

I spent minimum one day per week on average in the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) House and Garden. I actively participated in gardening work but met and talked to people in the Resource house as well. I collected data and information through participant observation, informal single and group interviews and discussions in the communal room of the building during shared lunch and tea times. These took place in the kitchen or in the community garden. I conducted one formal in-depth interview with the project facilitator. In addition, I attended and participated in weekly Garden Talks when all gardeners met, two trust board meetings, two formal group discussions with the LRC community, one Annual General Meeting and to the 10-years-plus celebration of the organisation. Further information was provided by written sources during trust board meetings and Garden Talks. I spent approximately equal time out in the community garden talking to active gardeners, visitors and other non-gardening members as I did in the building, talking to the project facilitator, secretary and other LRC members who were around while cooking, eating, meeting and discussing.

Overall, I met 22 classified volunteers\(^{12}\) of the LRC community including all five trust board members, the paid garden project overseer, the professional community developer (CD) as facilitator and the external accounting support person. Furthermore, I met a group of impaired people, which came for gardening once a week, some visitors who showed interest but came only once, and other casual visitors.

The group welcomed everybody and accepted new arrivals right away because they were always looking for more volunteers, especially those who might become actively involved. Socialising and getting to know me as a student from Austria was important to the group. Yet, it put me into an ‘exceptional’ position. This sometimes hindered the research process more than it helped. In other words, the group included me in a way which was beyond just doing research: I took on some tasks such as helping prepare a newsletter, cooking soup for shared lunch or supervising other community gardeners while they experienced and learned about the LRC community and individual development from the inside out. However, this gave me the opportunity to experience a weekly schedule in the LRC by participating in busy as well as calm days, with and without the project facilitator present.

\(^{12}\) See definition of a volunteer in section 4.1.2 Community gardeners and volunteers.
4.1.4 Data gathering in the case study 2: Lyttelton Community Garden

Compared to the LRC, I spent a slightly less time in the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) but could still gain a good understanding of how things worked in this community garden. While engaging in gardening activities, I could collect data through participant observation and small group conversations/interviews (maximum three people). General group discussions and interviews took place in the resource building during lunch time on the weekly gardening days.

I conducted one informal, in-depth group interview in the resource building; one informal, in-depth interview at the garden coordinator’s place; one informal interview at a community gardener’s place; and one interview via phone. In addition, I conducted three informal interviews outside the garden site with people from the Project Lyttelton (PL) trust board. They were not actively involved in gardening activities but provided background information on PL. Furthermore, I was present at one home composting workshop and open day in the community garden, one Saturdays’ farmers market day, one meeting of ‘Living Economies’13 and the following pot luck dinner, which had been organised mostly by community gardeners as PL members. Finally, I participated in one radio transmission in the local radio station which was moderated by the PL’s chair person. Overall, I met 15 regular volunteer community gardeners, a few gardeners who came only once, and a small number of visitors with general interest in PL. Additionally, I talked to minimum 14 residents living in the immediate neighbourhood.

4.2 Case study 1: Linwood Resource Centre – Te Whare Taonga O Nga Iwi Katoa

4.2.1 History and recent development

The community project in the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) was initiated in 1998 when the property was provided by the Christchurch City Council (CCC). This piece of urban land included already an empty house, a native front garden to the street and a backyard. The charitable project is governed by a trust board, but it is facilitated by a community developer (CD).

Several local groups use the facility for their purposes, for example, the heritage group, which supported interactions between young and elder people by teaching children how to do research on local cemeteries’ histories. The heritage group also created heritage videos and won several awards. It had its own structure and organisation, as do other groups such as the women’s group, which came in for artistic activities and others.

13 As national organisation cooperating with PL.
The initial community garden

A local woman living on her unemployed benefits took initiative and went knocking from door to door, asking and looking for people in the neighbourhood who were interested in gardening. From this pool of passionate gardeners a group was formed. They were driven by the motto ‘back to nature’ and the desire to grow food together. The small number of people, many having only a low level of education, started gardening in the backyard of the community building. The initial CD left at one point after years of activities\textsuperscript{14}, and the initiator of the community garden took over the community project while staying active in the garden. A few gardeners devoted themselves to the garden and created ‘a lovely, great garden site’, including, an herb garden with over ninety different herbs.

Additional community garden land and structural changes

The CCC recognised the gardener’s efforts to grow food in the backyard of the house and offered them an additional bordering piece of land that had previously been used as a car park and was covered with carpet and shingle. The site was partly developed for cultivating plants and at times composting workshops were held. However, conflicts emerged and the trust board had difficulty dealing with conflict situations, which were rooted in personal disappointment and frustrations of individual gardeners, for various reasons.

A change in the organisational structure occurred in 2004/5 when the active project coordinator left, and a new coordinator came in, yet details are still very vaguely documented. Anyway, after her time\textsuperscript{15}, a former head of a local school took over for about ten months for the sake of further securing the project. Unfortunately, the history and heritage of the house and place were not preserved under his supervision. In fact, various valuable records about the house were discarded. He also had all native plants removed from the front garden, which was apparently a beautiful, lively and green piece of land with low maintenance requirements. He is said to have been neither a gardener nor a CD; and more importantly, he did not want the garden to be part of the community development project. Besides, the heritage group was not active anymore. At that time, the CCC intended to keep the house and the garden as separated projects. Hence, another garden coordinator entered the project but, contrary to expectations, spent more time in the house than outside on the actual garden site. Nevertheless, garden activities took place, but house and garden were separated.

Union and redevelopment of house and garden projects

In 2007, the CCC considered stopping support of the project and using the house and garden differently. It was then, when the umbrella organisation ‘Anglican Care – Family and Community’ sent a woman with skills in social as well as management fields who took interest in restoring the project. ‘It was an absolute mess when I came here,’ the CD reflected about the initial stage. She was driven by the vision of uniting house, 

\textsuperscript{14} More details about the circumstances of leaving of the first CD could not have been clarified by me as the researcher.

\textsuperscript{15} The precise duration of her being active as CD is not known.
backyard and community garden on land of the former CCC car park. Under her initiative, a team of keen people who wanted to create a positive place brought about a significant change to the project. They started by cleaning up the community building and then turned it into a ‘warm, charming house’ surrounded by a backyard and sheds.

The garden sites were overgrown with sprawling weeds because very little gardening activities had taken place in the recent past. In order to (re)turn the garden into productive and colourful areas, the trust board employed a passionate gardener as garden project overseer. (The former garden coordinator had quit the job previously.) The new gardener had just lost his job at the CCC and was voluntarily gardening in a private garden of someone who had a contact to the umbrella organisation. More volunteers were recruited, and much work, efforts and time were invested to re-develop the completely neglected gardening site: Garden beds had to be established in a proper manner; weeds had to be pulled; the composting area had to be made accessible again; fruit trees had to be pruned; tree boxes had to be replaced; the herb garden had to be restored; heavy loads of non-reusable material had to be collected from all over the site and to be removed by truck. At the same time, the productive areas of the garden needed ongoing maintenance.

Within the last two years, people came and went again, while a core team of helpers and passionate gardeners has developed and increasingly grown. The current team agrees that ‘so much has changed within the last eight months’. Only recently, did this community development project receive the status of a charitable organisation – as the first social development project with a community house and community garden in Christchurch with its organisational style.

Celebrating the successful union

On a warm, sunny day in late spring of 2008, the project celebrated its ‘10-years-plus anniversary’ and the official re-opening of the community garden with food, drinks and music. It turned out to be a well-visited and entertaining celebration with interested people, who had been related to the project in some way in the past. People of all ages and different ethnicities came from different parts of town, from different (public) agencies; and all were equally impressed by and enjoyed the community garden environment. Some people saw the garden for the first time while others could tell anecdotes about the history of the place. Overall, it was another occasion to highlight the project’s successful union of house, garden and people to contribute beneficially to the local community in the Linwood area.

4.2.2 Current activities

A wide range of activities are offered in. People came to the community garden for different reasons, primarily to get outside and be at a place where they can have useful tasks to do.
The List of activities is very comprehensive and determined and finally offered mainly by the organisational body. However, most active people contribute to the wide range of activities. In single cases, some independent gardeners arrive with new ideas, develop new incentives and take ideas further, such as two participants of the herb group do. Most others help maintaining the community project as they take advantage of the current offer.

| Special aim | To challenge those structures in a current society that are based largely on consumerism, competition and individualism: to restore society. |
| Speciality | Linwood’s greatest resource is its people. Through their work processes, they can learn how to make group decisions, to communicate in a group and to take collective responsibility. |
| Horticultural production | Communal and individual plots for organic vegetables, an herb garden, a Mediterranean garden, a native garden, a tunnel house; cuttings, harvesting own seeds; hot heap composting, worm farming. |
| Educational initiatives | Workshops; Herbs-Horticulture-Heritage-Health garden project (how to grow, use and cook vegetables/herbs), Garden Tal (sharing skills, exchanging resources, info sheets, provision and videos on gardening), letter actions, poem rhyme competition, providing books and magazines. |
| Self-funding | Sale of plants, shared lunch, tea, biscuits for gold coin donation; self-funding brings little money directly available for the garden group. |
| Recycling, waste minimisation, environmental enhancement | Recyclables¹⁶, seed saving, use of donated day-old bread. |
| Landscaping, constructing, building and maintenance | Available space to be developed freely; reuse of materials; theme gardens; recreational areas; children’s play area. |
| Social (community) service provision | Co-operations with social service agencies, inclusion of physically and mentally disadvantaged people; work experience for community service clients. |
| Health promotion | Organic quality food; Herb group; Herbs-Horticulture-Heritage-Health garden project; Overeaters Anonymous; gym equipment available. |
| Beautification, recreation and self-renewal | Big recreational front, side and back gardens; recreational facilities; community events; horticultural therapy. |
| Marketing, promotion and community events | Notes, pamphlets in libraries, community centres, schools and supermarkets; newsletter; information board; BBQs, anniversary celebrations, cultural feasts (hangi); Annual General Meeting (AGM); articles in Anglican Action. |
| Volunteer, student and employee support | Outdoors: seeding, planting, weeding, tidying, watering, mowing etc.; Indoors: weekly workshops, cooking, socialising with a cup of coffee or tea. |
| (Passive) neighbourhood involvement | Beautification, social interacting, networking opportunities. |
| Workshops | Garden Talk, Artisans Anonymous (handcraft), Koffee Kafe, Community Catch Up, Overeaters Anonymous, cooking. |
| Cooperation | Social service agencies, Family court; no political and CCGA engagement. |

The List of activities is very comprehensive and determined and finally offered mainly by the organisational body. However, most active people contribute to the wide range of activities. In single cases, some independent gardeners arrive with new ideas, develop new incentives and take ideas further, such as two participants of the herb group do. Most others help maintaining the community project as they take advantage of the current offer.

¹⁶ Recyclables include timber, stakes, bamboo sticks, tyres, barrels, metal, baths, tiles, pots, trays, netting, carpets, wires, strings, ropes, tins, jars, plastic bags, plants, gardening tools; reused or converted into furniture, sheds, composting areas, plots.
4.2.3 The organisation

As mentioned earlier, the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) organisation operates as a legal trust on the basis of the community development model. It assists predominantly local, people with low incomes and aims to educate people about accessing their personal rights. Furthermore, this project has been created to inform, to empower and to encourage the community to personal development and sharing resources, knowledge and practical skills. It calls itself ‘a community project by community members for the community’. Overall, people are seen by the organisation of LRC House and Garden as the greatest resource that Linwood has. The CD explained that ‘we are not a garden — we are a community development program. People come here, learn how to do things and take it home’. The community project encourages people to develop community in and around the LRC as they come, learn and go again to carry out what they have learnt. The different levels within the organisation are mapped and described in figure 8, which follows.

4.2.3.1 Organisational structure

The LRC trust is governed by a trust board and managed by a community development worker (CD). The trust board is made up of a changing number of four to six volunteer members, who at the time of this study, were all actively involved in on-site activities in the house and/or garden. The CD, who was not a member of the trust board, supported and facilitated the board with its decision-making. The role of the chairperson is held by the treasurer, who sometimes was the leader of practical application17. The role of the secretary rotated among members. Ideally, the trust board is responsible for developing project ideas. It manages (also ideally) the community garden project and, to that end, has employed a part-time garden project overseer (GPO) for 25 hours per week. The garden project overseer did daily physical gardening work, was the core of the gardener’s group and facilitated outdoor gardening activities. The CD is employed part-time and supervised by the umbrella organisation Anglican Care. She is responsible for fostering and facilitating an environment in which people could develop. In particular, the CD in this case study did the accounting together with the treasurer and the external umbrella organisation’s administrator, organised funding and managed projects. While the trust board is responsible for the available organisation’s budget, a loyal volunteer does the bookkeeping for the garden finances, which were directly available for the garden group. A volunteer cleans the house on a weekly basis.

17 The term ‘leader of practical application’ was introduced by the CD for the sake of creating a contact person (and later chairperson) who could give information or help further for people, who come with new ideas or good will for taking action.
These are the key people who are involved or affected by the LRC: 18

Community developer (CD): The person who facilitated the project and its people during the time of research. She provided information, education, finances and creativity to let people develop as a community, organically a natural process out of the background. 19

Trust board: A group made up of four to six volunteers. The specific people change over time. These people also take part in activities for, for example, the LRC office (finances, administration), the community house (cleaning, Garden Talk, tea times, arts workshops) or the community garden (gardening, constructing, organising resources). They are supported by the CD, who never sits on the trust board.

18 The aim of this list of key people would be to point to the specific roles. Yet, the roles are clearly influenced by current personalities, which behave more or less ideally. Thus, the general roles refer on the one hand to the general being of organisational roles as well as strongly to personalities.

19 The community developer left the project for personal reasons in April 2009 after two years of activity.
Garden project overseer (GPO): The experienced gardener, who was employed by the trust board to be responsible for the practical part of the community garden project. He also educates the community gardeners and facilitates their weekly meetings.

Community gardeners: Predominantly local people, who garden together or individually (on a more or less frequent basis). They share skills and (gardening) knowledge, or ‘are’ just together in the community garden and house. All of them receive fresh food or surplus bread. Most of them attend the weekly Garden Talk and/or help prepare community events.

Visitors/groups: Some local people/groups come on a casual basis to use the community facility (garden and house) for their own needs.

Neighbourhood/local community: These people potentially benefit from this project through aspects of beautification, since the front garden is visible to all passers-by. Anybody can join the community project (gardening, community events) at any time during opening hours.

4.2.3.2 Funding body

The community project relies on various sources of public funding. Little income comes from donations. However, the organisation pays a peppercorn rent for the house to the Christchurch City Council (CCC), while running costs are paid by the CCC.

4.2.3.3 The LRC management and its goals

The LRC management body was not strictly organised as such but rather encouraged management through teamwork between trust board members, volunteers, garden project overseer (GPO) and CD. Yet, the CD was the main facilitator and organised (ideally) in the background, supported by the garden project overseer and the whole LRC community. Their projects are accomplished by clarifying, ‘What do we need to grow? What do we have to grow? How can I with my skills work for the others benefit?’ The community agrees that people are more important than the actual harvest: ‘People first, and only then get things moved!’
Goals for the LRC organisation are defined by the management body and are based mainly on the community development model: The LRC House and Garden shall continue to assist predominantly low income people for achieving a better quality of life. Hence, local people are educated about their rights, such as having access to healthy food. The community can exercise their responsibilities as they develop creativity and share resources, knowledge and practical skills about the house and garden. In this process, people become more informed and empowered. In a further development stage, they should be able to make their own decisions and to undertake the changes they wish to make. Since the LRC wants to create a community garden is sustainable well into the future, it encourages people to organise as a community, rather than have opposed the CD form the group.

The same applies to the on-site community garden in particular: People should be active and do gardening together. This supports the development as a group and multi-cultural community. A garden plan which maps all garden sections, plants and the free sections has been created.

The LRC management believes that the future development of the LRC House and Garden could benefit from the creation of a long-term project plan that includes opportunities to produce food additionally for other people from the local community, and considers especially the inclusion of Work and Income (WINZ) funds. Overall, the place aims to continuously provide a safe environment in which everybody is welcome. The

### Table 3: Responsibilities for tasks at Linwood Resource Centre (LRC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community developer’s tasks</th>
<th>Garden project overseer’s tasks</th>
<th>LRC community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Office work and facilitating resources</strong></td>
<td><strong>Social work and facilitating people</strong></td>
<td><strong>Covering the practical part in the garden</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing the development of projects and the community</td>
<td>Educating and advising in terms of financial matters</td>
<td>Developing, constructing and maintaining the garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Re-)applying for public funding</td>
<td>Organising house and bookings for external groups</td>
<td>Creating and prioritising to-do tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting and bookkeeping</td>
<td>Resolving conflicts</td>
<td>Allocating tasks to gardeners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report writing for accountability</td>
<td>Keeping transparency by passing on information to the LRC community</td>
<td>Facilitating people with tasks and tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating new ideas</td>
<td>Expressing appreciation</td>
<td>Encouraging teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning (max. 1 year in advance)</td>
<td>Creating roles and reminding participants of their responsibilities</td>
<td>Educating people at weekly Garden Talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising available resources, extra money</td>
<td>Visiting funders’ meetings</td>
<td>Roughly documenting gardening happenings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping record of progresses and projects</td>
<td>Welcoming and introducing newcomers</td>
<td>Keeping record of gardening year and harvest</td>
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</table>
project aims to stimulate building an inclusive community, individual and communal creativity, and the sharing of resources and skills.

4.2.3.4 Organisational vision statement and personal envisioning at all levels

The official, organisational vision statement of the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) is composed in form of a one-page-document and can be understood as follows: The LRC shall be a united place where house, garden and people are combined. Communal and collective responsibility shall be reintegrated, and individuals, families and wider groups can be empowered, supported, nourished and valued. People shall have this place, where they can come and develop a community that interacts, and where learning and making group decisions takes place. In other words, people and local groups shall come to the place and use it for their own needs. Overall, the community, gardeners and casual visitors shall feel the welcoming, stimulating and safe environment for predominantly locals that enables building an inclusive community. In this community, people can explore creativity and share skills and resources. Finally, the organisation foresee for the future to move into an area of health: to build a healthy, just, caring, interactive community in the Linwood area in Christchurch.

In addition to the organisational vision statement, both the CD and garden project overseer agree on a positive vision for a positive future in their prepared reports for the Annual General Meeting 2008: The community garden shall be a place for gardening, creativity and beauty where people can come, meet and be. Overall, the LCG garden shall basically serve as source for food, especially for people who are in need. People learn how to grow food and to interact in a process with others and will finally take their learnt skills and gained confidence out. The community garden shall be relevant for the Linwood community, envisaging a positive future with adequate funding and enthusiastic attitudes of community gardeners as foundation for the project. Community connectedness shall unite house and garden activities. Everything - the house, the backyard, the community garden, the toy library shed, the launches and people – is part of a whole concept. Processes of learning and group decision making shall ensure that the project will continue once the CD does not facilitate the project anymore. Sustainable (community) development put into practice will enable building social connections and confidence in a safe, non-threatening and productive environment.

Community gardeners in the LRC house and garden say that they want to see a place that unites house and garden for socialising and producing food. The community shall oppose current society which seems to be spoil, increasingly more expensive and nurtured by unhealthy fast food. As a place for people, who want to learn more about gardening, the community garden shall be a clean and nice garden with more space for other

20 As opposed to the project’s former structure, which was characterised by the separation of the LRC house and community garden projects.
people who want to be involved as well, such as parents with their children or elderly people growing plants as a symbol of hope. For it, communal and individual plots shall remain in its current structure, and the group wants the garden not functioning as a market garden. 21 Still, the LRC could offer a drop-in place to start with the provision of food to the community.

4.2.3.5 Sustainability focus: Sustainable community development

The Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) House and Garden aims primarily to challenge and in a consequence to transform the current structures of society. Recent societal developments have led to isolation and disempowerment for people and families, who consequently feel unable to participate in their communities. 22 The people of the LRC believe that social development has to be understood as the reintegration of communal and collective responsibility. Furthermore, individuals, families and/or wider groups can be empowered, supported, nourished and valued. All this can be achieved sustainably by working together.

The principle of inclusiveness in the project and uniting the house and garden let the project develop in a sustainable manner towards one whole concept. However, sustainable development is always a slow process. The community garden development is a productive and active process taking part outdoors in which humans fulfil tasks. People can learn how to build relations, to communicate, to work and to make decisions in a team, and to learn gardening skills. Willing volunteers learn by practicing and sharing skills with others and develop confidence to take learnt knowledge home and duplicate it in their families and/or gardens.

Sustainable development on the LRC organisational level ideally means bringing the project to a stage in which it could run without the CD. For this reason, the CD facilitates more and more from behind the scene.

4.2.4 Leading and participating in the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) project

Management and leadership are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they overlap frequently, and in these two specific case studies they clearly do so.

4.2.4.1 Leadership history and current leadership body

Since the establishment of the LRC, the community developer (CD), who holds leadership, has changed several times. While the first CD stayed longest, a second one took on leadership as she was concerned with the development of the initial and additionally gained community garden. She left at a stage when conflicts

21 In November 2008, after the end of the fieldwork, the community decided surprisingly to start a weekly summer market day (Thursday 10 – 12 am) to sell surplus harvest and to generate a little income for the garden group.

22 Excerpt from the organisational statement.
arose, and was followed briefly by a third CD. After she left, the fourth CD came to try to develop the project further. He appointed a garden coordinator to develop the neglected community garden by establishing garden allotments and contracts. At this time, the CCC started to make plans about shutting the community centre. Just in time, a new CD showed interest in taking on the challenge of re-developing and to uniting the house and garden projects of the LRC. Consequently, the new facilitator led to the recent development. She worked closely together with the trust board and the garden project overseer. The garden project overseer has worked with other volunteers to build upon what had been already established and to develop new areas.

4.2.4.2 Action and influence: Facilitating people and projects

A CD facilitates the community house and resources for community garden projects such as the united Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) project, while a trust board manages the community garden. According to organisational regulations, the CD is not allowed to be on the trust board, but supports the trust board in their decision-making, informant and creator of understanding. The facilitator reports to the LRC community about (trust) meetings, passing information onto the community. In other words, she as a leader maintains transparency within the community project and articulates the vision, goals and achievements to the trust board as well as to volunteers and/or community gardeners.

She sometimes has to make decisions for the community without including other members. Although she feels sorry about it, she also feels that occasionally situations require a final decision from a leader. In the end somebody has to determine the “how” or “what” of things, and this is part of her responsibilities as the person with the leadership role. She also often felt like a manager in an office because of all the administrative tasks she takes care of: applying, receiving and organising funding, writing reports, developing new ideas, and keeping an eye on activities that take place in and around the LRC house. The job of facilitator included reminding people of an appropriate length of meetings and of particular responsibilities and ensuring that the groups talk about relevant issues.

Public occasions are especially times when volunteers, trust board members, supporters and visitors come together. The CD used such opportunities, as leader, to express appreciation for all who were (actively) involved in the project.

While most involved people were volunteers, the CD, together with the garden project overseer, was a paid employee. From time to time, she described herself as the ‘boss’ of the garden project overseer. The garden project overseer assisted, oversaw, directed and encouraged people and groups outside in the garden to put

23 The new CD mentioned the good timing of taking action by herself. Read more about the LRC history in section 4.2.1 History and recent developments (in the LRC organisation).
ideas into practice. At the time, he also physically worked on the development of the garden site development. Basically, he made the on-site garden decisions — as often as possible together with the other gardeners. As an experienced gardener with practical skills, he was essential to the garden group. He described the garden group as ‘enthusiastic gardeners who meet each week sharing knowledge, practical demonstrations, asking questions within the group forum and working on various tasks in the communal gardens’.

4.2.4.3 Self-awareness: Leading as project facilitator

The CD leads the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) project so that people can develop skills and build interactions. The facilitator’s position requires ‘wearing multiple hats’ to adjust to different people of different ages, different ethnic, cultural and spiritual backgrounds, different attitudes and so forth. The majority of the people, especially newcomers, tend to become dependent on the facilitating person as people often want to be led, and hence see her as ‘the boss’: ‘But that is not development!’ Development means change, and change is what the CD wants to bring about: ‘Everybody has a seed with talent. They can grow it, learn, get confident and go further with it — with their skills. They can finally distribute it and provide it to other people. Everybody has some little, tiny, wee bit to contribute. That is development and achieving change.’

Led by the philosophy of community development, all people are supposed to be equally involved in a project so that should eventually no longer be necessary to have a facilitator. In other words, people shall organise themselves as a community, not that the community developer forms a group. Participants shall take things into own hands and be confident to make their own decisions. Even though the CD is here to facilitate the project, she feels sometimes that she has an office job as the sole facilitator carrying the responsibility for the practical applications. Instead, she would prefer to participate and to interact with people of the community.

