

Noqu Vale: Community organisation professionals' views on what works and what needs to change for Pasifika housing

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: The shortage of suitable and affordable housing within Aotearoa New Zealand is creating vulnerability in communities and is a barrier encountered by community organisation professionals (COPs) working in the housing field. Pasifika peoples are particularly disadvantaged, experiencing higher levels of household overcrowding, being less likely to own their own home, and being more likely to be tenants of social housing than other ethnicities. Increasing numbers of Pasifika peoples affected by housing issues require immediate (emergency, crisis) or long-term community social housing support, in an already constrained housing system. While there continues to be significant literature exploring facets of Pasifika housing in Aotearoa New Zealand, there is a lack of research on COPs' perspectives regarding Pasifika housing focused on the Wellington region.

METHOD: This research takes an exploratory, qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews with three COPs based in the Wellington region. Interview transcripts were thematically analysed.

FINDINGS: Findings address "what's working" and include: wrap-around services, collaboration, advocacy, and empowering families. COP perspectives on "what needs to change" include: quality and quantity of housing, affordability, and racism and discrimination.

IMPLICATIONS: The implications are that a holistic and collaborative practice approach taken between community and government organisations, needs to be harnessed if outcomes for Pasifika housing are to improve.

KEYWORDS: Pasifika; housing; community organisation professionals; Pasifika housing; Wellington New Zealand; what's working; what needs to change; housing shortage; affordable housing

Introduction

Housing issues are worsening in Aotearoa New Zealand, especially for Pasifika peoples (Johnson, Howden-Chapman, & Equb, 2018). Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand are more likely to experience higher rates of household overcrowding, higher rental rates, lower quality rental properties, and are less likely to own their own home

in comparison to other ethnic groups in Aotearoa New Zealand (Baker, Zhang, Blakely, & Crane, 2016; Fu, Scott, & Laing, 2015; Tanielu & Johnson, 2014; Statistics New Zealand, 2016). Research reveals that sub-standard housing quality contributes to poorer health, and to negative educational and social outcomes (Quirke, Edwards, & Brewerton, 2011). Moreover, children are

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more susceptible to the negative health impacts of inadequate housing. Children at higher risk are those living in lower income rental dwellings within larger family sizes, exacerbated by New Zealand's unregulated housing stock (Centre for Housing Research, 2010; Statistics New Zealand, 2017). Housing, therefore, is a multidimensional issue warranting consideration when community organisation professionals (COPs) work with Pasifika communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In the Wellington region, the shortage and high demand for suitable and affordable social housing, places considerable pressure on families to locate affordable housing further north. The Wellington housing taskforce report (Wellington City Council, 2017) found there was a shortfall of 3,900 homes in Wellington City. Population forecasts project that between 20,000 and 30,000 additional housing units are required to meet the range of projected population growth by 2043 (Wellington City Council, 2017). Porirua, which is north of Wellington City, has a higher density of Pasifika peoples with 31,047 peoples living there, 12,738 (24.6%) identifying in the 2013 census as Pasifika (Greater Wellington Regional Council, 2017a), compared to the 190,956 people living in Wellington City, 8,928 (4.7%) identifying as Pasifika (Greater Wellington Regional Council, 2017b).

This article reports on the findings of a small-scale Masters of Applied Social Work (Massey University) research project, exploring COPs' responses to Pasifika housing needs in the Wellington Region. The first author completed the study, and the second author was the research supervisor. Both authors identify as Pasifika and are motivated to contribute this article given their own extended families' experiences with housing issues. The article title, "Noqu vale", pronounced (no-goo vah-lei) and translated into English as "My house", was chosen to represent the first author's identity as an Aotearoa New Zealand born Fijian, who spent a majority of her childhood