4.2.4.4 Leadership relations in small groups: Among the LRC community

a) Leader - trust board members - garden project overseer

The leader and CD continuously articulated to the community that the purpose of the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) house and garden was to be a community development project. The local project was generally understood as such by its participants. On the one hand, the leader appreciated her role in the project and the support of the LRC community: ‘I would not be here without you [volunteers, staff, supporters, sponsors].’ On the other hand, she had to actively encourage people to take over more responsibility because she wanted to avoid individual and communal dependency on her as leader.
As was typical for her open communication style, she reminded especially volunteer trust board members and the garden project overseer of their responsibilities to take action, and to have a clear position while working together with and educating other members. Her practical training style at the LRC followed the scheme of (community) leadership that illustrated to the right. It shows the various stages (1 to 4) of relations between CD, volunteers and garden project overseer, people in stage 1 and 4 can be difficult for a community, whereas those stage 3 is seen as the optimum members.

**Figure 9: Community development scheme, LRC**

1) ![Diagram](image1)
   In the initial phase, a new person/volunteer receives training and assistance from the community developer (CD). The relation is characterised by dependency on the CD that; ‘Many volunteers stay there.’

2) ![Diagram](image2)
   In the 2nd phase, the CD coaches a volunteer and the dependency eases off; ‘… let people go out, let them do things alone.’

3) ![Diagram](image3)
   In a 3rd phase, the volunteer exhibits a high level of independence, while the CD continues to check on the progress of the volunteer. This is seen as the best stage. The CD categorises her relation to the garden project overseer in here.

4) ![Diagram](image4)
   The 4th stage is known as the ‘sea gull mentality’ (more appropriate for large businesses); ‘You just come back if it is necessary, let a poo and go away again.’

**b) Leader - general LRC community**

Since the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) project focuses on social development of a community, the CD aimed for personal development of the people involved. She explained, ‘It has been satisfying to see many people developing and sharing skills and talents in a wider community.’ Despite her efforts, she found that some individuals never developed as she would have hoped. Nevertheless, she continued to encourage everyone to develop and express their individual goals, suggestions, ideas and visions. Working for the sake of the community and its project, she had sometimes to set aside her personal opinions and feelings, just as she knew others had to also do from time to time. ‘We have to adapt to each other.’ In this sense, the LRC community is like a family, and ‘stories stay inside the LRC’.

The leader as facilitator believed in a philosophy of community leadership. Hence, she sought group consensus whenever possible, even though she knew that developing sustainable community requires a long time and lot of patience. Overall, the leader saw that things continued to function and develop even when she was not present, as in times of illness or holidays. She told the LRC community at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2008 that ‘there is no need for a boss’. Using a leadership style that drew upon open communication through asking, listening, responding and informing, she attempted to lead others to lead themselves in a social environment.
4.2.4.5 Emerging issues and challenges within community leadership

The organisational structure of the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) community project is not necessarily obvious to newcomers. Nevertheless, once the volunteers are familiar with the organisation, they tend to look to the leader, the CD, to be led. This tendency challenges the CD to present volunteers from developing a dependency on a single leading person. However, people who have other challenges in their own lives and/or are struggling with issues of modern society are sometimes already overloaded and hence sometimes lack the internal motivation to take on more responsibility. The leader of this social project occasionally even felt that she had to work to create and develop a positive atmosphere.

Although, leading a group of highly diverse volunteers (gender, age, ethnicity, culture, ethics etc.) appeared interesting to the facilitator it turned out to be challenging in its own ways. The trust board started to take over ownership and responsibility for governance only when the CD showed decreasing engagement and more passiveness as leader, which happened gradually. As close observation of and many discourses with active gardeners showed that slow processes can be frustrating for any participant, but especially the leader repeatedly pointed to her frustration.

She found herself doing a lot of administration (writing reports, funding applications, accounting, and creating ideas) when she would have liked to participate and interact directly with people instead of being tapped in the office. From time to time, she had to take her paper work home, which meant neglecting her personal social life for a time. As the sole leader, she sometimes missed the support of somebody else on the same level as she is and in her field, who would have an understanding of the actual difficulties of such a social project.

The garden project overseer was sometimes challenged by a flood of simultaneous requests from gardeners for instructions and advice. This happens especially in the summers when people want most to help in the garden. But what is really challenging for him, as the responsible practical person in the community garden, that he only had a limited budget to purchase gardening resources (tools, plants, seeds). The budget often allowed him to buy only cheap products rather than appropriate quality products. Fast changing decisions, overabundance of suggestions of things to do and having to make many decisions alone sometimes brought him into difficult and frustrating situations.

4.2.4.6 Importance of leadership in the LRC

The importance of leadership in this case study draws on the need to direct people and projects, especially because the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) project focused not on outcomes but on processes through which people and projects are facilitated. The success of the LRC projects lies generally in the structured group, whether it is the trust board, volunteers or the garden group. A leader should motivate and brings ideas
to a project and a group of people and also has also to remind people of their responsibilities, for example, that the trust board manages the outdoor garden project. The garden project overseer as on-site leader is seen as being essential for the continuing success of the community garden. Just as important are the volunteers who have supported the LRC from its very early stages. They capture the history and are particularly interested in keeping the project running. Their experiences have especially helped to resolve social conflicts as they act in good will.

4.2.5 Community gardeners and volunteers: The small group in the LRC

Community gardeners come together in the community gardens for different reasons. Some want to break their isolation at home, some to interact with others, some to garden together with people and/or having a cup of coffee, to grow food, to learn and practice gardening skills. Others just want to do some volunteer work in the community house and garden, while still others find in it a satisfying employment situation. Overall, the community garden offers opportunities to people to become involved in the community and hence to be included in the neighbourhood, to gain therapeutic benefits in silent garden environments and moreover to build a sense of ownership and responsibility for people and groups.

4.2.5.1 Individual and group aims

The occasions when newcomers enter the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) group are used for introduction rounds and awareness-building. ‘Who are you, what is your name, and why are you here?’ The facilitator or group leader regularly communicated and explained the LRC project and its philosophy just before all volunteers who were present gave short comments about themselves: ‘It is here such a lovely place – people like me come, interact and feed themselves...’; ‘I have my plot and I am quite happy about it...’; ‘I am here to relearn gardening...’; ‘I like gardening at home. But it’s better to grow with other people together! ...’; ‘I love gardening and want to help...’; ‘I want to learn about social development projects...’; ‘I have time now and want to help in the garden...’

At the AGM 2008 the community developer emphasised that the project relies on the generous time and efforts that volunteers and supporters give to keep the place ticking. Thus, the group aims to continue integrating new people into the project, introducing them and to making them feel comfortable: ‘It is about growing together!’ They also create places for recreation where gatherings such as BBQs take place. At least three keen gardeners are passionate about maintaining the restored herb garden while others want to get into general contact with earth and nature. At least two gardeners expressed that they were searching for a purpose in their lives within the community garden project.

The LRC intends to (re)educate people beyond gardening: Volunteers were willing to share knowledge and to give it further to younger generations or those who are interested in learning more. But foremost, in order to
realise ideas, the group aims to attract more people through advertisements, promotion and newsletters. ‘... to get new, positive energy - even if only two people!’ At the same time they want to structure themselves as a group in a better way, especially in anticipation of an increased number of gardeners.

4.2.5.2 Personal skills contributed

Most committed people apply their personal skills in the community garden environments. With it, they want to contribute to their personal and their community’s benefit. The diversity of each community gardener group brought along a range of various personal skills. These skills were partly related to their needs beyond food. As such, all skills were equally important for each community’s well-being and projects. The following table gives an overview:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study 1</th>
<th>Community skills in the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time and good will to participate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation and growing enthusiasm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kindness and patience</td>
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<td>Interest in other people and topics that arise</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Willing to learn and to share</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge about plants, pruning/cutting, composting, traditional gardening methods</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Passion for gardening</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pleasure in working in groups and as team</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Creativity and a sense for beauty</td>
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<td>Physical strength</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caring also for each other</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keeping data about the people and volunteers who have been involved in the LRC history; keeping contact with some</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.5.3 Aspects on lifestyles, food and working in the community garden

Lower income class, sharing and gardening together

People who come to the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) have predominantly low incomes and are not necessarily regularly employed because they might be retired, a student, a home mother or mentally or physically ill. Most community gardeners/volunteers live alone or with their families within the immediate or near the local community of Linwood. Only a few people come to the LRC by car, all others walk or cycle to the place. Most people have a basic education and were up-to-date about national current events.

24 The information in the table is based on self-reflection of participants, my observation and others
Money is a frequent topic, whether in relation to rents, incomes and wages, rising food prices or in comparison to other countries. ‘Power, money and information brings corruption! ...’; ‘It is so important to acknowledge social values beyond monetary values. ‘; ‘Time is what we all have in common – we can share skills. ...’

Wednesday is the main gardening day and it is all about gardening, cooking and food: ‘Herbs for medicine. ...’ ‘Gardening is the best physical exercise – that is what most people forget. ...’; ‘I love organic. ...’; ‘We don’t want to have a food bank mentality. Why should people just come and take? It’s about exchange. ...’; ‘Spring means new beginnings. ...’; ‘People matter more than veggies. ...’; ‘Once you know the taste of vegetables from your own garden, you don’t want to have them from the supermarket anymore. ...’; ‘I like the idea of a community garden – to be with others to garden. ...’

Sharing is an important aspect for these people, too, and happens in a dynamic way. People bring food, flowers and other resources like informative books, notes or printouts, and grew vegetables and fruits in order to share with other community gardeners and volunteers.

4.2.6 The LRC community put together: Leadership, management and small groups

The LRC is a (public) place, where different people of different ages, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds come. The project is based on certain behavioural guidelines to avoid anarchy and to maintain safety. The guideline is provided in written and verbal forms. Over time group norms have evolved.

4.2.6.1 Rules, norms and expectations

In the LRC, people are made aware of why they are in the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) house and garden, that the LRC includes them. This is done so that the people can realise they are a part of a community, that they should interact with others to support forming and maintaining the community. To keep the LRC garden and house a safe and sustainable garden, certain group guidelines (for community development) exist as a written one-page-document and are put on the walls of meeting rooms. It becomes obvious in meetings that everyone tries to respect that only one person talks at a time, to actively listen to each other’s points of view and to respect differences, because it is okay to pass on a topic, as the group guidelines suggest. Furthermore, people should respect confidentiality – ‘what is said in the house stays in the house’ - and to be honest to the best of one’s ability. Supporting an atmosphere that accepts making mistakes, people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and behaviours, to make decisions and to take things into their own hands to (re)gain confidence. However, when a meeting is held for a particular purpose (apart from social gatherings during tea or lunch time), people are to avoid personalising the issue, to keep to the subject and to speak only for oneself.
Generally, to comply with health and safety regulations, people are further asked to enter the house through the main entrance in the front and to let a welcomer know when they arrive and leave. Furthermore, gardeners may only garden during LRC hours. Children are the responsibility of their caregiver and must not be left unattended for health and safety reasons. Pets are not allowed on the property.

Specifically for the maintenance of the community garden, gardeners/groups are asked to keep their plots planted, weeded, watered and tidy. All are asked to occasionally help take care of common areas. Gardeners have to ask the garden project overseer before using any pesticides, fungicides, weed killers or other sprays, even if they are organic. Moreover, gardeners and visitors must put tools and unused materials away where they found them and report any damage; likewise, they are supposed to leave all gates and sheds as they find them. Finally, all gardeners are to respect each other and their plots and to ask before removing any produce from communal areas. In organisational terms, all people are welcome, especially if they bring in ideas into the LRC project and are independent and as long as they are respectful of the LRC guidelines and rules. However, people should be local and moreover loyal in order to receive support and must not act without consultancy.

The LRC community expects the management body to enable a step-by-step development of the place in which all have the same chance to contribute. It is important for the people to be accepted so that everybody ‘can be’. All people are to be treated equally, independently from individual points of view. Conflict situations are to be used as an opportunity to clarify the framework of the community project as well as personal interests and awareness.

4.2.6.2 Organisational communication

The LRC community follows the principle that everybody has a stake and a voice. Almost every suggestion is discussed in an open and constructive way among the LRC community. Tea times are especially used for discussion so that all present people can be equally informed. The weekly Garden Talk is a platform for planning, informing and educating, and everybody is welcome to participate, to share skills and their knowledge. Contact information of the garden group’s participants is kept in a garden book. Monthly trust board meetings take place on a weekly basis and include at least three trustees who were active in the LRC. The trust board members are supported by the CD’s report and advice. The AGM is a publicly announced event with a social gathering prior to it. Despite these measures, about half of the involved people have expressed a desire for an improvement of the communication of the ideas and new projects on the different organisational levels.
4.2.6.3 Harvesting policy

All community gardeners receive as much fresh produce as wished and needed once they commit themselves to community gardening. Hence, food access in the LRC is limited to volunteers for two reasons and was not made available for those who didn’t actively engage in activities in and around the LRC: Firstly, the gates are locked outside office hours; secondly, the LRC community was not willing to feed people for free but expected rather an exchange of time and skills for it. ‘We won’t give people just the fish!’ Overall, as long as there was enough fresh food ready to harvest, gardeners could take as much as they wanted.

4.2.6.4 Decision-making process

In case study 1, group consent is a fundamental part of the project. However, the trust board is the ultimate decision-making body but is supported by the CD. The garden project overseer make decisions in the outside garden. Sometimes, the CD has to take actions without the confirmation of the others. Basically, all people should eventually become equally involved in any Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) project so that a leader would become unnecessary for making communal decisions. If the group could not come to consensus in the initial stages, it looked for compromises, for example, in special meetings.

4.2.6.5 Social cohesion amongst leadership, management and community gardeners

The community developer, who was the project’s facilitator, worked mostly in the community house and does no physical gardening work outdoors. Yet, she supported the garden project with ideas and advice and gave overall direction to the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) project. She was valued by both, volunteers and the trust board members, who all looked to her for her support since she knew the most about the project and all matters of management and the people.

a) Project facilitation

The strategy of the project development is simple: People should come to do some gardening in a bigger, clean and nice community garden, organise a community and develop ideas, inform the trust board and then come to the volunteer CD, who finally facilitates new ideas and projects. The treasurer/secretary receive advice in terms of accountancy and supports the CD with his time given for free. They manage the financial matters together with the umbrella organisation’s administrator, working as a team whose interrelations also reach beyond money to things like social interactions and producing healthy food. Both the CD and the secretary work together with the garden project overseer. The daily on-site work is handled by the garden project overseer and the CD, who work together on an informal, professional and cooperative basis. They

25 After the end of the fieldwork, the community initiated a little weekly market day where they sold surplus harvest.
frequently exchanged information especially during tea times, about the garden management, the physical progress and issues of responsibilities. This allows the CD to react to gardeners’ individual needs, although, he has the responsibility of ultimate-decision making on-site.

From time to time, the gardeners can be overwhelmed with new ideas given by the CD, especially when other projects are not yet complete: ‘She has so many ideas, good ideas – she will soon come up with new things.’ On the one hand, her ideas were appreciated; on the other hand, a few volunteers expressed increased passiveness or felt too directed as volunteers: ‘I just do what [the CD] tells me […]’ or ‘[the CD] wants to have …’ the CD was commonly recognised as developer and director of the LRC project rather than leader of individuals since all volunteers lived their lives independently from her: ‘We all have to take our lives in our own hands’. Still, she supports volunteers in personal matters that take place outside the LRC house and garden by providing an actively listening ear.

b) Interactions

The LRC community gardeners all noticed that group dynamics as well as the working environment changed in the absence of the CD. Although productivity decreased sometimes, for the most part, things kept running in both house and garden, and community gardeners and volunteers worked together and helped each other even more closely. The CD expressed appreciation and gratefulness for that and underlines the group’s ability to run the project while she stays in the background.

Volunteers and community gardeners meet informally several times a week in and around the LRC House because they want to do things together. People often get involved in several activities offered in the LRC. Some come more than once a week, either to grow or to meet people. Two keen gardeners, who were involved already in the initial stage of the project, are both especially appreciated for their support of the LRC and its development with their time and work. The constellations of people who worked in the gardens changed every day and week, as they came together as tasks turned up. There were only few cases in which some people avoided working with each other together because of personal issues.

As soon as new people were introduced to the group, community gardeners integrated them into the group by showing interest and acceptance for them. Sometimes, personal relations were from time to time built right from the beginning, when individuals took personal efforts to introduce newcomers and to show them around the garden. This time was used to clarify and to articulate to others the reasons for and importance personal involvement and interest.

Most relations among LRC participants stem from a personal interest for each other, talking and asking about each other’s families, yet mainly limited to interactions in the LRC. In some cases, volunteers have built deep friendships, and over time some share plots or cook the community’s shared lunch together. Community
gardeners are proud to show their cultivated plots and even to offer their own grown fresh produces to others. Personal relations are further maintained through supporting each other’s interests and bringing along resources based on common interests. Group discussions emerge especially during the weekly Garden Talks, where people try to listen to each other, show interest and their thoughts. Basically, community gardeners shared same the interests, values and opinions on issues of organic food production, health and the environment. In some cases, the group undertook some efforts to make their group opinions even public, for example, by writing opinion letters to the council.

From time to time, during lunch or teatimes, only a few people would dominated a conversation, leaving the others no ‘space’ to take part and hence left out. (Some people preferred staying in the background, anyway.) Conversations were centred on the CD especially when only a small number of people was present. In times of conflicts, the group made a point to communicate openly with each other. In some rather exceptional cases, they even announced ‘special meetings’ in which all interested people could have their say.

c) Disagreements

People in the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) have different reasons for being in the LRC and their goals vary, sometimes considerably. Yet, considering other people’s views is of key importance to the group. This leads to challenging situations such as when dealing with issues about on the future development to a market garden, about lacking understanding of the tide financial situation, or about people who have individual plots but do not contribute to communal gardening and sometimes even neglect their individual plots. Resentment and unrest appeared in the community if individuals undertook activities without consultancy or confirmation. This made it difficult for people to grow together as a community, especially if the non-conformists self-handed people were not local. However, different people had different views with regard to the purpose of the LRC garden and house, practices of organic gardening, utilising public funding or the level of cleanness in and around the house. For this reason, the interests of all participants and aims of the LRC project had to be clarified on a regular basis.

The LRC project relies on volunteers, making the project’s long-term future unpredictable. From time to time, the LRC house and garden was short-handed, sometimes dependent on weather conditions and hence needed to motivate and recruit volunteers/gardeners. The number of volunteers increases as soon as spring comes. Because the help of many people is needed but not always available, a lot of effort is put into aspects of attracting new skilled gardeners. Furthermore, time for communal gardening is limited as weekly working bees spent on the average only one and a half hours working in the gardens. Gates are locked outside operating hours to comply with CCC safety regulations. If nobody is in the house, the tea, coffee and biscuits are sometimes locked away as a precaution due to the particular social environment around the LRC. Incidents of theft happened during the time of fieldwork, although only to a limited extent: Parts of the
irrigation system and worms from the worm farm were removed. In the past, tools such as a loan mower and rich crop harvests disappeared.

The most difficult challenge to the community gardeners in terms of gardening appeared to be the poor soil conditions, since the garden area was previously a car park covered with shingles and rubber mats. The 30cm layer of new soil that the community brought in to cover the residuals, but CCC regulations still forbid digging the ground. However, their shared pride for the LRC project and especially for the community garden developed in only a short time through the individual and independent interest, energy and time that the community put into the gardens because of people’s desire to grow, to learn and to interact with others in a gardening environment.

4.2.7 Project–specific challenges and difficulties

4.2.7.1 Issues for the management structures in the two community gardens

The CD in the LRC was present at most of the time. She constantly informed volunteers, the garden project overseer and the financial body and also the trust board about current happenings. This action pulled the CD automatically into a leading position. This is not what she wanted, as she originally intended to work from the background. Additionally, she had to spend more time as facilitator in the office than she wanted because she did not expect to have an office job in her role. She had chosen this working environment because she wanted to be to participate actively with the gardeners and be more directly involved in the development work.

4.2.7.2 To compensate, the challenge of facilitating and managing people

People in the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) in case study 1 wanted to recruit more motivated people with gardening skills, experience and physical capability. Also helpful to the group would have been for people to take initiative without waiting for direction from leadership. On the other hand, it can become problematic for the gardening community when volunteer gardeners follow personal interests without trying to get group consent prior to taking action. Creating a detailed garden plan was needed, but was not accomplished before the end of the fieldwork. Recent thefts are also a new problem for the LRC.

One of the biggest challenges for the LRC is the lack of internal motivation of people, especially when they are new. Volunteers tend to feel a lack of responsibility (in garden and house), want to be led by somebody and/or can be passive, which blocks processes of sustainable development, which in the best circumstances, sustainable development processes are typically slow. In an environment, where different people come together, there are different values, opinions and ways of communicating. Respectful and tolerant behaviours are hence of key importance. However, it was difficult to offer shared lunch if no volunteer was willing to
cook. Concluding these aspects, some volunteers noticed that having too many ideas and planned projects can result in demotivation.

As the LRC community garden land was previously a car park covered with carpet and shingles, the development of the garden sites sometimes demanded hard work. Hence, the poor soil conditions on the garden sites required a lot of effort to make the land usable for growing. Volunteers could not come into house and garden after hours because gates had to be locked.

4.2.7.3 Issues on financial matters

Every community garden as a unique entity has to find its own sources in the wider public funding pool. The process of applying for funding happens mostly in the offices and is time consuming. Additionally, issues about finances of this community garden are partly driven by uncertainty since public funding is never guaranteed, and only short-term contracts are accessible for it. These circumstances can sometimes restrict the development of the LRC.

Applying for funding costs the LRC management body a significant amount of time in the office. This is done mainly by the CD but often in cooperation with supporters. The CD had to plan up to one year in advance, which was challenging since the project relied totally on volunteers, who come and go. Additionally, getting funding was competitive and depended on being able to argue a ‘point of difference’ of the community garden as a social project in Christchurch.

4.2.7.4 Challenged public policy relations

The house and garden of the LRC could be united only after a time of intensive negotiations with the CCC, who wanted to keep them separate and even intended to close the community house all together. The CD recognised once more that public policy agencies are often driven by monetary values rather than social policy matters. Currently, the CCC still has influence on the entity by determining the operating hours of the LRC house and garden.

4.2.8 Defining the specific leadership-management construct within the LRC community: Dispersed leadership and facilitation

The Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) organisation operates in a way that an overall person, the CD, facilitates and operates as much as possible from the background, whereas the trust board openly manages the garden. A practical person, the garden project overseer, organises daily the garden sites. This structure benefits the project and, in particular, the CD as the overall leader because she facilitated but was not supposed to manage all projects by herself. She felt that she would simply not have enough personal energy
for it. However, within the dynamic of nature, the CD as management body still facilitated the trust board and created processes as a non-board-member. Through these processes, trust board members increasingly took over a sense of ownership and responsibility as a formal governance body. As such, the trust board was independent from the management body and passes some responsibilities to the garden project overseer. There is enough space for willing people to show initiative and to bring in new ideas, while somebody — again the CD — who is on-site most of the time, facilitates, gives information and creates roles.

The organisational entity in its structure allows the empowerment of people by passing on certain responsibilities to individuals in the group: The trust board but especially the secretary, a loyal volunteer since the project’s early days, is responsible for the organisation’s finances. Another loyal volunteer is responsible for the gardeners group’s money, which is a small sum that is made available whenever needed. The chairperson and treasurer, another loyal volunteer, is in charge for practical applications, while the garden project overseer holds responsibility for all practical garden operations. Trust board members, the project facilitator and most other volunteers interact frequently and actively.

Volunteers have been repeatedly requested to engage themselves in active educational workshops for others, but none did during the time of the fieldwork. Overall, the whole LRC community continues to welcome initiatives in an open manner and simultaneously seeks for group consent at times.
4.3 Case study 2: Lyttelton Community Garden

4.3.1 History and recent development

‘There had been a tragic death and those around hungered to work the land together to ease their hurt. The community garden was born.’ That is how the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) was created around ten years ago. Responding to a need for healing, two women had the idea of growing food initially for poor people and beneficiaries. Living by themselves on unemployed benefits, they had the time for it. They noticed a piece of vacant land with a house on it on a property right next to a community swimming pool. They went to see the community board and asked for permission to use the land to grow food, which they got immediately.

The initial development stage

Having the garden started, they put the first plot on an ash bed. After a while, three additional beds were created around the house. In the initial phase, the gardeners were confronted with several difficulties: Since there was no water retention, the water ran through the garden; the growing weeds made a daunting appearance to people who might have otherwise joined had it not looked like so much unpleasant work; the back section was overgrown with weeds and a mess with building materials; no compost was available; and the soil conditions hindered crop success.

The community garden was taken to a second stage when a new, passionate and skilled community gardener brought new energy to the garden. She enthusiastically took over the role of the community garden coordinator because she was eager to grow vegetables, since she had only a small garden section on her own private property. Consequently, a few ‘working bees’ were organised and the jungle of weeds were cleared from the back section, transforming the site into a productive area. A shabby house in the front of the garden was removed and gaps were filled with new plants. A new shed was donated by the Lions Club. The small team of gardeners was still struggled with too few people who came regularly to the garden to do some gardening work.