growing up in Housing New Zealand (HNZ) property in the Wellington region. Two specific research questions were posed: what's working, and what needs to change? COPs identified four strategies which were working well: wrap-around services, collaboration, advocacy, and empowering families. COPs identified four strategies outlining what needed to change: quality, quantity, affordability and discrimination. The next section discusses the research methods, before the findings are discussed. The implications of the findings for practice, programmes and policy are considered, and finally conclusions and recommendations are offered for further research in relation to housing for Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Within this article, the term *housing* is used to encompass and describe private dwellings offered by private landlords, or social housing via community organisational owned properties (managed by HNZ), or housing directly rented from HNZ. Affordable housing describes any type of housing which is affordable relative to income and living expenses. Sub-standard housing relates to any private rental, or social housing offered which poses a direct risk to the health, safety, or physical well-being of the tenants due to poor housing conditions. In Aotearoa New Zealand, social housing (also known as affordable housing) is generally understood to refer to the provision of assistance with housing costs to those who cannot otherwise meet their own housing needs (Housing Shareholders Advisory Group, 2010). Social housing in Aotearoa New Zealand is primarily delivered centrally via key organisations such as: HNZ, Ministry of Social Development (MSD), local councils, with a small number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and community groups which operate in HNZ dwellings. Furthermore, complexities regarding the distinction of social housing arise around questions of ownership, provision and subsidy. For example, in Aotearoa New Zealand social housing can be: privately

owned but publicly operated, publicly owned but privately operated, or privately owned and rented; however, the occupier is generally reliant on housing subsidies and service contracts with a key organisation (Johnson, 2017).

The term *Pasifika* is a collective term in Aotearoa New Zealand which generally refers to people from the South Pacific (New Zealand Educational Institute [NZEI], 2012). However, the term does not refer to one single ethnicity, nationality, gender, or culture, rather it is a term used more out of convenience and which encompasses the diverse range of peoples from the South Pacific region made up of Polynesian, Micronesian and Melanesian populations now living in Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2016). Each Pasifika nation has their own unique identity, land, laws, and culture which form part of their heritage and history (NZEI, 2012).

Methods

This was a small, qualitative study, utilising semi-structured interviews with three COPs located in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand. Two participants worked for community social service organisations which held community housing portfolios, and offered wrap-around services. The third participant worked for a housing organisation which supported people accessing social, community, and private housing. Practice experience among the participants ranged from 1–20 years. Of the three participants, two were female and one was male, each identifying with a different ethnicity: Māori, Pasifika and Pākehā European. The study was advertised amongst relevant community organisations and participants responded by contacting the researcher and opting into the study. All interviews were digitally voice recorded and transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was undertaken allowing for the exploration of the key emerging themes (Marlow, 2011) within a narrative context (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Riessman, 2008), thus permitting the data to express itself. A matrix was created using

participant responses, and key, related, and similar responses were firstly identified, then secondly colour coded and grouped under themes, enabling visual comparison and contrast. The project was assessed as low risk and notified to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee accordingly. Pseudonyms are used throughout this article, with participant organisation names omitted. Due to the small number of participants, the findings are not generalisable; nonetheless, the findings provide insights from the participating COPs' practice experiences addressing Pasifika peoples' housing.

Findings

Approaches to Pasifika housing – what's working?

This section discusses strategies and approaches that work in relation to Pasifika housing from the perspectives of the COPs who participated in this study. Successful approaches were identified as: wrap-around services, collaboration, advocacy and empowering families.

Wrap-around services

COPs recognised the intersection of psychosocial factors (such as health, unemployment, or relationship breakdown) affecting Pasifika peoples seeking housing services. COPs identified targeted and holistic wrap-around services as an effective approach to addressing Pasifika housing needs.

Again, not just a focus on one area, such as housing, rather a holistic approach to addressing family needs is undertaken. (Maria)

We are helping whānau that have children in Oranga Tamariki, so basically everything, everything is there, the services. (Frank)

Effective types of wrap-around support services included: parenting courses, counselling,

alcohol and drug support, life skills, spiritual support, budgeting and finance, foodbank, and clothing donations. One organisation offered a programme specifically designed for women, with programme content dependent on the current issues COPs had identified in their interactions with clients and families. Therefore, service delivery within this style of programme delivery was fluid and flexible enough to cater to the presenting needs.