Looking for more volunteers, the existing community gardeners decided to focus even more on tidying up, renewing garden beds in a proper gardening manner (with compost, newspaper, straw and manure) and establishing a compost heap as well as a worm farm. They got organised as a group with appointed meetings,

26 www.lyttelton.net.nz
27 A Lions club is a group that comes together and shares a common interest in community service, supporting the Lions motto “We Serve.” (http://users.eastlink.ca/~smlions/)
planning for the garden and dealing with administration work – tasks were beginning to include more than just gardening. Slowly, more gardeners spent their efforts and time on the garden, and some are still active today.

*Political actions for securing community land*

At one point, the local council planned to close the community swimming pool and sell the property it was built on. The council preferred to have the money than to maintain the land anymore — apparently, money for the required restoration of the pool was not available. The concern of the community gardeners was not only of losing community land to private investors but also of losing the community garden altogether. At the same time, the gardeners entertained hope, assuming that once the pool closed, it could be filled up with soil and the gardening area could be extended.

However, the future of the community properties appeared uncertain for a considerable time: the closure of the pool, the amount of available money as well as the future of the community garden. Private meetings were held, unfortunately without including the community garden team. As the story is told, the gardening group decided to try to keep the community garden as community land and to ‘fight’ for it. Hence, they investigated into the ownership of the designated zone of community pool and community garden. The group made its way into the active process of negotiations, and finally, an inclusive survey of the community dwellers was unavoidable. The outcome told that the community of Lyttelton wanted to keep the community pool but complained about having access to too little green space around the pool, e.g., where children could play. The ‘political battle’ ended with the decision in favour of extending the green space and reviving the pool area as a resource for bringing the community together. At the same time, the extension meant that the community garden would lose its main area and would have to move elsewhere. ‘A lot of work was gone,’ tells the former coordinator.

*Seeking for compromise*

According to the former coordinator, the community garden team had always been looking at the piece of land that bordered the top of the back section of the initial community garden. This area received more daily sun and included a building with a toilet, plots and a glasshouse. It was once privately owned, occupied with a commercial garden where seedlings and poplars were sold. Community gardeners had been supplied by this nursery with plants, pea straw and once, in the initial phase, even with a donated shed. However, the elderly man who used to live in the house on this property died, and the owners changed as the piece of land went into the hands of the former BPDC (Banks Penninsula District Council). ‘Let’s ask the local council if we can use it,’ the community gardeners decided. The gardeners’ enthusiasm was recognised during the negotiations that followed, and the local council agreed to give permission for use of the land. After all the time of uncertainties, organising people in the garden while maintaining the gardening, political engagement and the final loss of a piece of the community garden, the LCG finally won a new and bigger garden including a building.
A new piece of garden land

The community gardeners moved to and rebuilt the new property in a process of several months. A garden coordinator, with the help of only a few individuals, led through all the time of gardening and political activities. ‘It was more than just growing vegetables,’ explained the former coordinator. Several gardening volunteers needed a lot of training or wanted to have a social time and paid only little attention to the physical garden site. ‘Volunteers turned up only when they wanted, while the garden had a life on its own. It needs input as well as outputs at certain times – sowing, renewing plots and soil, harvesting, watering, weeding... In a garden it is all about timing.’

Even though a few people contributed in their energy, work and personal engagement, the vegetable harvest was small. Some ended up frustrated and disappointed. Mainly keen gardeners who stayed and went on gardening were those who did not have to work for money to afford a living. The garden still kept on growing while the coordinator left due to exhaustion and the personal need to earn money. Another gardener, chairperson of the local organisation Project Lyttelton (PL), took over the coordination. PL is a grassroots group that initiates innovative projects within the community of Lyttelton to ‘bring about a sustainable world locally’ through cutting-edge thinking and utilising innovative methods to capture community imagination and sharing visions. The new coordinator was driven by the vision of growing food together with others within the framework of PL as a key factor for building resilient communities. ‘The more people came in, the more positive the place became, the more present was the community at the council – and the gardening process was getting better and better,’ the former coordinator remembers. But still, the community garden consisted of just a loose body of members.

The community garden was given a new direction

Around 2005 a significant change happened, resulting out of a slow and emerging process within an ethos of open communication for an open, sustainable and inclusive community: The community garden came under the organisational umbrella of PL, which moved its new headquarters to the building on the garden property. Most gardeners were already involved in PL and hence saw this union with an incorporated body helpful, for example, when applying for funding. From now on the community garden was given more direction by PL, and it became a place for socialising, driven by the vision of creating a vibrant, sustainable community creating a living future. The attempt to employ a paid gardener in the volunteer-based community garden failed since the whole group dynamics changed due to issues related to the sense of ownership sense. Volunteers tended to leave and to stay away. Except for a few keen gardeners, who put a lot of energy, time and work into the garden site, the team as a whole never had enough energy to do certain activities in the garden, such as workshops, which remained an unfulfilled dream.

Recent development
According to the long time gardeners, in early 2008, the community garden as vehicle of PL underwent another significant change: New gardeners joined the small gardeners group and brought in new enthusiasm, spirit and skills. New arrivals were not only new to the garden but also partly new to the community, where they sought to become involved in community activities.

Since this change, more attention has been paid to food production and growing crops while the gardeners are still driven by the desire to create community and learning, connecting people and community, and being able to rely on a community and locally grown food in order to feed not only gardeners but a wider community. Out of this need, a new unpaid\textsuperscript{28} garden coordinator emerged recently in mid-2008. With her arrival, the focus has had to be shifted back to organising and coordinating the physical community garden site and people.

\textsuperscript{28} in terms of $ NZD; yet paid with timecredits instead.
4.3.2 Current activities

The offer in the LCG was put in a content which makes it possible to compare with case study 1 (see page 69). As the group was structured and maintained as a bottom-up-initiative, a score group of around six gardeners brings in new ideas for their garden as well as ways of realising ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Activities taking place in the LCG</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Case study 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special aim</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To advance sustainable development at the community level and work towards the collective inspired vision of PL: to create a resilient community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speciality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing organic food for local food supply, minimising waste, enjoying recreational activities, creating something together, sharing skills and educating people are keys for a resilient community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Horticultural production</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic vegetables, fruits, berries, herbs and flowers grow exclusively in communal plots; hot heap composting, Bokashi, worm farming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational initiatives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly collective gardening day, where (gardening) skills are shared; lunching together; sharing ideas, creative thinking, discussing, planning, decision making, improving individual social well-being; workshops; educating home schooling children; providing books, magazines, recipes; guided garden tours; arranged talks about PL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-funding</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus sale at weekly farmers market if any tools or other resources are needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recycling, waste minimization, environmental enhancement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recyclables, home kitchen waste collection, ‘no plastic bag’ policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landscaping, constructing, building and maintenance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enough space to build new constructions; renewal of composting areas, garden beds, herb spiral; recreation facilities: new stone oven, garden furniture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social (community) service provision</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcoming of physically and mentally disadvantaged people; cooperation with Lyttelton Time Bank; available place for community service clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health promotion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic quality food; shared lunch from own harvests; implementing Lyttelton Time Bank for social well-being; supporting Maori healing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beautification, recreation and self-renewal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty corner in the planning stage; individual horticultural therapy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing, promotion and community events</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamphlets, homepage, notes in shop and library; open garden days; articles in Lyttelton News; weekly PL program on Lyttelton Volcano Radio; National Community Garden meeting 2008; Ellerslie Flower Show 2009; talks; cooperation with other PL projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteer, student and employee support</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two communal gardening days each week; shared lunch, shared pot-luck twilight dinner; encouraging research; organisation of frequent ‘working bees’; workshop opportunities for time credits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Passive) neighbourhood involvement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling, green waste drop in, worm supply, beautification, contacting PL administration, recreation, social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workshops</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handcraft, bread making, collective visioning; ‘working bees’ for time credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other PL projects, CCC; indirect cooperation with social service agencies and CCC through PL.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The list of activities is long and is covered by its members and the neighbourhood. If people want to get involved actively or passively - physically, socially or organisationally – there was this wide range of opportunities and activities, developed from by people who brought in their own energy for getting little projects done and new ideas realised. Some activities have priority, such as the physical garden work.
4.3.3 The organisation

The Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) is a project of the parent community organisation Project Lyttelton (PL). PL is concerned with sustainable living for individuals and their community. Participants of this project aim to improve the interactions of the people in a community by weaving in complementarity, co-operation, flow, substitution and alternatives, clear channels of communication and feedback. To the gardeners group, the LCG is a symbol of an organic solution: ‘The gardeners are the garden’. 29 As part of an intentional learning organisation, the gardeners grow crops (seeding, growing, weeding, building plots, tending, harvesting, composting), tend to their own personal development and growth while they learn how to work in a group. The group maintains a flat structure among group members and during regular informal meetings. However, a formal garden co-ordinator was introduced to the garden. Levels of (active or passive) participation are structured and described below.

4.3.3.1 Organisational structure

The LCG runs under the umbrella of PL, which is a trust as legal entity. The trust board of PL meets at least once a month. The trust board meetings are not limited to group of members. Instead, the organisation of members is loose and aims to make participation as easy and inclusive as possible for the whole local community. Yet, the chairperson and the treasurer/secretary of PL co-lead projects together with others. Recorded minutes, reports and accounts are made freely available to interested people, and any project is open to anyone who wants to give input. The LCG is represented on the PL trust board by the volunteer community garden coordinator. The garden coordinator, also a paid part-time coordinator of the Lyttelton Time Bank, works together with other community gardeners to co-coordinated people and tasks. The LCG is based on voluntary work, while the PL trust board employs several people dealing with different PL projects and tasks. 30 From time to time, paid gardeners are contracted for set tasks. Payments are made as often as possible through time credits (from the Lyttelton Time Bank) or in cash.

29 www.lyttelton.net.nz.
30 No paid gardener was employed during the time of fieldwork.
These are the key people who are involved in or affected by the LCG:

**Community garden coordinator:** A hobby gardener who co-coordinates the LCG with other community gardeners and represents the LCG on the PL trust board.

**Community gardeners:** PL members from the neighbourhood and local community who aim to create a sustainable community (in and around the garden) and learn as a team. They partly co-coordinate the community garden together with the coordinator as they share tasks, engage in gardening and socialising activities and/or in other PL projects.

**Neighbourhood and local community people:** People who live in Lyttelton gain from aspects of beautification, (potentially) recycling opportunities participation in workshops and/or (active and passive) involvement in other PL projects, such as consuming at the farmers market, celebrating at street festivals or getting support in housing energy matters.

**Visitors:** People who do not live in Lyttelton can come visit the LCG and/or gain from other PL projects.
**PL trust board:** Any member of PL can be on the currently nine-person trust board and/or ‘champion’ of a PL project. These interested people support the governance body of PL by meeting to inform and advise each other and to make decisions together.

### 4.3.3.2 Funding body

The overall PL organisation relies on public funding from the Community Trust (in Lyttelton) as well as local council, governmental agencies and other public funds. Additional income for PL is generated through stall fees from the weekly local farmers market. The budget of the LCG is mainly embedded in the financial organisation of PL. The finances are facilitated by the PL administrator and/or treasurer. However, the LCG has its own budget.

### 4.3.3.3 The LCG management body and the group’s goals

The Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) is included in the management body of Project Lyttelton (PL) but acts as an independent project. First priority for the community gardeners was to maintain the loosely structured LCG organisation and not to focus on management in particular. In other words, they organised resources and coordinated themselves as a flat structured group that shared responsibilities, tasks and skills. A core group of self-appointed co-coordinators developed, among whom was the formal LCG coordinator also, also a keen gardener. Yet, the group officially did not have any head. Nevertheless people had specific roles:
Table 6: Responsibilities for tasks at Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCG coordinator</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Specific tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Co-ordination</strong></td>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Labour division</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informing the trust board with written reports</td>
<td>Allocating tasks to newcomers</td>
<td>PL chairperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to trust board meetings</td>
<td>Adding tasks on to-do list</td>
<td>Educating and reminding of PL values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representing the LCG on the trust board</td>
<td>Reminding each other of PL values</td>
<td>Visioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping the LCG going and taking it to a further step</td>
<td>Promoting the LCG and PL, attracting people</td>
<td>Keeping transparency and informing the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and mapping</td>
<td>Informing the community</td>
<td>Seeking for additional space to grow (as needed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating and updating to-do task list</td>
<td>Sharing the garden</td>
<td>Negotiating with funders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating successful harvest</td>
<td>Sharing skills</td>
<td>Regulating the financial PL situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to and asking the community</td>
<td>Sharing decision-making</td>
<td>Applying for public funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining transparency</td>
<td>Working as a team</td>
<td>Educating in terms of applying for funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-ordinators</td>
<td>PL administrator</td>
<td>Cooking soup, preparing lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Organising composting workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Organising open days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting Bokashi at farmers markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Watering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Networking in the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The LCG wants to contribute to the success of PL by creating a healthy and sustainable community with their local garden a healthy and sustainable community. Although they realise that more cooperation with public (social) agencies is necessary for the further development of the project, management also recognise the gardeners’ overall goal is to retain the heart of PL and the LCG project.

4.3.3.4 Organisational vision statement, personal envisioning and sharing for a vibrant community

Case study 2 is a vehicle of its umbrella organisation Project Lyttelton (PL). Hence, the overall vision for the LCG is subordinated to the vision statement of Project Lyttelton (PL), which measures the project’s sustainability. If any local project can be linked to the following collective vision, it can be part of PL:

‘Lyttelton – portal to Canterbury’s historic past, a vibrant sustainable community creating a living future.’

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31 www.lyttelton.net.nz
The PL chairperson is an active gardener. She says that there is the need to relearn simple basic skills. At the same time she calls out to be more in touch with how nature works and to be able to mimic nature’s system, especially in times of current uncertainties, peak oil, climate change and transition towns. In spite of a belief that the global (economic) system will break down one day, the chairperson continues to hold and speak out a positive vision as a community leader: ‘A community garden is the ultimate political power: S/He who holds access to food holds power.’ According to her personal told experience, the LCG acts as a community growing seed beds, which is central for growing healthy communities. The realisation of the vision means to her to increase the access to quality food which is a basic community human right.

The LCG volunteer coordinator visions a self-supporting community/ neighbourhood that realises the idea of community: People come together and support each other. Therefore, she sees the potential in the LCG for entering and accessing other layers of the Lyttelton society and especially those who live on the edge of society. She envisions in a discours eventually ideas around cooperating with a food bank (providing food surplus), organising harvesting fairs in and around the LCG (to bring the community’s offering together) or starting a project which returns money accumulated in gambling machines to the community. The coordinator underlines that the global community needs to move toward a more localised one. According to her desired, outspoken vision statement, community gardens function hence as common areas in communities for social, educational and cultural sharing, as places of beauty and connectivity to nature, and also for self-renewal. Benefits out of these processes shall be provided to people and groups that do not have the luxury of having time to think about all aspects of environmental sustainability because they are struggling with other issues in current society.

The broad vision of the community gardeners group32 includes a whole range of interactions and moreover the process of getting there. This development underlies the gardeners’ conviction of sharing ‘a really positive vision’ as a group: Community gardens are central for growing vibrant communities in which people are healthy and support each other. In particular, the LCG shall be an open and inviting place for all Lyttelton residents to come, to participate and to enjoy. First and foremost, the LCG helps the gardeners feed themselves from their own actions and soil. Beyond that, the LCG shall be able also to feed others from the community. As the core gardener group discussed among each other, the community spirit shall be developed and maintained, for example, by passing on skills for cultivating vegetables organically to those who are interested. As a place for teaching gardening skills, for beauty and connection, for self-renewal, this can shift

32 Inclusive of the PL chairperson and LCG coordinator whose vision statements are described above. During the time of fieldwork, the community gardeners group visioned future processes underlying personal, self-reflected imaginations and visions.
a whole community and bring compassion, so is the group convinced. Some people hope to get support in form of time credits for time spent gardening at the LC in cooperation with the Lyttelton Time Bank.

4.3.3.5 Sustainability focus: Interconnectivity of people and projects

The key to sustainability for Project Lyttelton (PL) and hence for the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG), as for any community lies in fostering open communication. Being values-based, visioning in a collective process as well as the interconnectedness of PL projects is just as essential. Putting PL values into action, the LCG contributes to the social, economic, recreational and environmental well-being of the Lyttelton community. The project helps mobilise people and their inspiration at the grassroots level to meet the challenges of a changing world with an innovative method for harnessing a wide range of skills. The project also supported sharing, creating and capturing community imagination. Sustainability is embedded in decentralised structures: local food production and supply, local waste minimisation, on-site, renewable energy generation, complementary community currency system, recreation, education and skill sharing in the community.

Sustainability in the LCG is furthermore embedded in the process of being inclusive and offering opportunities to participate and to link the garden with other projects, such as growing vegetables organically, selling and promoting at the local farmers market, organising ‘working bees’ through the Time Bank, to have another productive garden for local food supply over a food box delivery system, to report in the local newspaper, and so forth. For the LCG, essential to a sustainable solution is having only communal activities as opposed to offering individual gardening plots. Finally, as part of a complementary project, some gardening services and garden tools were paid as much as possible in time dollars.

4.3.4 Leading and participating in the LCG

4.3.4.1 Leadership history

The history of leadership in the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) is just as lively as in the prior case study. After two people started the LCG with only little success a new volunteer coordinator injected new energy and gardening skills to the project, but after a while, she ran out of personal energy when the Project Lyttelton (PL) administration moved into the building on the LCG property. Consequently, the organisation’s chairperson became the new coordinator of LCG. The leader of the weekly meetings, however, changed to a non-gardening but active member of PL. Still, there was enthusiasm among the gardeners group but there

33 The specific values that PL defines are appreciation, acknowledgement, honoring, balance, encouragement, trust and love.
were just too few of them. At the beginning of 2008, the LCG coordination was handed over to the gardeners group with the task of organising the LCG, its people and their work. Out of the group’s antipathy toward hierarchical structures and strict planning strategies, a team of co-coordinators evolved, including a formal LCG coordinator and the PL chairperson, who leads the vision from behind. Overall, leadership in the LCG is both simple and complex: Somebody established the garden, other people developed it further and took it into new directions. At the same time, individuals and the group led themselves to develop a whole process of group tasks and specific roles: ‘What we do is natural. It is a process and not a static system in which things stay the same.’

4.3.4.2 Action and influence: Leading processes as complementary group

In this case study, to put ideas into actions, it is important to have a broad vision that includes not only a single goal but also a whole range of interactions. In other words, the core of a project is its development, which is understood as the ‘process of getting there’. The essence of this process is to focus on what works well, to concentrate on that and to remind the community gardeners and other PL members of that. According to the philosophy of shared leadership, the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) has no ‘head’ who explicitly leads the group and stands above the others. Instead, most gardeners have specific roles, whether as the Project Lyttelton (PL) chairperson and ‘leader’, the garden coordinator or as gardener in the group. As much as possible, they all make decisions together, taking advantage of any times that they are together, such as on Wednesday’s communal gardening days during lunchtime.

As already mentioned, the community gardeners group is a complementary project to PL, and within the community garden its members function as a complementary team. While the administrator, who is the contact person in any Project Lyttelton (PL) affairs, welcomes people during opening hours and does promotional tasks, others take responsibility to recruit new gardeners, for example, by organising casual opening days. Meanwhile some plan activities or manage the to-do task list, while still others are good at remembering which people have needed skills when other people need to be brought in. In the absence of a formal LCG coordinator, others took over the allocation of tasks, and reward the gardeners. However, all engaged in discussions on values of PL, the environment and personal matters.

The LCG coordinator reacts to the needs of the community by listening, asking and organising. She further gave direction to the garden group by contributing suggestions and ideas, looking for reactions. From this input, people could form visions, start to negotiate goals and a process can emerge, in which all were involved who want to be. One of her responsibilities was to read out tasks to gardeners on the weekly gardening day.

34 Read more about the LRC history in section 4.3.1 History and recent developments in the LCG organization.
Gardeners could then take on the jobs which they would prefer to do. If required, she also gave instructions for tasks. Afterwards she prepared fresh food rewards for the gardeners and also reminds them of daily achievements: ‘It was a great day and we moved a lot.’; ‘Isn’t it great to see what’s possible in such a short time if we all help together.’; ‘It is funny – all these women’s hands!’ She reminded all gardeners to maintain the flat organisational structure through behaviours such as staying open to bringing in newcomers. Overall, she highlighted that the role of each single gardener in the community garden as equally important.

The chairperson of the PL trust board tries to find what skills people have so that they can be confident to do things which they are passionate about. To this end, she has stayed active in several PL projects and has hence been able to build links between them. She met with people in the community garden who are relevant for PL, attended nationwide meetings on issues such as environmental sustainability or community gardens, gives public talks, and intended to hold workshops on grassroots leadership. Moreover, she had a close relationship with the CCC, does PL funding negotiations and attended to staff trainings.

4.3.4.3 Self-awareness of leadership: Leading from behind as co-coordinators

Leadership, as with the management body, in case study 2 should not take in a dominant role. Leadership means rather to be part of an on-going learning process either as formal leader, co-coordinator or members of the community, nurtured by the dynamic of new and positive energy.

The PL chairperson, a former Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) coordinator explained that she took just over, started doing things and people adjusted and followed automatically. The chairperson found herself always in a leadership role within Project Lyttelton (PL), which is said to be her ‘wonder-baby’. It is important for sustainable development to have some leaders who make up the official leadership and that over time several leaders emerge naturally. ‘Overall, it just depends on what is needed, what people want and what they give.’ Therefore, it is important to leave room in the organisational structure. The chairperson finds that it is also helpful to always ask people and oneself questions. However, she really disliked being the sole leader. For her, leadership is certainly not about ‘follow me’ but about the leading from behind. Therefore, it is essential to have a strong vision, to hold this vision and to remind people of this vision; to stay in contact with this vision and not to abandon it. To lead means to her to present a set of values and to hold it firmly, so that people become confident to move things and to lead themselves. She says, further, that leading is about playfulness and implies creativity, trust and faith, that an idea can be materialised, and finally, the ability to let go.

In this sense, the PL chairperson perceived leadership as a spiritual journey: Somebody, a leader, puts an intention ‘out there’ and it will evolved into something real. Conversely, if something is not happening as desired, the focus is probably on the wrong place and attention given to wrong aspects. ‘But just look carefully. Things come, look at their potential and do not miss the opportunity... Let’s take what is offered to
us and keep our eyes wide open! ... To lead a project [such as PL or the LCG] means and aims for identifying the best of “what is” to pursue dreams and possibilities of “what could be.” Tasks must focus on community achievements rather than problems, and go beyond participation to foster inspiration at the grassroots level.35

There are numerous layers in this project: ‘Besides vegetables there are other [layers], for example there is also a paradigm shift going on. The way we think now is full of fear, the fear of scarcity, and is so critical.’ She was confident like the others that they as a group with a positive vision can pull in other people who would soon begin to share their vision.

The LCG coordinator had been in her formal role only for a short period at the time of this study. The formal garden leader did not want to be named coordinator because everybody’s contribution is valuable, and this title ‘would make me more important than others. It is more about a feeling of belonging to a group of co-coordinators... Nobody is more important than another; everybody is equally important’. To her, leadership is about tossing something into the group — ideas — and letting it grow: ‘You seed things. It is easy to have ideas!’ From these ideas, visions are formed, followed by negotiating goals; and so the process of realising the visions emerges. The coordinator explained that you put out an intention, and it will evolve into a process. A flat, non-hierarchical structure within PL and the LCG was important to give everybody a sense of belonging at the LCG. At the LCG, all core community gardeners were encouraged to take leadership, regardless of their official roles.

4.3.4.4 Leadership relation within the LCG community

Interrelations among group members in case study 2 have been already discussed in past sections and will further be explained in detail.36 They welcome everybody and aim as a group for more involvement from the community: ‘The more people, the better.’ ‘We really want to have a sense of organic being: to give enough space.’ Nevertheless, the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) coordinator is aware that the community gardeners as a group cannot change other people’s minds; but they can bring about change by showing them with doing and living their live. ‘If too much structure in a group leaves not enough space, the danger is that people can not freely do’, do the members of the group agree on. But people are invited to take over: ‘The earth forgives us! We are allowed to make mistakes!” Aspects of sharing resources are vital for the health of the group, especially sharing the lunch. In every sense it is about giving and taking, while everybody’s time is equal.