Thursdays are Lifestyles programmes. It could be about parenting, anger for women, whatever is going on and we can see, oh this would be really good to talk about, or whatever issue seems of concern. (Maria)

In addition to providing physical and immediate support for Pasifika families and individuals, Maria's organisation offered spiritual support, and viewed this service as a unique and vital component further contributing to and complementing the wider holistic approach her organisation offered.

Some of the families get linked into churches, prayer is offered to families, and they are welcome to decline prayer. Being PI and Christian makes it easier, and it's up to the person if they accept this or not. I believe this is what makes our community organisation unique, is that they can go even further, offering a holistic approach to care... it's all about connecting with the wider community. (Maria)

Mental health was recognised by COPs as a significant factor which affected peoples' access to housing, in particular, Pasifika youth. Participants supported clients who had sought assistance with housing, whilst dealing with anxiety, depression, suicide, unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, relationship issues, and domestic violence.

And then we've got a lot of people in our community that suffer from depression and anxiety... like mental health issues. So we have counsellors,

and then also there's alcohol and drugs, there's relationship stuff going on, and budgeting stuff. (Frank)

In particular, some of the younger ones are dealing with multiple issues and problems, particularly in mental health. (Maria)

Saville-Smith et al. (1996) suggest that people who suffer from mental health issues are more likely to be confronted with difficulties such as locating, affording, and maintaining housing. On the other hand, sub-standard housing and homelessness further exacerbates existing mental health problems (Saville-Smith, McClellan, Mainey, & McKay, 1996), and substance abuse and mental illness are two of the major causes of homelessness (Zufferey & Chung, 2006; Zufferey & Kerr, 2005).

According to participants, many Pasifika families struggled with debt and lacked basic financial literacy and budgeting skills. A reoccurring issue highlighted by COPs was Pasifika peoples and families borrowing large sums of money and then struggling to meet loan repayments, with higher interest and penalty rates if the repayments were not made within contractual time periods. Two budgeting initiatives offered by Maria's organisation provided Pasifika families with access to lower interest loan schemes, allowing individuals to borrow larger sums at lower interest rates.

We offer two budgeting initiatives which is ideal for Pasifika families as many deal with loan sharks and end up having to pay more back in terms of interest. (Maria)

[Organisation] recently introduced a scheme of low interest loans, and no interest loans to help people with maintenance stuff like that, because it is a thing. (Lisa)

The COPs in this study were cognisant of the complex issues intersecting with housing needs, viewing wrap-around services offered

by their community organisations as an aspect which worked well to address Pasifika housing needs. According to Furman, Nalini, Schatz, and Jones (2008), the wrap-around process identifies, builds upon, and enhances the capabilities, knowledge, skills, and assets of, not only the client, but also the community, and other team members involved. As such, a collaborative approach is inherently strengths-based and, by incorporating a wrap-around team approach, professionals are able to identify resources, programmes and services that may best serve to meet the needs of clients, thus promoting resourceful intervention strategies (Furman et al., 2008). A wrap-around holistic approach resonates with Pasifika approaches to health and social care such as the *Fonofale* framework which incorporates the consideration and integration of physical, spiritual and mental, aspects of well-being, with aiga or whānau as the foundational base, and culture as the overarching adhesive (Agnew et al., 2004; Mafile’o, 2013). Aligning with an ecological systems approach (Nash, Munford, & O’Donoghue, 2005), COPs understand that the social issues their clients experience interconnect with other areas of well-being, and thus dealing with housing issues in isolation may fail to fully address the overall interconnectivity of the challenges faced.

Collaboration

Community organisation professionals viewed collaboration with other social service organisations, housing providers, and external government agencies as necessary in order to best support Pasifika peoples and families presenting with housing issues. For instance, if a client’s needs could not be met by their own agency, then a referral to an appropriate alternative support service would be made.