35 www.lyttelton.net.nz
36 See for information sections 4.3.3.3 The LCG management body and the group’s goals, 4.3.4.2Action and influence: Leading processes as complementary group, 4.3.4.3 Self-awareness: of leadership: Leading from behind as co-coordinators, 4.3.4.4 Leadership relations in the LCG small group, and 4.3.5.1Individual and group centered goals.
4.3.4.5 Emerging issues and challenges within the group leadership

A prime challenge for every leadership is not to lose the focus on the vision by becoming too pragmatic, explained the Project Lyttelton (PL) chairperson. Once a formal coordinator is announced, it is important to maintain the core principles of the community garden, that leadership is shared by all members of the group. The group has to organise themselves to split up and to equally distribute the work of coordinating the project. Having to organise itself to create a structure for a project put more pressure on group. At the same time, this put the official coordinator in a challenging situation to approach the process of giving direction appropriately, e.g. by contributing ideas and suggestions and then waiting for a reaction from the group.

The positive atmosphere of the group, as the gardeners agreed, and the PL’s positive visions were nevertheless only for a certain part of the society. While everyone is welcome, the group of community gardeners seemed to be partly perceived as being exclusive by people in the general community who did not share their vision. Furthermore, only few people from the community might possess the luxury of having time during the week to come to garden and think about aspects of environmental sustainability. Nevertheless, the people at PL saw a potential to provide benefits of community development and to link the community garden with other layers of the society.

4.3.4.6 Importance of leadership in the LCG

For Project Lyttelton (PL) as a values-based organisation and the umbrella organisation of the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) in case study 2 it is important to have several leaders: The overall leader is the chairperson of PL who holds the wider vision and gives the set of values, the LCG coordinator links projects and facilitates people’s visions; and the group of community gardeners who lead themselves to their satisfactions. A garden coordinator was chosen to take care of certain tasks that had not been foreseen in the earlier structures. Yet, discussions about the effective need and impact of having a formal coordinator have arisen, since it also meant that there was more pressure on the group to follow this certain structures. Even though several core co-coordinating community gardeners had been able to work together to the LCG’s benefit, the group requested somebody in a ‘formal’ position like the current garden coordinator. With this, the group stated that usually it is helpful to have somebody to set the direction. Yet, participants did agree that, as being an organic system, the group could also function without a specific leader. The group as a whole determines which tasks have to be done but the group still wants that leadership helps organise who does which task. Finally, leadership is also important for officially showing volunteers appreciation, something that

37 See section 4.2.7 and 4.3.7 Project-specific challenges and difficulties in terms of managing, as well as section 4.4 Conclusion: Common benefits and organizational advantages for and in the two organisations.
the coordinator explicitly did. This aspect was considered to be very important since people volunteered work and time without any monetary.

4.3.5 Community gardeners and volunteers: The small group in the LCG

Community gardeners come together in the community garden for different reasons. They want to interact with others, some to garden together with people, to grow food, to learn and practice gardening skills. Others just want to do some volunteer work in the community garden and resource building, while still others find in it a satisfying employment situation. Overall, the community garden offers opportunities to people to become involved in the community and hence to be included in the neighbourhood, to gain therapeutic benefits in silent garden environments and moreover to build a sense of ownership and responsibility for local people.

4.3.5.1 Individual and group-centred goals

The Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) group actively maintained a non-hierarchical structure. They expressed a desire to have no single manager or leader but multiple leaders: ‘It is funny – all these women’s hands!’38; ‘We are about to form a community which is able to resist, in case, you know, you never know what’s going to happen.’ The group is well aware that creating structures in the group risk either winning or potentially loosing the group’s organic quality. This organic quality is, however, exactly what they like so much in the group as it is today.

The group did have an appointed LCG coordinator although she tried to lead only from behind. Nevertheless, she said that she found herself sometimes in the traditional role of leadership ‘... but it’s not about me.’ A former coordinator was aware that if one person manages solely, this would prevent other people to do things; as opposed to allowing a process in which people gain confidence to move things on their own, to lead themselves, another community gardener explained. The PL chairperson is convinced that ‘we lead us to it. Let leadership come to it – letting the game come to you!’; ‘People can become confident through suggestion over time.’ Overall, the flat structure and organic entity survived because ‘we assure that the others can meet their needs’ so that everyone has the opportunity to equally gain a sense of ownership, as a community gardener suggested.

In other words, the LCG group aimed to put the broad vision of PL into action through the active participation of the gardeners and the productivity of a community as a whole. In the community, they wanted to enjoy each others company, to learn from each other and to build friendships. Overall, the place of communality

38 This aspect of the predominance of women as leaders and members would need greater discussion somewhere but is not intended to be dealt with in particular in this work.
could be used as a pan-integral part of the vision of whanau (family group). Growing together in the LCG provides them and the wider community with food. The reward of receiving communally grown food was perceived as a way of showing appreciation for each other’s time. In this process, they aimed to connect with the earth and seasons, to touch the soil and to dig in the dirt. ‘One day,’ say the community gardeners, ‘we will have our own seeds to sell to people.’

4.3.5.2 Personal skills contributed

Most committed people apply their personal skills in the community garden environments. With it, they want to contribute to their personal and their community’s benefit. The diversity of each community gardener group brought along a range of various personal skills. These skills were partly related to their needs beyond food. As such, all skills were equally important for each community’s well-being and projects. The following table gives an overview:39

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study 2</th>
<th>Community skills in the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willingness to participate and give time to gardening work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holding a wider vision</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sharing the vision and enthusiasm for the LCG</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Planning, organising</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Facilitating people’s interests into actions in an appropriate manner</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watering (when needed daily, if nobody else is present)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weeding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Willingness to do what others do not like</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Gardening knowledge</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Friendliness and a welcoming attitude to newcomers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Spreading the word in the community, encouraging others to join in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interest in the community</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The ability to include the LCG into PL</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interlinking all the various PL projects, networking</td>
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</tbody>
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4.3.5.3 Aspects on lifestyles, food and working in the community garden

*Middle class, authentic environmental awareness and alternative solution*

The Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) group is predominantly made up of middle-class people. Only a few gardeners have lived their whole lives long in Lyttelton. Most moved into the harbour basin only a few years

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39 Likewise in case study 1, the information given in table 7 is based on self-reflection of participants, my observation and others
ago and had intentionally chosen the township for reasons such as the presence of a community and its atmosphere. They live mostly in their own houses, only a few rent. All walk to the community garden, even though most own cars. Most also had their own productive garden at home, and adhering to ‘organic’ is a common principal.

Organic gardening means for them not using chemicals and other materials that could harm the human body, soil, water and air — now or at a later point in time. An organic group is understood as one that has no firm group structure for the organisation and hence allows enough space for all other beings. It emphasises the need to be authentic and also to accept other people’s lives. The project was built on trust: ‘We trust people. ...’; ‘It is always a giving and taking. ...’ They believe that a group has the potential to attract certain types of people and moreover to bring about change. The gardeners’ desire to live in a sustainable or even self-sustaining community evolved from the need to share visions, the overall process and hence the change. ‘If you put out an intention, you will evoke in a process. ...’; ‘We cannot do anything but learn from nature. ...’; ‘The earth forgives as! We’re allowed to make mistakes. ...’; ‘The world is our classroom: interactions rather than protection. ...’; ‘Nothing is more healing than digging and growing. ...’; ‘Kitchen waste is a treasure. We pay for getting it picked up, and then we pay again for getting compost. ...’

Most community gardeners were members of the Lyttelton Time Bank, known as a cutting-edge initiative where skills are shared on an equal time credit basis. Time credits oppose the hard currency system, which as based initially on gold and that is available to only a limited extent and only to certain people. Social cohesion increases within a Time Bank system, as the members are convinced that ‘time is equal.’

4.3.6 The LCG community put together: Leadership, management and small groups

4.3.6.1 Rules, norms and expectations

The LCG is a public place, where different people of different ages, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds come. Nevertheless, no set of rules was provided for members to follow. Based on trust, everybody is free to act as long as it is in the interest of the community. Yet, all community gardeners need to be members of Project Lyttelton (PL), and pay an annual membership of $10 (NZD). It is suggested on the website www.lyttelton.net.nz that there are particular expectations of members even if they are basic ones. However, members of the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) say that they have no particular expectations in terms of the gardening productivity, but everybody has a chance to contribute. The PL chairperson points out additionally that some might be ‘champions’ in small things, some in larger projects. Some people want to have enough room in the community garden to find their own tasks, whereas others expect to be allocated to tasks.
Everybody should be given an equal sense of ownership and responsibility. People are expected to work as a team and to share decisions, and plans cannot be changed without group consent. Even though a LCG coordinator exists, people are still encouraged to organise themselves and not to make the coordinator the focal point, because this would put more responsibility and hence pressure on a single person, which is explicitly unwanted in the group structure. Meetings are informal and held only if necessary. Appreciating each other and each other’s time is seen as essential to this group where a free cup of soup is a major feature of the social gatherings at lunch time. Furthermore, priority is always given to the community gardeners’ families: ‘Family first!’ Because serious conflicts have not yet occurred, there has been no need to focus attention on this topic. When it comes to monetary aspects, the combination of cash and time credits is used for as much as possible.

4.3.6.2 Organisational communication

The active community in this case study promotes open communication through clear channelling and open dialogues so that information is freely and easily accessible. The LCG coordinator communicates happenings in the garden through her monthly report to the trust board eight days in advance. As in case study 1, everybody’s voice is heard, and not just the majority’s view. The LCG group meets weekly to inform, plan, discus and organise the progress of the garden. Active discussions also take place during gardening, so that new ideas can emerge, tasks can be added and small decisions can be made. Email is important, too, to inform interested people every three weeks about upcoming events.

4.3.6.3 Decision-making process

Shared decision-making is essential in the LCG. Plans and decisions are made during the weekly gardeners’ meetings at lunch time. The present group always decided as a whole decided new projects, ideas, finances and applications. However, some decisions were made quickly during gardening activities. Anybody was free to plant whatever as long as they labelled the plots. Final decisions for the LCG were made by the Project Lyttelton (PL) trust board.

4.3.6.4 Harvesting policy

The particular harvesting policy in the LCG is built on a sweat-equity basis ‘food for work’. In the LCG, however, none of the members controlled how much food individuals took. The LCG community was

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40 Even some people come sometimes only for the lunch soup and gathering but let out the communal gardening activities in the morning.

41 This is the official harvesting policy of the LCG, taken from the official LCG folder.
convinced that people who took more food than others, needed it for feeding their families or friends. The PL chairperson explained, ‘if too little food is available, we will find more land to grow on’.

4.3.6.5 Social cohesion amongst leadership, management and community gardeners

LCG participants perceived their group as one without ‘head’ but as one with different people having different roles. They intentionally shared the coordination of the LCG as they agreed among each other that no one wanted the role of sole leadership. However, it turned out in conversations with community gardeners that the PL chairperson was seen by the others as the main active person: ‘She has the vision and just does things. She is fantastic.’ Bringing her in-depth knowledge of grassroots leadership into the group, she highlighted the importance that, over time, leaders must just emerge from the group itself.

a) Shared group tasks

The group commonly thought that the LCG project as an organic system could work without a designated group leader. However, they usually found it helpful to have somebody who shows where to go. Hence, current leadership seemed necessary and emerged because it became busy in the LCG, and the organic, leaderless system of coordination and organisation dissolved short time prior to the beginning of this fieldwork. The arrival of two new gardeners, who moved into the community only at the end of 2007 and who brought new enthusiasm and team spirit with them were a godsend to the community garden that needed willing hands and fresh energy. Still, the community needed the involvement of more dedicated people, as dedicated members tell. The team of co-coordinators developed to take away some responsibility from the appointed LCG coordinator and to share the workload. The chairperson suggests that leadership shall be for this core group of gardeners a game of creativity and playfulness based on trust rather than one person’s sole role.42

The LCG group characterised itself as an intentional learning group that is based upon trust. In this process, community gardeners exchanged advice in terms of gardening practices, and also tried to support one another in their personal lives, their personal ideas and interests, in and outside the community garden. The community garden working bees also helped people who were part of the Time Bank (whether they were also community garden members, or not) in their homes and personal gardens.43 Communal actions included

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42 One could argue that citizens’ money (public funding) is being used to support the project and hence leadership should be more than a playful game. On the other hand, as much as possible is paid in time credits which loosens constraints due to financial pressure. Public funding is to a certain level not there that people play with. Yet, it is to justify with the hidden aspect of encouraging the garden community to not be afraid of tasks, responsibilities and mistakes which occur for both a leader and a collectively leading group.

43 Most community gardeners are members of the Time Bank.
allowing two home-schooled children and some other children to come visit the LCG as an educational experience. Spending time and playing with the children in the gardens, the community gardeners supported mothers, who were also fellow gardeners.

A small number of community gardeners knew each other previously through their children, who were the same age or went to the same schools, and hence had already known each other for several years. Relationships sometimes started outside the garden and later carried into the group, when they have been strengthened. This friends lived together, others joined each other at public events in the community, the city of Christchurch or even New Zealand-wide. People from the group brought in personal ideas and plans, at the same time asking for interest and group consent. Ideas which were brought in and which appealed to others were numerous, e.g. the intention to map local fruit trees, aspects of beautification, workshops for bread and preserving, weekend entertainment and community gatherings. With the abundance of suggestion and limited communal time, the ideas had to be prioritised.

b) Intentional learning group

Individual interests often overlapped the group’s common interests, especially their visions and goals. For instance, almost all community gardeners were members of the Lyttelton Time Bank, which increased the social cohesion independent of gardening activities, brought a sense of being part of a valued everyone’s time and recorded the amount of social capital within a community. Shared lunch allowed newcomers to enter a group, while working together in groups or individually stimulated interactions with newly arrived people as well. Most community gardeners show active interest in each other.

However, because the majority of the group cultivated their own productive gardens at home, it was clear that people came for reasons other than growing food: ‘Veggies are an incidental outcome, a nice side-effect. But in principal it is so much about community, growing together and digging in the soil with other people.’ Planning, making suggestions, visioning and mapping was done as a group in which individuals had particular roles, as already explained in previous chapters. Still, sharing harvests was main aspect for the group.

Labour division and some doing things which others did not like to do complemented and strengthened the group and was appreciated by the volunteer gardeners. However, some (rather unpopular) tasks like fund raising or irrigating hang on only a few persons. Especially rainy weather discouraged most people in the group from coming to garden. Even though the LCG building was available on the communal gardening day, apart from shared lunch and the informal LCG meeting no organised indoor activities take place.

Overall, the LCG community gardeners want to focus on the achievements rather than on its problems. Still, according to my observations further difficulties occur: The LCG relies on its volunteers. Yet, as independent
volunteers there is no obligation for them to come weekly, which the gardeners themselves also admit. But if several people stay away, it affects the productivity and transparency of the project. Since there seemed never to be enough participants, the group were always looking to attract and involve more people for joining physical and social gardening activities. It is most challenging to get people from the community to come to the LCG for the first visit, since people tended to be quite critical with regard to innovative approaches, something one community gardener came to realise.

c) Compensations for weaknesses

The centre can not be staffed all the time, so should a visitor come by when no one is there, they will find a sheet with welcoming and introductory information on the LCG building’s door. Many people in the local area could when the general gardening group met, because they have to work or take care of a family. In fact, it was seen as ‘luxury’ to have time on Wednesdays during the day to work voluntarily. Participation is particularly difficult for people like sole parents, who have to still earn money to pay the rents. So as an alternative, an additional working afternoon and evening with dinner was set up.

According to past experience if people do not have a successful harvest at the end of the season, they are likely not to return the next year. To ensure a productive year with a successful harvest at the end of the gardening season, the group tried to determine which crops are most likely to be successful. The harvesting policy was based on trust, and different people sometimes had different ideas about how this worked, but nevertheless the general commitment to an unregulated approach was stronger than their differences. The amount of food taken away was not controlled, and the group never experienced any negative incidents. Vandalism has happened only rarely and attributed committed by youth outside of the community.

What has been already mentioned in prior chapters is that the existing group shared a common and ‘positive’ vision, and they realised that this might make it difficult for new gardeners to enter a group. The question to how inclusive the group actually was, and whether there is a place in the garden for people who do not share their vision, was examined but remained not fully answered. ‘Are our interests exclusive for other people who are different?’ they asked. The group seriously considered this aspect of in-/exclusiveness but was convinced that the group’s dynamic would tolerate any necessary changes in the garden environment, and that they would attract the right people.

Shared lunchtimes and a flat organisational structure helped the group to remain open and inclusive. All gardeners were supposed to have an equal sense of ownership in the garden. But for all that, it was more difficult with an increasing number of gardeners to have the community take over ownership. In a consequence, the growing group tended to become more structured. About six months ago, the core group found it necessary to organise themselves more (with a ‘formal’ garden coordinator and regular meetings), tasks (by creating a to-do list, mapping and planning) and other people (through instruction). One effect this
has had on gardeners is that they now feel more pressure as a group. The challenge is now how to function effectively as a larger group and still maintain what they valued in the LCG: the non-hierarchical, flat structure and loose organisation.

4.3.7 Project–specific challenges and difficulties in terms of managing

4.3.7.1 Issues for the management structures in the LCG

The LCG community organised itself because the group wanted to co-coordinate the project independently from any other Project Lyttelton (PL) project. Organising itself meant that more pressure was put on the group: ‘We can win a lot, but we can also lose something in this process.’ The group’s task and a challenge became to take away some responsibility and workload from the coordinator while still keeping a work environment in which the volunteer coordinator and all others enjoyed coming but were still able to relax. Especially in a social and productive setting like in a community garden, it was seen as important, although challenging, to continuously the broad vision and not to narrow down the focus too much on particular tasks, such as only growing vegetables. In this sense, the group was obliged to work together. Because the flat structure gave people the freedom to act and to follow their own preferences, there was always a risk that the group could lose the overview of what people do and do not do. Additionally, processes and goal achievements can take longer in the absence of a single, directing leader. Showing appreciation to volunteers was essential since gardeners are not paid in monetary terms but often neglected and not taken seriously enough. To compensate, the community made efforts to actively acknowledge each other’s contributions and successes.

4.3.7.2 Issues on financial matters

The process of applying for public funding was mostly conducted by the Project Lyttelton (PL) administrator and chairperson. The challenge was clearly to find appropriate gaps in the funding systems as well as to adjust intended projects to requirements. In few cases people at the LCG who were concerned with the funding applications were busy with other tasks or detailed information was lacking, and they ended up missing an important deadline for a funding application. The following year, however, offers another chance to apply. With regard to financial matters, the overall budget and funding system the LCG was and still is unclear among the group members, although they do recognise that money is necessary to keep the project running. The task of applying for funding has belonged so far to only two people, even though anyone with new ideas and initiators of new projects could take over writing funding applications. The problem is that LCG member

44 Since the LCG finances are low and embedded in the PL financial body.
commonly had limited knowledge about how to apply, so they would have to constantly be educated by experienced people. As already mentioned, incomplete information or lacking communication can interfere with writing good applications or missing deadlines.

4.3.7.3 Challenged public policy relations

The Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) community also had to take political action in the past in order to secure the project. In the meantime, the Project Lyttelton (PL) chairperson maintains good relations with particular people who are influential with the local council. Overall, it appears to be important but also challenging to have a ‘good’ relationship with the local council that enables cooperative progress in a political sense.

4.3.8 Defining the specific leadership-management construct within the LCG community: Group-shared leadership and co-ordination

The flat structure of the LCG group encourages the community to freely contribute. It allows a group in which a specific leadership and management do not play a dominant role. Thus, several leaders can emerge if needed, wanted and are available. In line with philosophies of grassroots leadership, having multiple leaders benefits a project since sharing leadership tasks makes it possible to react immediately to situations. Shared tasks and working as a team brings complementarity into the group. For example, the coordinator does not necessarily have to have financial skills whereas others do not need to have the coordinator’s experienced gardening skills. Community gardeners feel an equal sense of ownership, expressed interests and the opportunity to take initiative.

Overall, the process of shared leadership is based on the sustainability aspect of the LCG (and PL) as community project. The dynamic of a group, which shares a positive vision and similar interests, can bring about beneficial change and might affect further people in a positive sense, once they feel the supportive atmosphere. A newcomer explained after her first visits: ‘The dynamic is refreshing so that I really felt welcomed, and not controlled.’

Working as a team created an informal atmosphere during meetings and increased the communal spirit: ‘We just go on chatting, coming up with ideas and making decisions.’ Fitting also into the beauty of PL, the garden contributed to the self-renewal of all volunteers. Shared leadership and especially shared responsibility allowed them to also have time to relax in the LCG. Otherwise the formal LCG coordinator would have full responsibility and would not longer come in her spare time for voluntary gardening or even relaxing any more in her spare time. The LCG would consequently lose its self-renewal status.
Moreover, the LCG as a vehicle of PL benefits from the interconnectedness with other active PL projects, especially from the complementary value system provided by the Lyttelton Time Bank. Finally, another specific advantage lies in the little, hilly township environment, in which the LCG is situated. Being located in a safe community benefits the project since garden, shed and tools do not have to be guarded and are accessible for community gardeners at any time. Finally, the LCG gained more significance in the wider community when the only local supermarket closed and food supply in the town decreased.

4.4 Conclusion: Common benefits and organisational advantages for and in the two organisations

Community gardens’ contribute to sustainable urban development and can hence satisfy a range of diverse needs of people. The garden projects’ most significant advantage is the provision of fresh quality food to the community for low/no cost. Depending on the physical garden sites, the communities studied have either unlimited or limited access during office hours. The food there is accessible for community gardeners only, but could potentially feed and benefit the wider communities. Apart from healthy food, people also have access to free education in several ways, such as through workshops. Moreover, the places offer opportunities for social interaction at any time. Compared to other social projects, community garden projects are valuable and unique in that they offer active involvement. This significant point of difference is beneficial in terms of receiving public funding, since sponsors are not interested in supporting replications of already existing projects.

Loyalty of community gardeners as well as their activeness and initiatives were openly appreciated in most cases. However, people are free to leave at any stage if they should no longer have time or find passion for new projects. They would take with them gained confidence and new skills and hence contribute to a natural dynamic. A main benefit to the process of an organisation’s natural dynamic turned out to lie in newly arrived and motivated people who bring in fresh enthusiasm. The organisations especially benefit when the new members bring along various skills and show initiative. However, in both community gardens, a (more or less) natural dynamic took place with some people coming and some people leaving. This natural process brought different skills but also different ages and different ethnicities with different spiritual backgrounds into the community. Most community gardeners are convinced that a project in which the people always stay the same would not be likely to function successfully.

Depending on the specifics of the organisational structure of the two case studies, manager, facilitator or garden coordinator can rely on the trust board to a certain extent for support, especially in conflict situations.

45 …once the secret about the hiding place for the keys to the facility sheds has been disclosed.
46 The only local supermarket closed in September 2008 as had not reopened by the end of the fieldwork.
In all situations, team work on all structural levels grow a community and especially a project together, since things can move forward. Personal interrelations and friendships can also develop this process, which appears to also be important.

Both community projects are charitable organisations, which means that they are all exempted from paying taxes. Furthermore, they are all provided with land and buildings by the CCC, which requests only a peppercorn rent for their use in return. The land provides work and food, whereas the house provides volunteers with facilities such as toilets, kitchens, offices and gathering rooms for indoor activities.

As for applying for public funding it is essential to have creative skills and an understanding of how to make a successful funding proposal, for example, through splitting up projects, highlighting outcomes and/or having personal relationships with funders.

The community garden places are basically very enjoyable environments, either to relax, to recreate, to regularly be active or to be employed in. In any case, people can come there and, if they want, they get supportive help at the right place by skilled people.

In every community garden project there are some experienced gardeners who have a wide range of gardening skills and practice. This knowledge is accessible to the community when they interact within the projects and show interest. Hence, experienced home gardeners are welcome to join in and contribute to a community garden’s body of gardening knowledge.

4.5 Summary: Leadership and management so far

In this research, some leaders were ‘formal’ leaders due to their ‘formal’ responsibilities of managing and facilitating. Others held informal positions within a leadership construct. The ‘formal’ facilitator in case study 1 was pushed automatically into the position of a leader, since management overlapped with leadership throughout the processes. In the absence of a ‘formal’ management, in case study 2 ‘formal’ leadership was generally held by the chairperson of the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) umbrella organisation. Although the LCG coordinator was also a formal leader, the actual leadership activities were taken over by the group and there was no official ‘head’ of the group.

47 See also section 4.2.3.3 The LRC management and its goals, 4.3.3.3 The LCG management and its goals, 4.2.4.2 Action and influence: Facilitating people and projects and 4.3.4.2 Action and influence: Leading processes as complementary group.

48 See also section 4.3.3.3 The LCG management body and the group’s goals.
In case study 1, the facilitator of the project carried overall responsibility for organising resources. At the same time, she led people and gave directions to the projects. In contrast, the overall leader in case study 2 stayed in the background to allow others space to manage the community garden details. However, in both case studies several leaders emerged.49

In case study 1, the facilitator of the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) was the main project related visionary and was supported in her role by the garden project overseer and the garden group. The garden project overseer managed the garden but as such took over active responsibility for the garden site and practical activities only in an emerging process. In fact, the garden project overseer as an informal leader was initially passive. To counteract his passiveness, the project facilitator, as CD, made a point to be and slip into the background of the project. Out of these circumstances, the community garden group sometimes also looked to an ‘informal’ leader and ab initio loyal volunteer, for guidance and support.

In case study 2, the formal Project Lyttelton (PL) leader as chairperson was supported by the umbrella organisation’s management body and other PL project groups, such as the one of the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG). As part of PL, some leaders of this community garden emerged from the group of participants. In other words, leadership was in this case study group-centred and shared amongst people. A ‘formal’ garden coordinator was appointed to be in charge of coordinating the community garden, tasks and people and, if necessary, to represent the community gardeners for practical reasons, for example on the PL trust board. Yet, she refused to lead in a hierarchical way, but expected instead to work in a group of co-coordinators.

49 For more details on leadership see section 4.2.4 and 4.3.4 Leading and participating in the LRC / LCG.
5 COMPARATIVE FINDINGS

Both case studies of this research indicate that leadership and management of projects were strongly interwoven with each other. Hence, it is impossible to draw a clear line between them. ‘Official’ managers, who were appointed to positions of formal authority, such as a project facilitator or chairperson, tended to be pushed into leading positions. They could be distinguished from those managers or leaders who emerged out of a group’s need but have no particular responsibilities to work with public institutions. Management bodies in this study embraced leadership as a key task beside planning, controlling and organising specific community garden projects. However, both leadership and management often brought different emphases and values with them. The real challenge in that was balancing the combination of (strong) leadership and (strong) management to effectively work together.

5.1 Organisational leadership and project management in the two case studies

The analysis of case study 1 and 2 suggests that the ‘physical’ distinction between the manager and overall visionary helped hold and keep to the community vision without compromising. The visionary leader in case study 1 can be positioned as following: Based on a given broad vision, the CD, as facilitator, gave the overall direction for the development of the Linwood Resource Centre, while management details were partly given to the external umbrella organisation’s administrator as well as to the garden project overseer and the trust board. Overall, I observed that people who were involved in management issues were more sceptical and pragmatic with regard to new ideas.

Main management matters in case study 2 were left to the umbrella organisation’s administration, if they were required. Nevertheless, the Lyttelton Community Garden worked as an independent body. These conditions enabled the core group to develop group leadership and moreover keep focused on the broad vision. In fact, community garden specific tasks were organised by members as a group who potentially took on different sections and activities.

5.2 Reviewing in detail: Commonly emerging issues and difficulties

As the researcher, I am aware that many (positive) aspects will be left out of this section, whereas I feel that underlying and overall goodwill of all participants in these projects has to be acknowledged. The subsections here will discuss various aspects that appeared to challenge some part of the complex community garden systems. The analysis of each aspect will start with issues on the specific garden sites, then go to more generalised difficulties and finally end with considerations on higher levels of involvement with the intention to try to get an understanding of the broader relations.
5.2.1 On-site gardening activities

5.2.1.1 Practical gardening

Garden-made compost was essential for successful food production but in both case studies 1 and 2 it was only limited or not yet available. Plant labelling was an important aspect of smooth communal gardening. It helped people distinguish between crop plants and weeds, and so, avoid disappointments.

5.2.1.2 Focus away from the gardening productivity

The need for developing bureaucratic mindsets, political activeness and an educated staff and volunteers meant that some focus had to shift away from the actual garden productivity. The actual productivity in the gardens was partly constrained by (1) a shortage of funding, (2) volunteers who needed intensive supervision, (3) differences of opinion about visions, (4) the lack of community will, (5) the particular site locations and (6) the seasons. Vegetables grew behind locked gates during the night and high fences in case study 1 and 2. However, on-going weeding was required to keep the gardening sites attractive, although it was relatively time-consuming.

5.2.1.3 Trust in people and surrounding community

People in both community gardens broached the issues of the trustworthiness of people. Although there have not yet been any internal conflicts in the groups due to distrust, there seemed to be different levels of trust among community gardeners. The levels of trust in the case studies were distinguished in terms of interpersonal behaviours, organisational communication, cooperation among people, amount of freedom to act independently the control of resources by responsible people.

The levels of trust of wider communities were mainly based on actual experiences and on the surrounding social environments. In the past, both organisations had to deal with thefts. The lowest occurrence appeared to be at the LCG, while large amounts of produces and tools were taken without any exchange in case study 1. Contrarily, gates were locked overnight in case study 1 for security reasons, and the Linwood Resources Centre community stopped trying to sell fresh produce at the gates during nights anymore. Community gardeners in case study 2 ignored incidents, and facilities remain accessible for all participants and the wider community.

5.2.1.4 Community gardeners and community house

The combination of community gardens and houses was considered an important advantage in both community projects. It allowed indoor and outdoor activities to take place independent of weather conditions and seasons.
5.2.1.5 Realisation of ideas and creativity

Too little time was available to realise the many ideas generated from the garden communities. If pressure was put on people, it commonly led to situations in both case studies in which progress was perceived as too slow and hence required extra patience and energy from the involved members, sometimes more than expected. The new ideas that tended to be most often and easily realised were those on which groups of minimum 2 people worked together. In case study 2, which had a flat organisational structure, the community gardeners contributed countless ideas and a lot of personal interest. In case study 1, however, ideas were predominantly thrown in by the overall leader and then were put into action by active community gardeners.

5.2.1.6 Workload and time pressure

In several situations, having too much work but too little time led to frustration for individuals and groups in the case studies. Experience also showed that volunteers tended to stay away if the list of expected to-do tasks seemed to be long. The study showed that the engagement of people decreased under these conditions, whether trust board members or gardeners. In case study 1, crucial situations occurred when (1) trust board meetings were too short to cover all issues adequately or, (2) board members with busy agendas did not leave time to discuss topics fully, (3) achievable outcomes were overestimated, (4) there was a shortage of volunteers and physical workers, (5) there were too few people with the necessary skills for some key tasks, (6) community gardeners took too little responsibility at the physical garden sites and (7) the flood of ideas put time pressure to realise them, which sometime even led to contra-productive passiveness, especially if projects started earlier were not completed yet.

5.2.2 Volunteer involvement

5.2.2.1 Rewarding community gardeners

In both community garden projects, shared lunches and fresh food as rewards were an essential exchange for the work that came out of personal commitment and teamwork. Fresh produce as rewards kept gardeners motivated, made them feel useful and gave them additional social and intellectual benefits for their commitment. Shared lunch was an occasion for socialising, meeting and planning, while new arrivals had an opportunity to join existing groups. Shared lunch in case studies 1 and 2 took place once a week. In case study 1, participants were usually expected to give a gold coin donation. In both community gardens, soups or salads were mostly made from self-grown produce, creating a special treat with an educational touch.

5.2.2.2 Volunteer group dynamic

Community gardeners are convinced that group dynamics would change if employed workers entered the volunteer work environment: ‘As long as the group appreciates that the workers do work more and that they
deserve wages for it, it is less likely that a group’s positive interrelations are harmed.’ Yet, all participants should behave in a way that benefits the projects and communities. Conflicts occurred in case study 1 and were discussed and a solution was sought within the community group.

5.2.2.3 New arrivals

New energy was brought in from time to time by new arrivals. This new energy was seen as beneficial for both community garden entities. At the same time, groups’ norms, values and ownership positions were challenged, but these could also be strengthened if clear structures existed. The majority of the people enjoyed the constantly changing nature in the community gardens and houses.

5.2.2.4 Male support wanted

The involvement of male workers was from time to time low but very welcomed in both community garden projects, which considered ways to draw in men (as mainly physical support) through (1) an employment situations (such as with Community Services), (2) specific men’s workgroups (for example, a men’s shed group), (3) providing of attractive tools and tasks (such as building) and (4) the encouragement to hold practical workshops (on topics such as bread baking, constructing a stone oven, organic gardening or art painting).

5.2.2.5 Attraction of community gardeners

Attempts to attract more gardening volunteers to support and maintain the garden sites was a constant theme for both case studies. Where community gardeners sought effective ways to address people and inject them with the desire to grow food locally and communally. Members of the leadership bodies in both case studies mentioned that the nature of voluntarism in New Zealand as having changed; the willingness for it decreased, especially with a high regional employment rate. The new people who did come were mainly attracted by the open garden environments or learned about the gardens, through word of mouth or written notes placed in libraries, stores or mailboxes.

5.2.2.6 Expectations towards participants

All leaders had certain expectations of the community gardeners, staff and volunteer trustees. From time to time in case study 1, these expectations were not fulfilled, especially expectations that were related to issues of responsibility for the physical or intellectual organisation of projects, which others were supposed to take on. In these cases, expectations were either not made explicit enough or appeared inappropriate, which sometimes resulted in a temporary increase in passiveness. Moreover, the need to deliver certain outcomes and fulfil funding contracts increased expectations. Case study 1 was supposed to be a place where people can come to just ‘be’ and get active. Yet, they were also supposed to contribute to the community’s development.
5.2.3 Issues relevant for leadership personalities

5.2.3.1 Dependency of leader personalities

The people in the official role of leadership in both case studies were in agreement that community members should not become dependent on their leaders. However, each leadership body had different degrees of success with preventing dependency. In case study 1, the leadership accepted the tendency towards dependency; whereas in case study 2, the leader resisted this tendency and instead verbally expressed and encouraged the gardeners to take on more personal responsibility in certain cases. The group-centred leadership in case study 2 seemed to support the process of forming a community which represented the local, albeit primarily female, society. In case study 1, a community that attracted all kinds of people, whether disadvantaged or fully capable, its (strong) leader was sometimes confronted with challenging relations to them employed male gardener. A gardener was initially hired to assist the facilitator, the leader, but he tended to depend on the leader in organisational matters, seeking for advice and support and was initially passive.

5.2.3.2 Support for leaders

Leaders required support from other people in the form of governance and supervision, but in case study 1 this support never really arrived. Although the leader had access to assigned supervisors for advice, the benefits gained from the advisory support were limited because the supervisor lacked understanding for the ‘reality’ of specific problems. Nevertheless, the supervisor provided a listening ear. If any (personal) issues occurred in case study 2, it was commonly talked about with whomever was around.

5.2.3.3 Facilitating the project in the future

What will happen after the current leaders leave and new leadership develops? In case study 1, another facilitator will come within the next weeks or months, facilitating the community and taking the project a step further. In case study 2, the natural dynamic of a group tends to keep the group along the right track and if there is need for one, a new ‘formal’ leader will arise.

5.2.4 From a wider perspective

5.2.4.1 Organisational communication

Communication within the organisations was mainly concerned with keeping transparency between different levels and to external bodies. Yet, communication processes were partly challenged due to limited available

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50 The new facilitator started working in April 2009.
time, information asymmetries and the standardised public funding system. The problems with the standardised public funding system arose out of its value system, which was given by politicians and which did not always comply with those of the organisations and their procedures. Furthermore, a lack of communication capabilities, knowledge and skills for understanding and acting within a community garden environment constrained teamwork processes. Relatively rapidly changing environments especially in the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) made it sometimes difficult to follow through with a plan or to engage independently as volunteer.

5.2.4.2 Limited financial sources

The lack of money is basically a challenge but not a reason to give up (the planning of) projects. Under this general philosophy, both garden projects coped differently with limited budgets: A gold-coin donation for lunch was installed in case study 1 to generate a little extra money. Additionally, projects were sometimes split up into several little projects when applying for funding to earn more extra money for each of those. Purchases of new equipment and materials had to be at low prices, which often meant working with low quality tools. In case study 2, when funds were needed for things like new tools, fresh produce from the community garden were sold on the weekly local farmers market. Services rendered were mainly paid with time. Overall, the community garden could rely on the umbrella organisation’s budget, if necessary. This was seen as considerable benefit but was not perceived as a necessity.

5.2.4.3 Community gardens and public funding

Community gardens still rely on public funding, donations and the goodwill of the Christchurch City Council (CCC) as well as the community. The dependency on public funding means the community gardens have to reapply for funding, report how the money received is used. This never ending process of applying and reporting takes up a considerable amount of time. Short-term contracts with funders hinder the self-regulation, long-term development and professional licensing that the community garden organisers are aiming for. Grant money can be used only for designated purposes, which usually haves to be already specified in the application. If the organisation is not able or does not find any convenient purpose to spend the funds on, the money has to be returned. However, short-term contracting seems to stimulate appropriate goal setting and on-going development processes.

The constant need for applying and reporting of outputs constrained the performance of leaders and affected the projects’ development in case study 1, whereas the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) ran at minimal expenses and could benefit from being included in the overall budget of the umbrella organisation Project

51 In cooperation with the Lyttelton Time Bank.
Lyttelton (PL). The gardeners group in this case study appreciated the external administrator’s work but also the opportunity to fundraise weekly at the PL farmers market as funds were needed.

5.2.4.4 Support from the Christchurch City Council

The Christchurch City Council (CCC) initially owned both properties and buildings that the two organisations occupied and leased for a ‘peppercorn rent’. Yet, past leaders of each of the organisations had to go through political processes to ensure the projects’ contingencies for the future. This was particularly complicated because support from the responsible public policy agency fluctuated over past years, mainly due to individuals who were in charge. However, CCC currently provides no direct financial support, but it covers the running costs in case study 1.\(^{52}\) Overall, community gardens are not yet recognised within the public and social sustainability policy as ‘standard facilities’ for communities in Greater Christchurch.\(^{53}\) Especially the participants in case study 1 felt controlled by the neighbouring CCC, while people in the case study 2 experienced limitations set by this public authority, too.

5.2.4.5 Community gardens as innovative and non-institutionalised organisations

This study aims to show that community gardens in New Zealand are innovative community projects. Even though community garden projects in New Zealand have yet received only limited credibility and support by public relations, public funding agencies have experienced no past exploitation of public funds and amateurism in terms of management and accountability of community gardens (Carter & Molisa, 2005). The non-institutionalised character and increased regulations for funding applications within the New Zealand funding system accounts most likely for the organisations’ high reliance on the volunteer sector. Furthermore, these beneficial organisations seem to sometimes be based on differing goals and value systems. Community garden organisations in this study but also others, which were here not dealt with, are hence faced with the challenge of finding appropriate gaps in a standardised public funding system in order to receive necessary public funds. Fundraisers and those who were responsible for the organisations’ budgets in both case studies mentioned the need to be creative in the application process if they wanted to successfully receive funding. Moreover, the application regulations increased for security reasons and outcomes have to be assessed accordingly. This process appears challenging especially for community organisations based on voluntary work due to difficulties in projecting the commitment of volunteers into the future.

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\(^{52}\) Financial support is received indirectly from the CCC through community boards.

\(^{53}\) The CCC has not explicitly formed a public and social sustainability policy but includes relevant aspects in various programs, e.g. the Long Term Council Community Plan or the Greater ChristchurchUrban Development Strategy from 2005.
5.3 Leadership: Personalities, gender and behaviours

The question whether leaders are born or made through experience was posed frequently to me as researcher during the time of data-gathering. Reviewed literature tells that leadership can be learnt. Among that body of study, Freud’s psychoanalysis and Jung’s psychopathology emphasise that a (leader’s) behaviour is heavily influenced by the family of origin (Parry, 2002). Hence, this study attempted to also find out about personal lives and backgrounds that might be related to particular philosophies of leadership personalities.

In both case studies, the leader personalities and their domestic situations influenced motivations and behaviours when performing as leaders of a small group. Nevertheless, whether born or made leaders, it can be concluded that individual personalities of leaders are not to be overestimated. Instead, the study is rather a focus on leadership concepts.

Yet, it was interesting that all relevant female leaders had a higher education, practical horticultural skills and experience in leading groups from their pasts. The leader in case study 1 worked in a men’s prison for several years and also had professional management skills, whereas the coordinator in case study 2 had an academic background in feminist studies and social policy/development. Additionally, the overall leader in case study 2 had a degree in theology and music.

According to this information, personalities for leadership in the two case studies seemed to have high intellectual abilities. They appeared to be attracted by the multidimensional potential of a community garden organisation to successfully bring about change in their communities from a social, environmental and economic point of view. Embracing the ‘big picture’ based on (personal) holistic philosophies, leadership in both case studies had a spiritual note.

With regard to gender roles in certain leadership positions in the community gardens, a general answer is difficult to give. However, all relevant leaders in the study, with exception of the garden project overseer in case study 1, were women. Case study 1 also had two men in leading positions, one as chairperson of the trust board and the other as garden project overseer, but their leadership roles were limited. Both case studies had two men in leadership roles in the past, but reportedly they led the project poorly and hence left the projects after short times.54 The male garden project overseer (and informal leader) at the community garden site in case study 1 took an active leadership role over time. He still needed to be guided by the female overall leader and project facilitator. She supervised him in a personal (informal), yet task-oriented relation that ensured the project’s success. In this context, all leadership personalities focused on being task-focused while

54 The described situations happened several years prior to the fieldwork.
simultaneously fostering interpersonal relations, whether based on the interest in participants’ backgrounds and developments as a ‘talent-spotter’, employer, social worker, practical educator, ‘vibes-watcher’ or friend.

While exploring leaderships’ behaviours, more consistent results can be attained from examining the domestic situations of leaders. The Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) coordinator in case study 2 had two young, home-schooling children and received support from her partner. The LCG emerged as place for practical education for her children and as family gathering place as she sought interpersonal contacts for her family, which had recently moved into the area. This desire and behaviour was also observed in most of the other community gardeners in this group. As the LCG coordinator was a busy mother, she was not able nor willing to take on more ‘formal’ responsibility. To keep a low level of personal responsibility for the LCG and to act in the aim of the Project Lyttelton (PL) vision, she reminded the garden group to share tasks and responsibilities and to interact with each other within the community.

People who were involved in case study 1 experienced an overall leader who clearly kept her family and her job as facilitator separated. Yet from time to time, she had to neglect her private social life for the sake of facilitating the project efficiently. Her ultimate leadership goal in leading was hence to maintain and support the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) community to keep the project going independently from her.

In summary, this section demonstrates that personalities, gender and domestic situations appear to influence motivations and behaviours of leaders in the two case studies. To what extent was hardly determinable, but bearing the awareness of it in mind appears to be important. However, this study focuses more on discovering ‘why’ and ‘how’ certain leader-follower relationships work under certain managements. Hence, the focus in the following sections will return to aspects of affecting certain influences.

### 5.4 Contextual leadership

Leadership can be strictly understood as a relationship constructed out of the reality of existing “followership”. The following section assumes that personalities and personal interrelations among groups of community gardeners influenced each others behaviours, performances and expectations of leaders and followers in both case studies. Yet, leaderships have to be put into the right context since any leadership is constantly influenced by internal and external factors. Questions of ‘where’ and ‘who’ have already been answered, but in order to find out more about leaderships and their present performances, we have to ask, ‘When? Why? and How?’. In the subsections that follow, the focus on major aspects shall give a deeper understanding of emergent leadership constructs in both community garden projects. Leadership will then be categorised as leadership constructs and reflected by small group dynamics (and vice versa).

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55 For more theoretical background see section 2.3.2 Leadership theory in small group organisations.
5.4.1 Leadership belonging in historical context

Leaders in the two case studies revealed different levels of ownership and personal commitment in the organisational settings. This could partly be reflected by the historical developments of the community projects. In fact, the study suggests that it relevant to consider the stage of organisational development in which the leaders entered the projects and further emerged as leaders. This aspect helps to understand present leadership performances.

The leader in case study 1 entered the project at a critical stage nine years after its initial establishment. Her mission was to revive, re-develop and facilitate the project into one that is ‘from people for people’. She knew right from the beginning that her engagement will be limited to a certain time period. Thus, she focused on leading people to lead themselves. Towards this goal, she created specific roles and distributed them among participants. At the same time, she steadily reduced her personal engagement so that the community gardeners could take over ‘their’ projects slowly, over time. While she rejected political engagement, her social life outside the community project was from time to time neglected in the sake of facilitating the office workload. Overall, she often articulated that all committed people were part of this project and have created a sense of ‘community’.

In case study 2, the garden coordinator joined the loosely structured Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) project with the intention of being part for its benefits within the local community at an arbitrary stage in early 2008. She was selected to be garden coordinator only over time out of the group’s need for it. Emphasising that ‘the gardeners are the garden’ and that everybody (who wants to) should equally take on ownership. She has as yet not had to be involved in political activities, but she has had to network within Project Lyttelton (PL) and its projects. The LCG garden was a place where the coordinator’s family could be involved and a wider community could be developed beyond communal gardening. She was aware that the only way that she would be able to also enjoy the garden site privately, would be to share with others the tasks and responsibilities for continuously maintain the garden site.

5.4.2 Leading for the sake of what?

People in both garden projects fundamentally grow organic food to nurture and educate themselves and others, and to raise awareness among them, to build community and to utilise (public) Christchurch City Council (CCC) land. Main aims of community gardens, which initially underlined the projects’ purposes, could be partly traced back to the initial stages and histories of the community gardens, and the motivations of the initiators and leaderships.

Case study 1 strived to stimulate social development in a lower-income area and gave preference to supporting local people who live on the edge of society. Therefore, the goals of LRC involve very basic social
capital building processes. The community garden as a tool for these purposes embraced group work and team building, both in house and garden. Overall, the study shows that this project benefited community gardeners of the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) economically, socially and physically. The leader especially enjoyed developing and working with an interesting community to bring about change, while the community increasingly grew social capital.

Case study 2 is part of the complementary community organisation Project Lyttelton (PL). PL was initiated to build a vibrant, sustainable world locally. The community gardeners in the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) were primarily a group of community-minded people who, as PL members, also shared a common vision. It could be recognised that the LCG reflects already high social capital in and outside the LCG, which shall thus be reinforced and maintained in this garden project. The community garden allowed them to put values of PL into action.

Overall, there are fundamentally different socio-economic and cultural contexts for the two groups. While the LRC operates in a context of ostensibly very low social capital, the LCG, on the other hand, exists in a relatively comfortable environment where standard of living at least, and presumably social capital, is high. If LCG folds it won’t harm the social order of Lyttelton and people can move into new hobbies quite easily. The same is probably not true for LRC.

### 5.4.3 Leaders’ superiors and leadership accountability

Accountability is used to describe (formal) relationships based on external political and organisational scrutiny of actions. Accountability relations of leaders, managers and community gardeners were in this study based on their relationships with involved parties in the organisation’s cultural and historical context. Accountability relations are assumed to be also relevant and worthwhile to explore within the framework of the two case studies in order to understand the leadership constructs. Since leaders could never give participants more freedom than they were given by their superiors.

The study highlights, that both community garden organisations occupy Christchurch City Council (CCC) land and buildings. In other words, project leaders were accountable in first line to the CCC for appropriate use of the provided properties. The Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) leader is accountable to public funding bodies who provide funds to the community and to the umbrella organisation. The Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) coordinator is only accountable to the umbrella organisation’s trust board through periodical reporting and maintaining the organisation’s transparency.
5.4.3.1 Case study 1: Accountability to the umbrella organisation

The umbrella organisation in case study 1 tries to support social community development projects. For this purpose, the umbrella organisation assigned a paid project leader for a limited amount of time to facilitate the desired developments in the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC). The leader facilitated a vision based on the umbrella organisation’s philosophy of community development and its realisation for re-developing the house and garden project. The leader as CD was fully accountable to the umbrella organisation, her employer ‘Anglican Care — Family and Community’. Together with its administrator she was also accountable to public funding bodies. The facilitator provided evidence for social development through reporting about the current community compilation — internally to the umbrella organisation’s supervisor and externally to public funding bodies. The leader attempted primarily to represent the community needs, for example, when reporting to the LRC trust board as a non-member. At times, she managed to appropriately fulfil the public sponsors’ expectations by accomplishing mainly short-term projects. Looking at this, the overall accountability relations in the LRC can be seen as relatively simple.

5.4.3.2 Case study 2: Accountability to the umbrella organisation’s trust board

The Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) coordinator, as its formal leader, was accountable to the Project Lyttelton (PL) umbrella organisation’s trust board. To keep transparency she reported monthly about the community garden development. Since PL members aimed for creating a sustainable community, PL is based on a collective vision that values time as complementary currency system and tries to connect complementary projects to each other. To connect with other projects, the community gardeners actively reported about happenings to other PL members.

However, the community garden was a self-regulated entity and the group reacted independently and could respond to the participating community’s needs. The formal community garden leader reminded the community garden group to maintain the flat and loose organisational structure while they wanted to enhance gardening productivity for a local supply of quality food. Accountability relationships within the community garden group in case study 2, could also be observed to be simple.

5.4.4 Leading to organisational sustainability

The study found that sustainability in community gardens played an essential part in the purpose of their activities. To be relevant as community projects, the organisations have to ensure future sustainability. Both community garden projects focused on various key factors of economic, environmental and social sustainability. Specifically, the main aspects were commonly founded on decentralised, local resource utilisation and management, food production and social development. In other words, the community gardens...
aimed to counteract the forces within the current competitive world and its dependency on globalised (natural) resources.

The project in case study 1 targeted mainly to favour and to concentrate on social development and to encourage people in the wider community to participate in the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC). Processes of collective responsibility and decision-making, empowerment of people, practical education and inclusiveness of the community were of central importance.

Case study 2 was characterised by its complementarity, balancing the need of people and the use of local resource use. As such, it was a project for the local community of Lyttelton, which was based on aspects of intentional community building, decentralisation, global thinking and local acting, open communication, inclusiveness, complementarity and financial self-sufficiency as well as the valuation of time.

5.4.5 It is not all about the money - but it matters…

Deeper exploration of the two projects’ financial situations adds another element for the understanding the situational leadership and management analysis. With respect to financial matters, it could be consistently found in the data that funding was necessary to run a community garden, although not necessarily large amounts of it.

At the same time, entering formal relations with an increasing number and level of public funders could imply constraints for a small community organisation. However, it was commonly perceived as challenging (but still beneficial) to plan in advance. In fact, the facilitator as leader in case study 1 needed to regularly assess future achievements and realistic deliverables, her own capabilities but also the needs of the community. However, it comes down to the longer an informed body or idea is kept going the more pressure there is to institutionalise it and knit it into the formal economy. A relation between the longevity of a group and the need for money is very likely: The longer a group survives the more money matters.

The projects relied mainly on volunteer work. That means that processes of planning in advance were inexact because reliance the voluntary sector is subject to volunteers coming and going as they wish. This has to be regarded in the planning procedure. From this perspective it appears reasonable that only short-term public grants are available to community organisations that are based on voluntarism. On the other hand, the leader of the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) partly complained that having to apply each year for funding constrains development of actual projects. On the other hand, (re-)applying for funding with its requirement of setting goals also offers opportunities for development. The demands of the available grants put time pressure on the organisation and the facilitator (and seemed to increase) to provide certain deliverables at certain times. However, people in case study 1 recognised that money and public funding is necessary to some extent. Available funding ensures that services for other people are provided and so their own needs can
also be satisfied. In any case, applying for funding is a process which can be learnt, explained the LRC project facilitator. In this organisation, knowledge is given further by the leader to a volunteer as an educational process.

In case study 2, sustainability in the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) means to self-sustain, also in terms of financial matters. Since the community garden project ran at low expenses, only minimal funding was needed. Services were paid in time dollars as often as possible, as the group organised itself in terms of labour division. If the need for greater funds arises, the group will have to react and to learn about how to apply successfully for public funding by the Project Lyttelton (PL) administrator, a gardening participant who is willing to contribute her knowledge to the group.

5.4.6 Two organisations, two futures, and visionary leaders

Leaders were in the position of initiating and bringing about change. Leadership was hence essential for giving direction to the processes that led to change in both community gardens. Instead of planning in detail, leadership ideally creates visions and strategies for its group. These describe a community garden’s culture in terms of what it should become over the long-term. At the same time, leadership should articulate a feasible way of achieving goals, and this requires strategic thinking of leaders.

Two aspects appeared to be crucial for the vitality of the two organisations: Firstly, how well the organisations served the interests of essential participants. And secondly, how easily could visions and goals be translated into realistic strategies so that people could identify with them. Overall, aligning one to the other leads to empowerment of people in a way that processes of organising rarely manage to achieve.

The overall broad vision in the Linwood Resource Centre was formulated by the umbrella organisation. The project leader then transformed the broad vision into a specific strategic vision. With the focus centred on people and their development (understood as change), the vision was articulated to the people. The importance of the role of participants in this project was emphasised so that they were encouraged to put the vision into action. At the same time, the vision was based on the leader’s personal passion for ‘taking action’. In this sense, the leader facilitated people and resources for a limited period of time to move towards set short-term goals (development/change of the physical setting) and long-term realisation of visions (developing as an independent community).

In contrast to case study 1, case study 2, the Lyttelton Community Garden project, is part of the overall leading vision of Project Lyttelton (PL). The PL’s broad vision was created by a group during visionary workshops. The overall leader participated in the process as a member with no more authority than the others. The vision outlines aspects of inclusiveness, openness, empowerment and community development and promotes a flat organisation structure. The overall leader announced the vision on a regular bases, inspired
people and therefore motivated them to maintain and share this vision. Overall, everyone aimed for similar targets in this community and it seemed unlikely that a single person’s initiative would be stalled for being opposed to communal action.

5.5 Two community garden projects: Two post-transformational leaderships

Attention has extensively been paid in this research study to contextual factors by following the driving question of ‘What is going on?’ The situational analysis study shows that there was much more to transformational leadership than just behaviours and outcomes. Leader-follower relationships in this study were all based on processes in which activities of community gardeners’ groups were influenced in a multidimensional manner. However, the way in which influence was exerted correlated with the particular concepts of leaderships in both community gardens. Relationships were not achieved through force but in most cases based on voluntarism, embedded in processes of learning from experiences and failures and partly from leadership that was (truly) distributed within teams. Yet, relationships differed in terms of how people worked together in order to bring about substantial or more superficial change.

5.5.1 Case study 1: (Dispersed) leadership approaching team leadership

In case study 1, the leader was a part-time, paid project facilitator. A second person was practical manager (and informal leader) of the community garden at the Linwood Resource Centre. The facilitator as overall visionary leader gave the project direction toward community development and team work. She frequently spread and articulated the big vision to the community. The leader wanted with this behaviour to achieve short-term development and the project’s long-term independence from her as leader. During the process of applying for funding she had also to set goals on her own. Goals often reflected the personalities of volunteers and community gardeners and their desires.

Driven by the project’s philosophy and her personal intellectual capability, she aimed to encourage participation, group decision-making and overall empowerment of people, who were supposed to consequently form an independent group. ‘I lead people to lead themselves’, she explained.

The trust board was supported by the leader as a non-board-member, recently fostering independence from her by taking a growingly passive role as facilitator. Members on the trust board changed, with some coming and some leaving. The leader in the Linwood Resource Centre tracked her success by recording the development of individuals and the community. The development process was generally experienced as slow; Interestingly, however, this process accelerated in the absence of the leader.
The garden project overseer was manager of the on-site gardens and as such took responsibility over time. Most of the time he worked silently in the gardens, was calm and shy in his nature. Yet, he served and directed community gardeners whenever needed. Toward the end of the fieldwork, he started to motivate and educate community gardeners. His encouraging manner was based on his personal passion for gardening more than on formal goals or visions that had been provided by the overall leader. He also rewarded and reminded gardeners to take produce. Overall, he was a central part of the garden group which had developed into a team leadership group during the period of fieldwork: People contributed in different ways to benefit the project but none held ultimate power as leader in the absence of the CD.

One volunteer was the leader of practical applications (finances, chairperson of the trust board), another loyal volunteer was a further, informal (and therefore, invisible) main contact person for the general group of gardening volunteers.

5.5.2 Case study 2: Dispersed leadership and group-centred leadership

One person was perceived by the community gardeners as the overall leader of Project Lyttelton (PL): ‘Project Lyttelton is [the leader]’s wonder baby’. In spite of her vision of a democracy at the grassroots level, the woman accepted that she found herself in an overall leadership role. But instead of holding ultimate responsibility, she was supposed to give direction to the PL community. She continously articulated the importance of having a flat organisational structure to which she wanted to lead people, small and bigger champions, from behind. The Lyttelton Community Garden group is one working group within the community organisation, of which she was appointed chairperson.

According to the performance of the overall leader and the wide vision put in place, the community garden group organised itself without being actively influenced by the overall leader who was paid with time credits. This process of team building led to complementary labour division in this garden. The community garden could especially profit from individuals who were concerned with coordinating the garden site, the overall administration and financial operations of PL and also with public relations and networking, verbal and written promotion as well as being helpers and supporters in the background or with the out-linkage to other (PL) projects. The group emerged over time from its initial leaderless working group to a group with an appointed garden coordinator as the need for self-organisation occurred just shortly before the beginning of the fieldwork.

Unlike case study 1, the study of the LCG assumes that the gardening community’s choice for the particular formal coordinator were based on interpersonal relations, since the group chose the current group leader only when there was need for one. Yet, the garden coordinator explained that she just happened to be there when the need for a coordinator emerged. However, I further assume that community gardeners began to form their own norms and expectations of each other as they maintained their own flat hierarchy. After all, the group set
PL values into action and hence enabled the development (of garden and people) as an innovative organisation and as a symbol for community empowerment. The level of success could be determined by observing the compilation of the participative community as well as by directly asking and listening to the people, as the formal leaders explain.

5.6 Followership perspectives: (Community gardeners) small groups as essence for leadership

Leadership concepts tend to be discussed in the theory as divided into aspects of ‘leaders’-focussed/oriented and ‘followers’-focussed/oriented, whether both constructs are clearly distinct or overlapping. In fact, the act of ‘following’ a leader appeared indeed to be vital to leadership and with it to this study. This has been shown in previous chapters and sections, which highlighted leading and following personalities and correlated processes. What this study aims to show further is that external forces and endless internal factors are considerably influential in determining organisational performance. This leads to recognising that leadership should not be overestimated nor conceptualised within set boundaries, and this applies also to the leader personality itself. But if nothing else, the study acknowledges that the concept of leadership is a permanent phenomenon and social construct in all parts of our human being. In this specific context, leadership was and is present in all parts and levels of the community garden organisations and can be relevant to the success or failure of projects.

Underlying the open-ended being of this analysis, data was gathered in order to explore correlations between organisational leaders (as managers, facilitators or coordinators) and volunteer community gardeners, staff and trust board members. They are not to be seen as strictly separated but all of them contributed to particular leadership constructs in community gardens, in which people are dependent on each other as members of various groups. This recognition allows the focus of this study to shift from aspects on predominantly ‘leading’ toward group dynamics and ‘following’.

What remains to highlight is that leaders in both community gardens attempted deliberately to reduce their own power and to make group members (namely volunteers, trust board members, and staff) as responsible as possible in the particular settings. This process was very challenging in both case studies since it was primarily the leaders who were firmly entangled in management tasks and responsibly organising resources. Accordingly, the study suggests that the levels at which community gardeners moderated the leaders’ influence effects the conclusions that can be drawn about ‘real’ effectiveness of leaders.

Interestingly, both case studies represent different leader-follower relations on different internal levels. The relations depended primarily on individual (performance) characteristics and personalities. On the one end of a continuum, community gardeners were passive recipients of influences. Those were almost neutrally
independent from leaders. At the other end of the dependency continuum, there were some gardeners who were actively constructing or even sharing leadership as a group. This observation could be drawn from the presence of all-dependent, counter-dependent and independent ‘followers’. An introductory sample can be given, which roughly demonstrates the diversity of leader-follower relations in connection with productivity. Subsequent to the sample, relations will be analysed in depth.

5.6.1 Sample: Group dynamics, gardeners and productivity

The levels and types of community gardeners’ engagements were crucial to a project and its delivery of services. The way of their commitments shaped the organisation’s overall performance and perceptions by others. The study shows that committed community gardeners constantly deliver quality services and enhance hence the organisations’ reputation. Also the perceived legitimacy in both community gardens appeared to be highly reliant on volunteers.

Community gardeners in the Linwood Resource Centre performed well generally, although occasionally poorly, in the absence of the project leader. However, their attendance was independent from the leader’s presence on-site. It could be observed that the group organised itself, and new leaders emerged for short times and for specific purposes. The more volunteers were involved on a frequent basis, the more likely it was that they took over some independent coordination by themselves. All volunteers were in independent relations with the overall leader, except the garden project overseer who was paid. The daily on-site garden project overseer as well as a few loyal volunteers tended to productivity and tidiness throughout wintertime. The number of volunteers increased considerably at the beginning of spring.

In case study 2, both attendance and performance of gardeners were overall independent from both the Lyttelton Community Garden coordinator and Project Lyttelton leader. Yet, the dynamic of this group also changed in the absence of the garden coordinator since nobody actively took on the coordinator’s role but they all took on the role together. Gardeners continued to work together, however mostly by each following his/her own favourite gardening activities. Compared to case study 1, this community garden relied only on volunteers. Some were paid with time dollars. The collective gardening activities to contribute to productivity was followed by a socialising time once or twice a week. Productivity and organisation increased in spring.

5.6.2 Case study 1: Followers moderate and substitute leadership

The leading facilitator in the Linwood Resource Centre expressed that she was pushed into the centre of the relations’ network of community gardeners. As evidence of the nature of this ‘situational leadership’, the study points to the fact that a dependency of community gardeners and volunteers on the project facilitator as overall leader was present, but at a low level.
Community gardeners and volunteers tended to join the project in periods of personal crisis or change in their lives. This constatation is basically not necessarily ideal for getting demanding project work done. As people at those times were typically disoriented, there was a greater likelihood to idealise and obey the facilitator as leader. Hence, firstly, leader-follower relations were primarily related to both task-oriented and relationship-oriented activities. Secondly, the community gardeners group noticed another dynamic: The leader’s influence and activities were neutralised or even unnecessary under certain conditions, leading to no change.

The examination of this phenomenon showed that the majority of community gardeners had a low need for both the relationship-building and task-oriented activities of the leader after a certain time after their arrival. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that community gardeners and volunteers had the knowledge and awareness of being followers since the project leader regularly articulated and modelled matters on leadership in front of the assembled community. Moreover, the majority of community gardeners expressed that each individual has the responsibility as an adult to take their lives into their own hands even though they had to deal with personal challenges and struggles in their lives.

The relationships during the fieldwork appeared to result from the increasing routine within the working environment after the initial project re-development phase, which the leader facilitated and they handled together with success. In a further development, most community gardeners started out of self-motivation to cultivate individual plots in addition to maintaining the communal garden areas. Hence, they did not need the leader to express regular appreciation anymore. Overall, community gardeners made the project leader react to their needs – as actual project facilitator - once the (working) environment had been stabilised, and the community had formed a group. The group of active community gardeners had its own dynamic and over time was not actively influenced by the leader’s actions anymore.

5.6.3 Again case study 1: Leadership for social identity

All people of the community gardeners group in the Linwood Resource Centre were volunteers, except the professional gardener. Observing new arrivals, they first came, watched, explored and consequently committed to the group or left without returning. Their commitment was overall dependent on how much they could identify themselves with the leaders, tasks and the group, their aspirations, values and norms.

The study suggests that it was no coincidence that the garden project overseer took on a more active role in the on-site garden while being more passive during the weekly Garden Talks. His passive position could be attributed to the fact that another informal leader emerged out of the group dynamic to lead the Garden Talks. This task was slowly taken over by the person whose values most closely matched those organisation, and who shared the history and a personal interest in the contingency of the project. This volunteer dedicated herself to the project since the early days eleven years ago. She slowly substituted the garden project overseer for the Garden Talk facilitation. In this process, she encouraged relationship building and introduced
processes. In the first part of the meeting, she frequently held ‘who am I and what I am doing here’-rounds. In the second part of the meetings, she directed the group to focus on actual tasks and garden related issues.

In times of conflict or when the need for organising special occasions occurred, the informal group leader as a typical member of the Linwood Resource Centre community took leadership together with the overall project leader. In matters related to the garden, as the group leader, she formed leadership together with the garden project overseer. In other words, she was a catalytic, focal point for the gardening volunteers. She represented the project when she was the intermediary between project leader and on-site garden leader. She carried her role further to the trust board, where she informed other trustees about the garden life. As a logical consequence, I think it is reasonable to assume that the likelihood is high that she will be selected by other members as an overall leader in the near future, as soon as the need for a new leader to take over new tasks emerges.56

5.6.4 Case study 2: Shared leadership

In contrast to the leader-follower dichotomy in case study 1, the community gardeners group of the Lyttelton Community Garden was in fact neither leader-centred nor follower-centred. Despite the nomination of the formal garden coordinator, hierarchical structures were completely rejected. The group saw leadership as a function which can be shared among all willing members, so that basically everybody has the chance to lead. An inclusive and openly communicating structure favoured meeting to discuss and respond to the challenges of a rapidly changing (competitive) global world.

Hence, this organisational structure could be described as a shared leadership: The overall organisation’s leader co-led the Project Lyttelton with the trust board ‘from behind’. She provided the shared vision and direction as well as achievements and effectiveness, inclusion and belongingness, and pride and self-respect to ‘followers’ as an altruistic leader dedicated to the service. In exchange, the group kept focused on visions, goals, gardening and social aspects. People continued to self-direct the garden project as they gave their loyalty and commitments. In other words, they made efforts beyond gardening, had respect for and cooperated with other community gardeners, Project Lyttelton members and the wider community.

Leadership in the Lyttelton Community Garden group is shared and even dispersed, depending on needed skills and resources. The team led its work collectively and complementarily while the people created norms, supported each other and actively maintained the vision and morale of the group. Interestingly, community

56 This speculation was confirmed by other members and (former) project facilitator during the process of writing this study. Yet, the particular volunteer had not taken over the whole project before this theses was complete.
gardeners enthusiastically talked during meetings more about visions, dreams and plans than about the ‘reality’ of things.

Nevertheless, leaders were in the position to initiate and to bring about change. Leadership was hence essential for giving direction to processes which lead to change. As such, the LCG coordinator existed as the formal community garden leader but was silent about it. The group did indeed seem to function effectively in the absence of any hierarchical structure and any actively held perception of followership within the flat structure. In reality, some people, especially new arrivals, disadvantaged and task-related inexperienced people appeared to feel like ‘followers’. Hence, even if leadership and followership were perceived as two parts in a complementary construct, they simply appear not to exist without each other.

5.7 Conclusion: Responsibilities, leaders’ positions and group dynamics

‘Responsibility’ should refer to ‘internalised’ relationships based on morals and ethics, as opposed to accountability. In case study 1, the overall leader’s responsibility was limited to issues on the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) project’s facilitation but she did not hold responsibility for everything. The different sections of the project (house, garden, finances, garden budget, newsletter, trust board etc.) were the responsibility of different people, even though their responsible behaviours were sometimes not fully pronounced as approved by the overall leader yet. The group needed encouragement from ‘above’ over a few months in terms of organisational matters.

Case study 2 was as a project whose responsibility was given to the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) group and was shared among the involved community gardeners. All people who wanted to take over (more) responsibility for the benefit of the LCG and the wider community could take on special roles (coordination, promotion, administration, etc.) without waiting for approval from a higher authority. Open communication and low organisational complexity of the community garden and the umbrella organisation Project Lyttelton (PL) made leadership and management bodies freely accessible.

The overall leader in case study 1 led others to lead themselves, resulting in ‘successful’ development although through slow process. Relatively low organisational complexity enabled volunteers to keep the focus. It appeared that volunteers did not like clear (traditional) organisational structures nor personally engaging in leadership and management matters. The communication of expectations helped improve unsatisfactory situations. Overall, people in both community gardens were more likely to take on responsibility when (1) they were encouraged to do so, (2) others took it on as well, (3) when tasks satisfied personal needs and interests, (4) the level of responsibility appeared manageable, (5) organisational structures were relatively low, and (6) they could identify themselves with the project.
5.8 Group-shared, participative to autocratic: What should community garden leadership be like?

Autocratic behaviour occurred to a low degree in case study 1. The Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) is a project that was recognised by the responsible project leader as one based on slow social development. Ideally, the leader liked to take actions to foster and to see (rapid) development. It appeared to be a pleasure for her to be in charge, also because she is intellectually up to the task. Some organisational decisions had to be made by the leaders single-handedly. Expressing motivation to the group in order to get things moved, once a decision was made, was partly (mis)understood by ‘followers’ as receiving direction. Volunteers, in particular, did not always welcome this form of encouragement. From time to time, conflicts occurred due to differing perception of democratic and autocratic leadership.

The overall leader in case study 1 looked for people who would take on more participative and responsible roles on different levels. However, her personal skills and knowledge caused her to sometimes act in (more or less) autocratic ways. Still, the leader in case study 1 was regrettably aware of the necessity to make final decisions from time to time to the exclusion of other members.

The group in case study 2 expressed its awareness of being a flatly organised group when a shared on-site decision needed to be made. ‘Look’ they said to me, re researcher, ‘that is how we make our decisions.’

In conclusion, organisations which are volunteer based appear to be more attractive to potential volunteers because they show flat organisational structures as opposed to strong, hierarchical leader personalities. Absolute democracy was not yet possible, even in case study 2, the group with shared leadership. Somebody would always (or even should) have a predominant role. ‘Followers’ could be seen instead as actively participating partners of ‘formal’ leaders. However, positions of ‘leaders’ and ‘followers’ were inevitable even in the most democratic relationship, and were insatiably unequal. The more often informal or formal group meetings were held, the less groups and projects were led from the top, and the more the community gardeners and other involved people had the opportunity to participate.

5.9 Summary: People, leaderships, visions and goals

The underlying study represents different facets of leadership and followership. The majority of people in the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) in case study 1 represented a part of society which appeared to suffer from societal disorder, competitiveness and individualism. All this has partly resulted in feelings of disempowerment, helplessness and even confusion among people (of any layer of society which was involved in this study). Yet, the involved community gardeners and volunteers explained that they never forgot about their individual responsibilities in their own (small) worlds. What they needed was a leader who re-injected
these people with enthusiasm and motivation, with faith, joyful power, patience and altruism. Case study 1 is certainly not a matter of ‘changing the world’ but changing a few people’s lives. Indeed, people have discovered the benefits of following their passion and taking action, together or individually, and have developed to a stage in which they carry out what they have learnt, or will do so sometimes in the future.

Members of the community garden in case study 2 represent a part of society that has the ‘freedom’, awareness, knowledge and time to re-think our modern-day lives as individuals in a globalised society, its benefits and constrains. This intentional community in the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) questioned current mainstream lifestyles and wanted to challenge society by ‘thinking out of the box’ and taking action locally. Yet, it needed a strong positive (collected) vision to make a difference in a competitive world. Flat structured leadership concepts reflected the innovative nature of the holistic community project in case study 2. In line with the project’s integrity, people led (themselves) to let traditional phenomena of leadership and followership blur: Better that all gardeners be leaders than none of them. People find their passions, and can hence benefits themselves and others. The project’s authenticity, sustainability and effectiveness has been fostered as being integrated with and out-linked to the local day-to-day life and to other Project Lyttelton (PL) projects. Within the umbrella organisation, the community garden appears to be a rather small but vital vehicle of PL to bring about sustainable change at the grassroots level.
6 CASE STUDY RESULTS IN BROADER CONTEXT

In most (non-profit) organisations and also in the two examined case studies, management complements leadership, and leadership complements management (Jackson & Perry, 2008). What this study shows further is that the particular leadership constructs in these community gardens evoked processes of following. Inversely, ‘followership’ formed leadership as well. However, neither does replaces the other, but both are part of whole organisational phenomena in both community garden organisations. The real challenge appeared to be finding the right balance and keeping it within the complexity of community garden organisations and their interpersonal relations. In other words, (authentic) leadership for change should be combined with effective management, while individual needs of participants should be also considered.

6.1 Real effectiveness of leadership: What is best?

Exploration of both case studies 1 and 2 supported assumptions that these entities’ performances were closely correlated with leadership. In this context, the question of ‘what is best’ evokes automatically a (at least theoretical) discussion about which behaviour of leaders (and followers) was good and what was bad in terms of achieve effective performance of a community garden project. Clearly, it was not only about physical outcomes of the community (garden) project, such as food, but also about non-materialistic aspects, such as social benefits, which appeared to be just as important.

In fact, effectiveness within both of these community garden settings went far beyond the utilitarian effectiveness of a leader. It is about more than transforming day-to-day concerns and resources into a process. It is about giving a project its identity. In other words, whether leadership came from an individual or a group, effectiveness was mostly about the people being led and inspiring them by giving them opportunities to contribute, to develop their personalities and to explore their passions; and then supporting their ideas, and finally taking the participating community to higher levels. Therefore, it was not only about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ behaviour. It appears moreover to be about what is ‘right’ and what is ‘wrong’ for motivating and inspiring people so that they can ‘grow’. To ‘grow’ as an individual is here used as a figurative expression and refers to a process in which participants gain a sense of usefulness for what they do, become confident and lead themselves to bring about the change, which they want.

Interrelations between leaderships and the related communities exceeded the physical organisations’ boundaries in both community gardens. They sometimes supported participants along parts of their ways through life. Maybe the people in case study 1 came to the community garden in a stage of their lives in which they were relatively vulnerable or disoriented. This was not true for the people in case study 2. Whether intentionally or not, leadership articulated a meaning to the people in the community gardens that appeared to affect their lives even outside the community gardens. The leaderships gave a sense of purpose to
most community gardeners, providing encouragement for generating essential components for human living in safe environments: food and social interactions.

Thus, the effectiveness of leadership in this context embraces more than leadership activities and has a personal and spiritual touch. This can be seen in as all leaderships, to one extent or another. Furthermore, the leading personalities integrated ‘their’ projects into their personal lives, passed on their knowledge and experience and were interconnected with a social, local and global way of thinking. They showed courage and emotions, sometimes more and sometimes less, most of all, they showed their passion. Due to active social interactions with ‘followers’, they had to constantly reflect on their own behaviour and their own performance, and to maintain self-awareness.

Overall, ‘real’ effectiveness of leadership did not seem to be limited to just being a good community gardener. They all attempted to create trustworthiness in socially productive and nurturing environments for the people by the people in their communities, either in an altruistic and all-empowering or more autonomous and directive manner. But for all that, aware or not, ‘real’ effectiveness and authentic leadership is not suited for every situation. In the following section, the focus returns to aspects of what make these leaders effective before this study goes on to determine in this context what ‘real’ effectiveness is.

6.2 Leadership constructs nurture effectiveness with skills and qualities

Leadership in the two projects was taken on by different people in different constellations for tasks and responsibilities. The group and personal philosophies in each project underlie the ways in which (active and passive) leaders involved themselves in the process. While dealing with people and other resources, they had to recognise, reflect about and articulate their positions, on different organisational levels and in relation to other participants.

Therefore, effectiveness of leadership in case studies 1 and 2 depend on possessing a wide range of skills (horticultural, management, social/community development, communicational) and qualities that are common to leader personalities: Confidence, integrity, consistence, self-awareness, an ability to keep focused. At the same time, the community garden leadership remained more or less inclusive.

Looking at the leaders in this study, the overall leader of the Linwood Resource Centre (LRC) in case study 1, the overall Project Lyttelton (PL) leader and the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) coordinator (as facilitator of shared leadership) in case study 2, all personalities appeared to be confident and to show self-assurance. In case study 1, the leader was described as ‘able to motivate others’, in case study 2, the coordinator was ‘enthusiastic’.
Integrity helped both leadership to be consistent and to provide values and moral guidance. The LRC leader partly sacrificed her social life for the sake of the organisational well-being. The group (leadership) in case study 2 integrated her personal and social life in the community garden and other Project Lyttelton (PL) projects, going beyond gardening activities.

6.2.1 Strengths and weaknesses

Leaders in case studies 1 and 2 translated their values authentically through metaphorical speaking. However, communication was only one piece of the leadership puzzle. The garden leaders in case studies 1 and 2 actively rewarded volunteers, and the workers’ time was explicitly appreciated. The leader in case study 1 tended from time to time to seek for control over people’s activities and processes, whereas having ‘control’ was actively avoided in case study 2.

The leader in case study 1 facilitated the project’s community especially in conflict situations. However, interpersonal conflicts hardly occurred. During the time of fieldwork, after each of three short time periods of intensive office work, the Linwood Resource Centre leader was absent from work for several days due to illness.

I did not observe any conflict situations in case study 2 during the time of research, and hence could not observe how the group as co-leadership team would have reacted in critical situations. As discussed previously, all people who were engaged in leadership demonstrated high degrees of maturity and consistency. All leaders were aware of personal strengths and challenges (such as being able to function well while being in a powerful position as leader). They were able to bring about change without being ‘bossy’, and they were able to do what is required although they lacked some of the skills needed for financial management.

6.2.2 Seeking for social interactions

The effectiveness of leaders was further underlined by their personal motivation for social interactions. The leader in case study 1 was passionate about developing a community and a positive place for people: ‘I enjoy empowering people ... to work with and for an interesting and diverse community ... I like networking, interacting and building relationships’. The community garden leader in case study 2 explained: ‘I love creating a community – meeting people and doing things together ... to meet people who share thoughts and values ... It’s an educational time for my home schooling kids, too’.

Leaders in case study 1 and 2 explicitly enjoyed leading other people to lead themselves: ‘Everybody has some tiny, wee, little bit to contribute.’; ‘Community development means that all are equally involved in a project’; ‘People organise rather than I form a group’, explained the LRC leader. People from the Lyttelton
Community Garden community said, ‘I like throwing something into the front, seeding something – it is easy to have ideas.’; ‘You put out an intention and it evolves in a process.’; ‘Leadership implies playfulness and creativity’; ‘We really want to have an organic being.’; ‘[We prefer] focusing on community achievements rather than on its difficulties.’

6.2.3 Working as project communities

Open communication and transparency as well as team work was vital for the organisation to function. The facilitator in case study 1 had to make unpopular decisions from time to time, which she regretted having to do but usually group consent was achieved in both case studies.

In case study 1, the leader sometimes expected community development to an extent that could not be fulfilled immediately. Issues of responsibility were discussed with the trust board, the garden project overseer and volunteers. The group was sometimes overwhelmed by the abundance of creative ideas brought in and directed by the leader. For the group in case study 2 it was clear that volunteers could take work on as much as they liked to.

6.2.4 Attempt at a definition: ‘Effective’ leadership

In conclusion, ‘effective’ leadership has to be distinctively defined in terms of the accomplishment of tasks, social development and on the balance between those. With regard to the two case studies, effective leadership in community gardens can be interpreted as a construct that aimed to empower people on different levels by passing appropriate responsibilities and individually considered tasks onto ‘followers’. This behaviour enhanced the participants’ sense of ownership and consequently led to increased personal commitment and productivity.57

Equally important to reflecting one’s own actions, asking oneself and others questions and listening actively as leaders was remaining open for suggestions and new approaches and to take these seriously. Once final decisions were made, either alone or in a group, leaders are supposed to take over to promote and motivate others. In order to build a group’s identity and to enforce effective team work, it appears to be just as important to encourage collective visioning processes as well as to remind followers and each other of visions and values. Overall, the study suggests that the more people from the community were involved in (re-)creating the current vision, the more they could identify themselves with the project and see a reason to contribute their time and energy.

57 Compare community gardeners’ awareness in both case studies (sections 4.2.5.1 and 4.3.5.1 Individual and group aims) to find out about levels of commitment and productivity related to levels of the ownership sense.
6.3 Effectiveness of leaderships in context

This study highlights that the presence of leadership was vital to the community garden entities studied. An effective leadership can lead to long-term success for a community garden. However, in the process of leading there were some more and some less effective ways to achieve contextual success, depending on the unique community garden entities themselves. Overall, leaderships were supposed to take on certain responsibilities, not so much for the projects’ present state and contingency but rather to ‘get things done’. To achieve this, participants need to stay focused as an organisation and group.

6.3.1 Case study 1: Leading in a sustainable manner

Case study 1 is a community project which was once on the verge of closure, until a community development worker was sent ad hoc to facilitate the re-development of the Linwood Resource Centre house and garden. The facilitator set a project specific vision with consideration of the place’s heritage, then set the focus on people as a united community and finally led them to create change. Using the motto ‘leading others to lead themselves’, she encouraged the community to take action themselves by distributing responsibilities all over the group. Yet, her encouragement and ideas led in some cases to increased passiveness.

After finishing the groundwork for the physical project development and being assured of receiving advance funding for another year, the facilitator started to take a back seat over the next several weeks. As she hoped, the absence of her influence forced the groups of the garden community to quickly organise themselves. The participants could consequently built a stronger group identity. Moreover, (new) leaders emerged and took up projects, creating one concept with different facets in a process. Shared responsibilities appeared in the end to help the group not fear mistakes and conflicts.

With all focus on the location, the organisation maintained a flat structure and was still accessible to anyone who was interested. The CD realised the vital vision from the beginning on and arrived successfully at her targeted place as facilitator. She had directed people to create a place where they could develop. Yet, she was dissatisfied to find that her job as facilitator continued to keep her in the office more than she wanted while her actual interest laid in practical education and community interactions. As she herself enjoys the natural dynamic of a project with people coming and leaving, she might soon also leave.58

58 The facilitator did, in fact, leave the Linwood Resource Centre project in April 2009, just a few months after the end of the practical fieldwork for this study.
6.3.2 Case study 2: Collectively enhancing sustainability

The organisation of the Lyttelton Community Garden in case study 2 is subject to a loose and flat structure. What might appear from the outside as 'unorganisation' was in fact a leadership construct which the group itself wanted once the need for becoming organised as a group emerged. Shared group leadership appeared to suit the overall vision of an intentional and innovative community organisation in a fast changing world. However, someone was also appointed as formal garden coordinator. Having several simultaneous leaders led to increased food production, delivery of other gardening related services and closer networking.

Based on the collective vision, collective actions were taken to produce food and, at the same time, develop a community. This approach supported each others interests and the building of social relationships. Networking with other local projects enhanced the quality of Project Lyttelton, the umbrella organisation, and benefited the community garden management. Under its loose structural character, the group seemed to develop successfully as a productive and autonomous group. As a result of open communication, leadership and management bodies remained freely accessible. Furthermore, the group’s identity satisfied the community gardeners’ needs beyond gardening.

6.3.3 Leadership constructs in their contexts

The study saw effective leadership behaviours demonstrated in both garden projects and their specific contexts. The CD and facilitator in case study 1 knew from the very beginning her assignment was limited, and this time she had to assure the project’s successful (re-)development. Hence, she approached her leadership in a way that made people take over the project as soon as possible. It was about building people’s confidence enough so that they could be able to lead the project over time by themselves. At the same time, she had to bring the participants to a desired level of competence as fast as possible. She tried as leader firstly to inspire them to bring about change so that people could experience ‘change’. Secondly, she intended to demonstrate what actually was possible within a short time through group work. To do this, it she had most importantly to react actively to peoples’ needs. The study of this leadership suggests that this effectiveness was based on its focus on social development while also being task-oriented to achieve successful community development.

The other project, the Lyttelton Community Garden (LCG) aimed to develop a resilient Lyttelton community to achieve comprehensive change locally and in all essential areas of their lives beyond gardening (such as energy use, complementary currency, making use of media, etc.). At the same time, they wanted to maintain their loose organisational structure. While case study 1 found effectiveness in focusing on either tasks or social development to support the actual project’s goals, case study 2 did not compromise on either, but instead emphasised the interdependency of the two. Shared visioning and taking action as a group appeared to be as
important as achieving sustained success via cooperation between the overall visionary leadership and the task-oriented community garden leadership.

To be more direct about it, case study 1 is situated in a very poor part of town. Lyttelton, despite, has become in the last few years very middle class compared to its historical working class profile when it was as a focal Port town with its busy harbour; it now increasingly transforms into a renomated middle class community as the workers are affluent. It appears that the members are more reflexive about whether they are inclusive or not but when one class and/or generation takes over from another on multiple levles.

6.4 Grounded theory: Leadership and management in community gardens

Leadership and management are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they overlap frequently,

6.4.1 Why is it important to have leadership in a community garden?

How leaders have led in the past influenced the way in which leaders lead today and in future. From this study, we see the importance of leadership, visionary leaders and leaders as strategic thinkers and pragmatic organisers of community gardens.

This study found that leadership emerged and influenced a small group whenever there seemed a need to it. That means that having a leader was not inevitable but was often helpful to give direction to a project and its people. Autocratic leadership as well as flat, or more team-based, leadership structures could flexibly react to rapidly changing situations on the garden-site when required skills were available. Innovative leadership collaboratively embraced visions and strategies for development processes that would strengthened the integrity of the community projects and new decentralised and independent solutions could be found.

6.4.1.1 Visions and hope

Visionary leadership held the broader vision(s) for its projects and provided its people with a set of values. In both case studies, leadership could partly be seen as a social catalyst. It motivated and inspired people to take action and encouraged group cohesion, and gave people emotional support and orientation. It also reminded people of responsibilities and connected them with external groups and projects. Overall, leadership showed appreciation for the volunteer work as that was vital in most community projects.

Most leaders were also there to bring hope to the small groups. They allowed others to feel useful and taught them how to share land and resources communally. They set rules and enforced the organisation specific values. In the end, leaders represented their own community garden, its ideas and optimally a strong community group.
6.4.1.2 Leadership supports management and vice versa

Every ‘formal’ organiser was a leader to a certain extent, whereas not every leader was a manager. Whether a highly functioning project facilitator, community garden (co-)coordinator or garden project overseer, they all led a group, whether they saw it that way or not. As soon as they started organising people and tasks, their ways of thinking were influenced more by pragmatic considerations than by romantic beliefs. This was even more true when the leadership had a somewhat political touch (necessarily) attached. If the leadership role was more separated from management tasks, leadership became focused on strategic planning rather than on planning the details of what needed to be done.

However, the demand for workers and the supply of time within a community garden differed according to the to-do tasks and the seasons of the year. As most involved people were volunteers, it was not possible to force them to come, work or leave. They could come and go based on their own responsibilities. Hence, somebody had to tell them about current activities and to organise tasks and people on a daily or weekly basis. If one person always carried a heavy workload, that person tended to get frustrated.

Leadership taken by the management body became important also out of a need for having someone with ultimate responsibility and accountability. A clear structure of an organisation that uses public land and funds helped convey values such as respect and responsibility for resources to the community. This contradicted the commonly held assumption that public places are based on anarchical structures.

Leadership could be observed as enhancing its effectiveness by playful exploring while leading to a desired process. Leadership was necessary to balance the dance between leading to flexible structures, leading to organisational performance and bringing others to lead themselves to take action. In conclusion, leadership was most important to direct a community project towards its vision.

6.4.2 How are leadership, management and the community garden entity interrelated?

As discussed earlier, leadership directs a project toward a vision. As already ascertained, leadership personalities, their skills and their domestic situations are crucial in providing a project’s underlying philosophy. Essentially, the study found that the fact that the leadership roles touched multiple branches allowed leaders’ personalities to develop beyond what is typical in ‘conventional’ career. The leaders here, mainly strong women, sought to challenge their own skill set, whether with a focus on the management bodies of projects within a tasked-based structure, on personal leadership capacities with a group-based orientation and/or on horticultural production in particular. Basically, it was found that leaders of community garden projects come with a wide range of skills. This study suggests further that the more comprehensive the set of skills was the less dependent was a leader on others. Hence, independent leadership personalities with high-functioning skills were more likely to make autonomous decisions if the situation allowed. However, a
manager/facilitator with admirable skills was recognised as a leader by others even after only a short time in the group. At the same time, the perception of leadership by community gardeners was also influenced by the situation in which the relation was developed, such as in the communal house, in an office, in the garden, a type of commitment (paid/unpaid), the individual personalities, and so on.

The recognition of that women happen to be overpresented in gardens as participants and leaders are warranted makes the gender aspect unavoidable to be discussed. Is the high presence and level of commitment account for that women take on the “nurturing” social role? Do women dominate leadership and composition of these community garden groups whereas this would not be tru with e.g. ecological estoration projects, where also many male involve themselves? We can assume that this phenomenon is indeed to do with nurturing connotations. It is likely to be linked to a concern for food security which often underlies women’s involvement in subsistence economy work as it has always been in the developing world.\(^{59}\)

Close observation leads furthermore to the conclusion that autonomous and management-focused leadership has its focus more intensively turned to outcomes. Autonomous leadership puts efforts into moving more efficiently towards set goals (and with it often increased productivity) rather than on an actual process. In contrast, the more people were involved in terms of management, the longer the process of finding group consensus seemed to take; but once it was achieved, more people with the same goals could move faster towards realising visions and goals from the ground up. As a result of accomplishing goals and despite liberating gender roles, the study shows that the majority of participants were by productive, female gardeners. Yet, men were at least as essential for successful garden productivity, especially when physical construction, restoring buildings and wood/metal constructions were needed.

6.4.2.1 Expectations towards the participative community in relation to time pressure and financial matters

Time constraints seemed to be an influencing and often limiting factor for garden projects. The study found that time pressure was mostly related to financial matters. Depending on the way it was dealt with, time pressure affected a group’s performance either positively or negatively. Being aware of this, leadership sought for positive development and estimation of ‘quality’ produced in the garden by fostering the acknowledgement of the valuable time that people contributed to the garden. This finding allows to approach that explicit appreciation of ‘time’ loosened the time constraint factor and therefore the monetary pressure on individuals and the group. In terms of management, several leaders suggested that ‘time is what we all have in

\(^{59}\) The gender aspect within community gardens needs definitely to be further investigated because this research work touches the topic only on the surface. “Gender and community gardens” should be a next research topic for students or other researchers.
common’. In fact, this means that they all suffered under the same principle that if too little time was available, there was simply too much work to do.

Leaders’ expectations toward workers and volunteers were part and parcel of community gardens’ cultures. Expectations that were not explicitly expressed could cause conflict or disappointments. It was a matter of fairness to speak out expectations, suggests the result gained from close observations. The data findings further support that expectations could basically be traced back as being subject to the financial situation of the community project. Expectations increased the more an organisation relied on public funding and the higher the amount of money received were.

If a community garden wanted or needed a higher amount of public funding, they would have to spend more time preparing more funding applications. This time is spent in the office instead of the garden which means, as a logical consequence, sacrificing some on-site productivity in terms of physical outcomes and deliverables. Data findings show that receiving more public funding means to committing to fulfilling new goals and to increased report writing. If the facilitator also functioned as an on-site motivator and personal leader, and was then absent because of illness due to the extra office work, (as seemed in case study 1) then applying for funding resulted in productivity loss, at least in the short term. On the other hand, an increased budget meant having more opportunities to reach a wider community and to realise goals faster, for example, by getting support from paid staff or hired tools.

As discussed previously and supported by the data, traditional leadership aligns more closely and pragmatically with the management and focuses on outcomes. In contrast, group-centred leadership concerns itself with the process rather than final deliverables. If leadership and management were not particularly distinct from each other, the project’s budgetary situation influenced the interrelationships, a group’s dynamic and finally the culture of a community garden entity. For example, a (physical) separation of the visionary leadership from the leading management body favoured a vital visioning-process, which otherwise tended otherwise to get compromised by pragmatic thinking that hinders ‘out of the box’ and holistic, big-picture thinking. Yet, producing desired outcomes was important to get funding and to keep a project running and sustained over a longer period of time. Consistent in the data findings was that, overall, managing with less public funding and/or under labour division enabled a community garden to concentrate on the process, acting towards vision rather than focusing predominantly on set outcomes. Still, setting short-term goals help to keep a project going.

An increase of the self-funding section could bring higher independence from public funds and bring new goals and activities. The amount of obligatory paper work would decreases automatically.
6.4.2.2 Sense of ownership and the complexity of an organisation

People from the community gardens developed a sense of ownership and pride when they were able to generating a little income. This income gave them more (financial) freedom to make little decisions about things like the use of resources or the realisation of individual dreams. Furthermore, self-funding provided a real goal and incentive to participants to keep the garden projects active over the whole year. Self-funding through sales of surplus produce was a realistic goal as they always had a surplus during summertime, anyway. In addition, the community gardens had enough space available to grow for a wider community and not only for the active gardeners.

The study indicates that the more complex an organisation got, the more difficult was it to keep organisational transparency on all levels, especially if communication was centred among only a few individuals. Having said this, transparency was assessed as being vital for effective performance at all levels. Otherwise, people, especially volunteers, lost focus, personal interest and sense of commitment. For instance, if the community garden communities were excluded from the process of applying for funding, they were likely to not understand or value public funding, administrative work or the need for management. The same can be said about the complexity of accountability relations of an organisation or rather its leader(s).

Overall, the data findings suggest that the potential for misunderstanding and time needed for clarification on all levels had to be considered, especially with increased institutionalisation and relatively higher complexity. Observations support that losing the overview of projects and the transparency causes deceased personal engagements, at all levels. Hence, this study suggests that having relative simple structures make it easier for people to engage in activities, to gain a sense of belonging, to express their own needs and moreover to explore and contribute their personal passion and creativity.

The observations about quality communication lead to the conclusion that working in teams brings productivity and induces change. Working in pairs as leaders helped especially influence members of the organisation and to fill gaps on different levels. The study showed that complexities of organisations make it improbable for a single leader to reach all people in the organisation to a satisfactory extent. The practice of group work was an advantage for the organisation since emerging team leadership created complementary skill sets, reduced the burden that sat on the formal leader’s shoulders and developed collective power, shared values, visions and an overall identity.

Additional data showed that a community garden seemed to be an innovative and yet uncommon working environment for people, and a welcoming (some more and some less) public place based on trust and voluntarism. This finding indicates that, depending on an organisation’s philosophies and visions, these public spaces could be places for anyone who sought to fulfil his or her personal needs beyond communal gardening.
The findings further support that issues of exploitation were linked with the socio-physical environment and among all, a group’s set of values and trustworthiness.

6.4.3 Leadership affects small group dynamics

Research findings suggest that leadership in a community garden influenced small groups of community gardeners, internal and external interrelations and whole group dynamics. For example, in case study 1, the leadership personalities with their particular characteristics, skills and motivations were reflected into how a community garden or community project with garden operated as an entity. The way in which people were led influenced how community gardeners interacted with each other. This indicated also to what extent their group identity was developed. Data findings show that small groups and individuals in groups developed either dependent, independent and/or interdependent relationships to leadership.

6.4.3.1 Leaderships actively communicate with small groups

It is further assumed that the way in which leaders communicate leadership always impacts the level of leadership–followership dependency. In this study, communication of leadership considers: (1) issues of ownership of and belonging to a small group, (2) the provision of a set of values and visions, (3) the direction toward visions, (4) verbal communication, (5) processes of rewarding and (6) inclusiveness and transparency. The result of these aspects is that small group dynamics varied with their level and type of dependency on leadership, even if the leader was not necessarily an obvious or active part of a group. Moreover, the fact whether the leadership determines that its followers be personally dependent and/or task-related also influenced small group dynamics. Once again, the personalities of the leaders’ were believed to be a particularly important factor for a group dynamic’s processes.

Another finding indicates that a leader in a community garden received most acceptance from the group if s/he was involved as ‘one of the common group members’, that is, as an active gardener. A sense of common identity in a group appears to be lower when the leading person is too separated in activities, time investment or outlook. Community gardeners tended to have no understanding for office work even though this task was very time consuming and essential. On the other hand, a leader who worked primarily in the office was not as accepted as one who would also work simultaneously in the garden. However, if a leader spent much more time in the community garden, the group tended to take only limited ownership because it seemed to them that somebody was regulating the business anyway. Thus, it is once more about finding the balance of tasks and time allocation. Spending too little time in the garden as a leader was problematic, too. Furthermore, the groups appeared to most easily integrate those leaders who only occasionally wore professional working clothes and suits. Overall, the leaders’ appearance, activities and the amount of spent time depended on activities of the day (for example, visiting schools or other meetings) as well as on their personality and their perception of their role as leader and their level of commitment.
6.4.3.2 The leader’s vision for the group

Visions gave the overall direction to a project, its philosophies, activities and creation processes on the physical garden sites as well as those for off-site projects. Hence, gathered data indicates further that the leaderships’ visions determined the uniqueness of the groups’ compositions and dynamics. The study found that a group’s effectiveness and positive group dynamics were the result of how well the visions served the leadership body, the organisation and its ‘followers’. In fact, leaders needed their ‘followers’. They not only supported an organisation with their efforts but also allowed leaders also to pass on their knowledge and to live a particular philosophy (as group leader). As such, it was followers who made up the entity in the end. Nevertheless, people who developed into the role of a leader were most likely more productive and committed as they discovered their passion and/or could follow their personal interests.

There is consistent theme in the data findings that a leader’s perception of personal ownership for his/her organisation was reflected in the group dynamic: An autonomous leader who felt high personal ownership, in comparison to the other members of the community, held a high level of control. This could hinder the development of confidence and hence foster a dependency of people on the leader. In other words, this approach suggests that once a leader was perceived by others as ‘owner’, leader-follower relationships and remained over time. In contrast, when an appointed leader articulated a low level of individual ownership, this flattened any hierarchical structure emerged and potentially heightened the sense for group ownership. Thus, it appears that flat structures pervasively favoured positive group dynamics and their productivity, independently from the leaders’ presence. Findings also support that people who were perceived as influential were called upon to lead others. Yet, in the absence of a formal leader, groups (that is minimum two people) started to self-organise, most commonly over time sought a new leader in the emergent processes.

6.4.3.3 Leaders as final decision-maker

The study found further that leadership or rather a leader, on whom a situation or group was particularly dependent, had to from time to time step to the front to show a group where to go. Yet, the study also showed that autonomous decision-making sometimes hindered team development. Likewise, frequent input of new ideas and predominating implementation of leader’s ideas resulted in discouraged passiveness or even contra-productivity in the rest of the group, and in a consequence, nothing happened at all. However, participants admit and findings support that absolute democracy was not possible. In any small group, a differentiation between leaders and ‘followers’ could be observed, unless it was perhaps the most democratic relationship in form of an authentic personal friendship between two people. I would even suggest that both leader and ‘follower’ positions are inevitable and in a way necessarily distinctive to justify democratic leadership. This

60 Read the example in section 5.6.1 Sample: Group dynamics, community gardeners and productivity.
assumption is limited to the condition that a small group is not a closed system and not isolated from wider social interactions.

6.4.3.4 Sovereignty of leadership

The study’s findings give no concrete answer to the question of how important it is for participants to know what kind of leadership behaviour is demonstrated by their leadership personalities. What can be suggested, however, instead is that the intellectual capability of the members does influence the performance of leadership, depending on the perception of 'leaders' and 'followers' of each other. Disadvantaged people who struggled with their lives, lived on the edge of society or were mentally or physically impaired tended to seek guidance.

Consistent in the data findings on the aspect of the groups’ constellations is that the more people were intellectually capable, self-aware and showed responsible behaviour, the more group-centred an organisational body became. However, the higher the intellectual level of the volunteers, the less attractive a leader-centred organisation appeared to them. People who were perceived themselves as requiring guidance were attracted by directing leaders. Overall, this study acknowledges that basically all people either wanted to be led or to (co)lead. Some of them feared and some others sought responsibility and leadership. Some of them were satisfied to be led and to follow, whereas others found satisfaction in influencing, guiding, empowering or directing people.

Giving credit to the previous approach and as discussed earlier in this study, it means that whether people wanted to be led or to lead depended to a great extent on the behaviours, and perceptions of others, both as leaders and followers. A person’s choice to be a ‘follower’ was frequently influenced by their personalities grounded in former experiences. On the other hand, it then presented the question whether any leadership construct actively excluded people. Clearly, people who liked to lead and to work independently were likely to develop critical relationships with an autonomous leader. Opposing, a ‘want-to-be-led’ person felt uncomfortable in an environment in which contributing to group leadership, was expected.

Does that mean that team leadership in case study 2 excluded from the group people whose capability for self-leadership is constrained for some reason? In answer to this question, data findings support that this team leadership was founded on a philosophy of ‘organic being’, which considered it important to let people take on as much or little of group leadership as they wanted. It was then the role of leadership to enable the people to develop. Still, one aspect concerned with the exclusion of people remains: What if people do not share the same positive vision such as the one of the intentional community in case study 2? This question will not be examined further but gives us food for thought.
6.4.3.5 Leaders direct and maintain groups (of volunteers)

All participants apart from a few exceptions\(^{61}\) contributed to the organisations’ activities as volunteers. Volunteers give their time free of charge to meet own needs, and so they chose a working environment which enabled them to meet their own needs. Once they enter a selected community project, they stay as long as they get something out of it, in other words, as long as they could identify themselves with the group and its leaders.

The study’s findings prove that admired leaders stood out either for to their capability of a wide range of skills, their empathic capacity or their contextual in-depth knowledge of a particular aspect such as gardening in a community garden. Leaders were perceived as having skills which helped them meet their own needs, goals and aims. Leadership was hence perceived as being held by ‘great’ people\(^{62}\). Yet, one gardener who had still the potential of becoming a champion once he started sharing his knowledge with others rejected taking a leadership role because of his shy nature. However, as people become aware that someone has a lot of valuable knowledge, a process emerged in which that person gains confidence and, intentionally or not, becomes a leader. This study shows also that a person’s motivation manifested in (mental and physical) engagement with an increasing sense of belonging to a group and to the community garden. As a result, productivity tended to increase (in terms of contributing to a community’s benefit) and, as just described, personal development took place, too.

Interestingly, this study indicates that the more a project was led in a group-centred manner, the more female participants assembled for gardening and socialising activities. Yet, that is not a generalisable explanation for this observation by any means. What was observed was that men, who came to community gardens to work, seemed to prefer obeying to obey to and following especially female leaders. But if needed, they could also act independently. However, it is not the intention here to make a gender study about this.

6.4.3.6 Leadership involvement in this research

The participative involvement of leadership personalities in this research reflected several findings: Firstly, the more active the involvement of a leader was, the higher was a person’s self-perception as (part of) leadership, and vice versa. Secondly, the more passively I, as the action researcher acted the more did the leaders’ most prevalent and deepest concerns become obvious. This process led not only disclosure of the

\(^{61}\) Exemptions were the two formal paid leaders (facilitator in case study2), two supporters as secretaries (in case studies 1 and 2) and one paid on-site gardeners (in case study 1). Two more formal leaders in case study 2 were paid with time dollars.

\(^{62}\) “Great” people are to understand as in “nice” and moreover as in “impressive and capable”.
persons’ level of self-confidence but also of self-valuations of personal skills and qualities. Thirdly, conversations which were most frequently and analytically centred on financial matters, resources management and human-task-alignments added a pragmatic note to leadership.

Dialogues often centred around a community’s people, their roles in context of the project and also in their families and day-to-day events. These tended to identify a leader in a social development/community leadership function because its priority set on people. Finally, conversations about lifestyle values, dreams, visions and ideas, connections to other community projects reflected the individuals’ sense of being part of an intentional, value-based group.

Finally, this study draws the conclusion that ‘followership’ complemented leadership and leadership complemented ‘followership’, these created a whole dynamic. Sometimes, this dynamic appeared to be a result of external and internal factors; however, looking behind the façades of both leadership and ‘followership’ revealed its true nature.

6.5 Conclusion

6.5.1 The ideal community garden does not exist!?

Current community gardens in Christchurch can be seen as practical examples of radical green politics (Pauling, 2001). They all seem to be making great use of the land and benefiting many different people in a lot of ways (Watson, 2006). Given the recent recovery of community gardens as (part of) autonomous organisations, it is the common goodwill of leading and participating people that needs to be highlighted first and foremost. Both organisations with their leaderships and management bodies contributed to enhancing the qualities of other peoples’ lives, their neighbourhoods and underutilised communal land. Yet, both case studies focused on somewhat different aspects of developing land and people. These circumstances made up the uniqueness of each community project: The way they operated attracted different personalities of different ages, social backgrounds and ethnicities. They followed diverse aims and philosophies; some participated to learn exchange skills and knowledge, others to enjoy growing food together, others to meet and interact with their neighbours.

6.5.1.1 Community gardens as complementary lifestyle

Community gardens embrace aspects of alternative lifestyles and have the potential to react according to peoples’ needs in a world driven by capitalism. It was not only that growing organic (healthy) food meant that community garden members did not have to purchase food from supermarkets. Community gardens also have the potential to implement complementary currency systems based on the value of time and work (in return
for vegetables). The majority of the participants were volunteers. Hence, they often share the same ‘different way of thinking’. In other words, a paradigm shift was going on as seen by, for example, time being valued or open public space being given by the CCC for a peppercorn rent, land being used as communal property or kitchen waste being considered a treasure.

Community gardens, either as an autonomous organisation or part of an umbrella organisation, offer various active or passive activities for community gardeners, other groups and the wider community to participate in. This study shows that the best offer of either organisation was not about the quantity but foremost about the quality of services which they provided; even though this ‘quality’ was difficult to define. Yet, it can definitely be said that the people involved had personally identified with their projects to some extent and this affected how they perceived development: the development of visions, ideas, people, land and work.

The study’s findings suggest that development which focused on its processes (including people) as well as on its outcomes became a way of life. The balance of it involves aspects of ‘effective’ leadership and its spirituality. Focusing predominantly on final outcomes led to efficient physical productivity. High rated productivity was likely to happen under a pragmatic organisation in a rather brisk and sometimes even impersonal manner, since ‘things’ had to be done. This was probably not as effective in a long-term view of community development but more efficient in terms of accomplishing short-term goals.

6.5.1.2 Available land for development is essential

Community gardens seem to be characterised by constant change. Adding to this observation, the study suggests that the more land was free to be potentially developed, the more a group was characterised as being a dynamic and interconnected entity. In other words, the development of community gardeners and volunteers increased with the land and organisational sections which were available to be freely developed. This could be seen as the result of the on-going necessity to create, to plan, to collect and to further develop ideas which are based on visions. Yet, this still does not indicate what the best practice for an inclusive process is.

6.5.1.3 Strong group identity

A strong group identity was found to be observable in projects whose groups shared leadership, whose members had high self-confidence and/or the project was an integrated part of most of the gardeners’ lives. If the main focus was put on processes that combined communal gardening, group work and creative socialising gatherings, community gardeners and their families were encouraged to meet new people and to become more integrated in the community. Shared meals from self-grown and self-made produce were essential for these processes. Additionally, the longer a group survives the higher is the social cohesion, the more projects can be managed while at the same time more money (or other form of exchange) is necessary.
6.5.1.4 High productivity

The study found also that the total number of involved community gardeners did not necessarily reflect a community garden’s productivity. Instead, high productivity was a result of peoples’ driving motivations and with it the way people work, alone and together. Even the community garden that received input for the shortest amount of time was able produce surplus food. From my own experimental behaviour and close observations, I found that shared visionary processes were essential for creating a group identity and a meaning for a project that people, as a group, could focus on. People who enter a community garden during a personal crisis or change of life are hardly ideal for a group for getting demanding project work done. Higher productivity can be achieved if people from outside of a core group run initiatives under calm and cool-headed circumstances.

6.5.1.5 High level of personal commitment

Clearly, the more a vision serves people and/or a whole group, the more personal commitment towards realisation could be expected and was indeed observed. Yet, to have a strong and inclusive vision does not necessarily imply productivity because it still needs action to bring about change, action is needed. Developing ideas and imagining what ‘it should be like’ was important. Yet, after that, people need to take on responsibility to lead themselves and others to realising the visions and ideas. Certainly, romanticised gardeners and ideological dreamers will not turn a community garden into a productive garden site the way pragmatic leaders might do. Yet, the main community garden leader might choose include some idealistic aspects within a holistic scheme even at the compromise of actual productivity. A skilled leader who took action and directed people could probably ensure productivity in a more effective manner; however, a process’s effectiveness and with it the success of a community garden depended once again on the context, the people, their needs, tasks, timeframes, visions, goals, transparent communication and other factors.

Offering individual plots was partly perceived by communal gardening volunteers as inappropriate to the concept of community. Interestingly, however, the observation throughout the fieldwork showed that individual plots attracted more people. With the increased number of participants, these community gardens could be characterised as fastest when compared to those with only communal plots.

The study shows further that the availability of (rent free) individual plots seemed to encourage people’s desire to learn and to immediately apply their newly gathered knowledge. Moreover, individual cultivation appeared to enhance the sense of personal belonging. At the same time, some kind of formal or informal arrangement had to be made to consider the involvement of every leaser of a plot in communal gardening activities. So another suggestion for a sustainable solution for growing food might be to give people enough space to grow individually within communal plots. Personal commitments of passionate and skilled gardeners
appeared likely to decrease, if people were given no opportunity to contribute to a garden’s yearly growing plan.

6.5.1.6  Offer of diverse activities for the community

Workshops within the gardening site turned out to be important to attract a wider community, especially during wintertime. When outdoor-gardening activities were limited, indoor activities took place in the community buildings. These were just as vital for serving community gardeners’ needs beyond gardening. Having a few self-reliant or loyal community gardeners was important to free up the organisational body to concentrate on additional tasks, e.g. planning additional projects, financial services, communicational tasks, etc.

Overall, different sections of these garden projects needed different levels of attention at different times. It can be observed that a garden site that consistently develops throughout several years comes to a stage when the physical part of the project has stabilised. Yet, the accessibility of land, which was free to develop, was essential in both case studies as it kept the garden sites and people developing in a creative and productive manner.

6.5.1.7  Lower complexity for easier access

A community garden which experienced frequent changes within the group tended to maintain less complex organisational structures, in which groups showed higher levels of group development. These observations imply that firstly, new energy brought into the gardens by newcomers stimulates group dynamic processes and is hence essential for an organisation’s well-being. Secondly, the more people participate, the higher the potential for physical but also mental, intellectual and spiritual development of the project and its people and groups can be. Yet, such circumstances, especially with increasing numbers of gardeners, make it more difficult for the organisational body to keep transparency, inclusiveness, the appropriate task alignment and codes of conducts at its best possible. However, for independent volunteers, participation seemed to be simplest in flatly structured projects.

6.5.1.8  ‘Best’ practice of leadership and management

The overall conclusion of this study about what is best in community gardens was that this quality was most obviously affected by leadership and its best practices as integrated with a project’s management. Generally, it was observed that the higher the self-awareness of a leadership body was, the higher was its self-control. Control of the factors that influenced a group and organisational performance also increased. These could be used to best suit the purpose of a leader, a group, an organisation and/or a community and its people. The findings detected further that self-awareness (of leadership as part of a group) was likely to be higher when
the people who were involved in leadership processes had a higher level of academic training. As discussed previously and supported by the data gathered through interviews and observations, the uniqueness and dynamic of a community garden project were considerably influenced by the skills, values and personal motivations of its members.

Findings show clearly that best leadership and management cannot be explicitly defined since the both entities in the two case studies differ in so many aspects: the personalities, values, motivations, skills, structural organisation, visions and goals, physical environment, aspects of sustainability, the understanding of effectiveness and so forth. Rather than a best leadership model emerging from the research data, the research showed only that, based on the qualities, skills and interests of its leaders, a community garden project could run effectively in various ways for the sake of reaching towards a (shared) set of visions and goals. That is, this study concludes that the characteristics and performance of the community gardens were most significantly the result of the skills of their leadership in the following areas: (1) appropriate resource management, (2) acquiring public funding, (3) community leadership in practice and empowerment of people, (4) putting visions into actions, (5) maintaining and stimulating group dynamics, and all equally but different (6) application, education and sharing of horticultural knowledge and (7) project development on a community level.

6.6 Key principals that emerge from the study

Community gardens want to create participative environments. To this end, it is important to keep organisational structures as simple as possible. Increasing organisational complexity is likely to result in dependency on single individuals. Likewise, having large amounts of public funding leads to dependency on sponsors. Dependency risks that a project is forced into directions that turns its focus away from its initial vision and fundamental purpose.

6.6.1 Appropriate structure:

A loose group structure makes it easier for newcomers to quickly become actively involved. On the other hand, flat structures can lead to chaotic circumstances if the whole group does not support this structure and does not actively contribute.

6.6.2 Multiple levels of communication:

Open communication on all organisational levels helps to keep transparency, favours inclusiveness and hence contributes to a project’s overall sustainability. Involved people can contribute more easily on all levels. Overall, keen gardeners and those who want to become so seem to be more attracted to projects which are already established than those where a lot of groundwork is waiting to be done. Using email as a
communication media appears to be helpful. Yet, communicating via internet can end up increasing the complexity of an organisation or lead to misunderstandings. It also automatically requires that members have regular internet access, which is not necessarily the case and may disadvantage some. The computerisation of the financial accounting has turned out as being helpful as setting up a detailed database has made budgeting and funding easier.

6.6.3 Financial pragmatism:

To receive (public) funding goes hand in hand with goal setting, monitoring and reporting to sponsors. Thus, it requires planning expected processes and outcomes in advance. To support this process, it has to be ensured that enough people, volunteers and garden workers are available. Resources must be carefully organised and the amounts of money must be distributed according to an appropriate context of a community garden project.

The dependency on public money brings constraints and (time) pressure as the focus is forced to be shifted away from the project’s preference for informal structures and openness towards community involvement. In any case, the utilisation of public funding has to happen in a responsible way so that the community can gain and see direct benefits coming back from the organisation into the community.

The less money is spent in the community garden project, the less urgent is the need to receive public funding, and consequently to fulfil certain requirements such as accomplishing certain goals or proving certain results. Yet, operating with low expenses definitely restricts the project’s frame of realisations, but it also boosts creative thinking of participants. Moreover, not being focused on the financial aspect makes it easier to focus on the actual purpose of the community garden project instead.

6.6.4 Maintaining team ethos:

Any community project is supposed to envision and realise the power of a group. Team building and teamwork are hence vital for a community project. People in a community garden project are more likely to contribute more and work more efficiently if they feel a sense of ownership and have some freedom to act independently as opposed to only having follow strict instructions.

In any case, teamwork among community gardeners favours a group learning process and as such is dynamic. Even though organising within a group can require more time and energy than when people just work autonomously, working as teams is worthwhile and beneficial over the long-term as leads to more sustainability results. Sustainable development is a slow process, however. Autonomous decision-making is faster and easier but most likely not as effective for the community in the long run because when people’s voices cannot all be heard or are not be regarded. This has a negative effect on the involvement of the wider community.
6.6.5 Political pragmatics

When it comes to the necessity to be politically active, working as a group is an effective approach because a group has more power than an individual. Any group brings with it their combined abilities through exchanging information, skills and experiences, but a volunteer group also brings its team spirit. Moreover, because political processes are often long-lasting and energy-consuming, working together keeps the group motivated to continue even during times when little progress seems to be happening and can avoid the complete exhaustion, mental as well as physical, of individuals over time.

6.6.6 Maintaining social cohesion:

Finally, teamwork is important for all members of a community garden, but especially to provide other people on the same level within the organisational environment emotional and advisory support, particularly especially in conflict situations.

Shared lunch appears to be an important aspect of community development in the community gardens. Self-grown food is a direct benefit and reward for the community gardeners and their work. Home-made food was especially appreciated and inspired other people in the group (sometimes even to cook too) and increases social cohesion.

6.6.7 Faith in small changes:

Never think that you cannot change anything! The two case studies proved to be community organisations with relevance to various people who as a consequence brought about change. If someone starts something, another will follow, and the at least two people can already share the same passion. Enthusiasm is contagious and can affect almost anybody. I can confirm this because I experienced it during my time of fieldwork within the settings of the two case studies. In the community garden, a variety of people came together and personal development could be observed in every single case, even within a slow process.

The wider range of activities and types of involvements are offered, the more varied are the people who make up the organisation’s community. The more different types of people come in, the more varied skills are brought in. The more skills are embraced by an organisational body, the better.

6.6.8 Fellow travellers:

One group of participants in the community gardens, who have not been discussed, but are worth mentioning now are the cats that made their homes in the garden sites. Cats enriched the environment in both case studies. They benefited people as socialising catalysts and the physical garden sites as bird and mice hunters and
hence as seed and crop protectors. Even though the cats were only attracted from the neighbourhood, they seemed to enjoy the particular communal environments. Yet aspects on their financial health care and food supply need to be clarified in the forefront within the group.

6.7 Summary

The resurgence of community gardens is a respond to current mainstream society and the on-going process of urbanisation. Although an old idea, community gardens are a relatively new occurrence in urban areas throughout the world, and have been for a while in New Zealand. They differ from conventional parks because they are collectively cultivated, managed and maintained public urban places and available natural resources. Participants have the opportunity to utilise public land and to supply themselves with fresh food but moreover to learn and build social contacts within their neighbourhoods. The two case studies were characterised by a range of diverse activities, in which the community could participate.

Issues of leadership were addressed in this study by critically analysing two different community garden projects and with it two different constructs of leadership and followership. The communities, their management bodies as well as the physical garden entities were observed and examined and the experiences there were reviewed. As a result of the research process it was finally possible to highlight the crucial but important role of leadership in democratically-led garden projects which aim for empowerment and betterment on a local community level.

The study underlines that ‘real’ effectiveness of a leader correlates with the context and culture of every community garden. The study also shows that it is important to establish each community garden in a way that makes it appropriate and attractive for its users. While focusing on a central leading figure can result in fast change and productivity, this might not be the case in a long-term perspective. In any case, leadership and followership are two parts of one phenomenon. The dance between leading and following as well as the balance between leadership and management determines effectiveness and success. Through their interactions, the two community garden organisations of this study are contributing to the benefit of the local community and to sustainable urban development. Hence, only if the needs of the community are met, can the projects gain relevancy as such. It turned out to be helpful in most cases if these processes are directed by a leading body, whether directly in front or from the background.

Dispersed leadership can be seen as a theoretical and practical response to the widespread use of empowerment strategies. Both community garden organisations focus intensively on the followers, who can use their abilities to lead themselves and others by liberating leadership. The theory of group-centred leadership was verified in case study 2. It was about a collective entity, and not so much what individuals do. Group awareness resulted in an emergence of a leadership that developed according to the needs of the group. Overall, the role of the formal community garden coordinator was reduced.
In summary, it can be gathered from the study that, in all cases, leadership actively exerts influence on a community garden’s entity, and always effects the group of community gardeners. In the end, leadership appears to hold the ultimate power to attract and therefore to determine the composition of people, activities and their underlying visions in a community garden. However, leadership cannot exist and influence without followership, as much as leadership cannot be shared without the will of the community it serves.

6.8 This research

This study has attempted to answer the questions that originally sparked this research: What are the roles of leadership and management in a community garden? How do different leadership concepts influence the network of interrelations at different levels? Why is it important that leadership in community garden projects is ‘effective’?

This research indicated that leadership and management are somewhat complementary and (more or less) distinctive parts of action taken by organisations rather than separated ones: Managers do things right, while leaders do the right things. In fact, this study shows that both management and leadership are necessary for success. While management organises resources and staff for accomplishing certain requirements, leadership is generally needed to align people, motivating and inspiring them. Leadership keeps people moving in the right direction while allowing them to satisfy their own basic human needs: enjoying social interactions and growing/producing food. Leadership constructs in the community garden organisations consist mostly of the people who are in charge for some task. As such, they influence the participants and activities so that people put efforts towards goal setting and goal achievement. In other words, leadership is held by those people who define the organisational reality through the articulation of a vision and who further create strategies to realize this vision.

To be able to answer the questions presented above, using a combination of action research and grounded theory was an advantage. It allowed me, as the researcher, to examine two case studies without having a clear set of expected outcomes but rather to base my results and newly gathered knowledge directly in participants’ experiences. This was necessary for a few reasons: Firstly, community gardens in New Zealand have not yet been the subject of any comparable research, and especially not with the focus on leadership and management. Secondly, community gardens can be based on different organisational structures. Thirdly, the social settings in both projects sometimes differed considerably and formed the basis for the projects’ existences, their leadership constructs, management bodies and, especially, group dynamics. Grounded theory allowed me to clarify and to consider these aspects within a single research.

However, this research does not reflect the strictest action research and grounded theory nor does it present a new, great theory. Rather, data from the two case studies were put together and checked with pre-existing
theories and the initial research concept. However, findings were matched to the reality of their community garden entities and an attempt was made to understand the complexity of leadership, even in small organisations.

6.9 Final comment

Community gardens are mainly relevant for the gardeners but increasingly also for the wider community. The two case studies showed that there are different ways of approaching a community garden entity as a community project. The underlying case studies 1 and 2 differ between each other, sometimes considerably, in terms of leading, managing and groups of participants.63

This study has not addressed the questions of whether it is essential nor how important it really is for a group to recognise what kind of leadership behaviour is conducted by the leading personalities. Yet, it can be assumed that if someone started to question leading constructs, certain relationships between leadership personalities and a group (the 'followers') would become stressed. The findings present the following observations as a possible answer to this issue: Non-hierarchical leadership constructs are effective as long as the whole group is involved in group processes and participants benefit from it. Here, the awareness of leading together is an essential part in such a community. On the other hand, there is no obvious reason why ‘followers’ would question their roles, and even less reason for leaders to question their way of leading as long as all are treated well and everybody can benefit. With it, this research appears to be not useful for a certain range of people. However, it should be noted that even the most passive ‘follower’ as participant and contributor should not be underestimated since everybody has a place within a group, can get organised and take own responsibility, if needed!

6.10 Limitations of this study

People in leadership are sometimes not aware of how they practice leadership. Reviewing the research process, prepared interviews were not necessarily the best tools to find out about relations between leadership and followership. Instead conducting behaviour oriented interviews to see what they were most concerned about brought more insight, and this required spontaneous action, attentive listening and building connections to the actual topic of this research, for example conversations had to be allowed to flow naturally.

Especially in the initial phase of the fieldwork it was necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of the entities, its people and general dynamics. From time to time, misunderstandings occurred due to a lack of

63 The differentiation of the two case studies as well as the consideration of ’what is best’ is discussed in the previous sections of this chapter.
understanding of complex structures, my practical inexperience in terms of management and leadership as well as cultural differences and because English is not my mother tongue.

The timeframe for the fieldwork was limited, which meant that I entered the projects at a random stage in their development and after several months had to leave again at another random stage of the projects. However, it seems that there is never a ‘best’ moment to enter or leave the practical sites, since these projects exist and successfully continued to further develop, and matters rapidly changed after my leaving.

During the process of data gathering as well as writing, I, as researcher, became more aware that it is important to focus on the essential processes and topics rather than on trying for completeness or a case study’s relevance over time. Naturally, even the first day after this fieldwork ended, things continued to change — without me knowing. Facts and data are history whereas the newly gained knowledge can contribute to a deeper knowledge or actions of people who are interested in community gardens.

The social character of this research study was from time to time difficult for some single participants. A few behaved that I became involved for emotional reasons rather than as an objective observer due to my passion for people, gardening and taking action. This may be true but did not prevent me from achieving critical distance in my view.

6.11 Implications for future research

A number of new questions came up during the fieldwork and writing this study that I unfortunately could not follow up on during this research process, but would be interesting for future research:

- What are the in-depth interrelations within the close neighbourhood? What are the potentials of community gardens as community-based environmental management scheme in terms of managing resources like recycling, composting, drinking water, waste water treatment, community businesses, biodiversity, soil functions etc.?

- What are the opportunities for implementing alternative currency systems (time, food, green waste, kitchen waste, etc.) in communities such as community gardens?

- What exactly are the contributions of community gardens to a healthy community?

- Which potential does a community garden offer in terms of jobs for (unemployed) people, who basically are not striving to get rich in monetary terms?
Why do so few people (re-)start (shared) gardening in their backyards? An action research could explore, for example, which role do landlords play for their renters and their intentions for utilising the rented backyard according to their individual needs.
Once more, I am grateful for all the support from the community garden people who were willing to participate, to share personal experiences and to reflect their activities within this conducted research!
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