But we just collaborate, like if you got families then let us know if we can help... and if [organisation] have nothing available then they’ll send their people to us. (Frank)

MSD [Ministry of Social Development] hold the new contract, people who

approach our organisation for emergency housing need to have been on the HNZ waiting list, or [be] close to being on the list. (Maria)

We work with other Pasifika health social services... and that’s really across the Mental Health and Addiction Services... so we get referrals from them, and so we work together with them to get access [to] housing to support people. (Lisa)

Collaborative partnerships with key government agencies, such as Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) and HNZ, were viewed as vital and necessary partnerships to best deliver housing services. However, one participant identified their frustration when dealing with external funding agencies with changing contract requirements, coupled with the lack of inter-agency communication and how this impacted on social and housing service delivery to clients.

Stakeholder relationships are vital if services offered are to be delivered in a timely fashion, with a client-centred focus in mind. (Maria)

There is a need for better communication between inter-agencies. (Maria)

Staff collaboration, in the form of regular meetings within community organisations, was also viewed as important in order to better track client or family progress. Such meetings were particularly useful if several staff members or agencies were simultaneously working with the same referral.

Ongoing material and financial contributions were another aspect of community collaboration for addressing Pasifika housing needs. Foodbank services, vegetable co-operatives, clothing donations and external business donations were among some of the extra supports provided to Maria’s organisation, and were a vital source of support within the community.

Collaboration and information sharing between non-government agencies and government ministries is necessary at the grass-roots level, as a significant number of service users are in a sense, “service-hopping” (Mills et al., 2015; Richardson & Patana, 2012). However, Mills et al. (2015) outlined that some social services were not flexible enough to cope with complex client needs, dealing only with specified needs, for example, focusing on mental health only, as opposed to incorporating a holistic approach. One way of addressing this would be to implement service integration, particularly where service users have multiple and complex needs, and where addressing one particular need in isolation is unlikely to be effective (Majumdar, 2006).

Advocacy

Advocating was core practice for all participants. Participants found that, at times, external systematic processes became a hindrance when attempting to house families with urgent housing needs. Participants shared their experiences about their use of unorthodox methods to advocate and support people due to the urgency of the situation.

We’ve gotta be really nimble, and dynamic, and a bit pushy...So trying to be as determined as possible to make things happen, because it’s tough!...that’s one of the things that we do well,...we take a very dynamic approach....Doing whatever it takes, advocating, you’ve gotta be pretty determined and clever and quick to make things happen, and use all your powers of persuasion and confidence to get in there. (Lisa)

In theory, [censored occupation] are supposed to do the work with WINZ, but what actually ends up happening is with the housing, because it often feels incredibly urgent and we don’t have time, it’s not always easy to coordinate people’s availability and timing, so sometimes we end up doing those appointments just because it’s more expedient. (Lisa)

The rubbish started building up because she just wasn’t able to get the rubbish out. She had no way of removing it from the property. And so, [I applied] for a flexi fund to pay to get someone with a van and a trailer, to go there and just remove all the rubbish, so that they don’t then evict her....We’ve actually ended up paying to remove the washing machines and stoves that were sitting there before she even moved in. (Lisa)

One participant worked for an organisation whose core service delivery focused on supporting and advocating for Pasifika and non-Pasifika people, who were navigating their way through the rental housing process.

COPs found that many Pasifika and non-Pasifika families face the challenge and frustration of navigating and comprehending multiple systems. These challenges were further intensified by the varying processing time-frames, creating further uncertainty for individuals and families already facing the risk of becoming homeless. Participants spoke of the value of utilising dynamic approaches within their practice and service delivery when supporting clients to navigate external systems, particularly in cases of urgency where individuals or families were facing impending eviction. This approach aligns with findings from Mills et al. (2015) which acknowledge that tenants benefited from extended support when transitioning from short-term emergency accommodation to long-term affordable housing.

Empowering families

Participants recognised Pasifika family strength, and empowerment of the wider family unit, as a resource in their practice with Pasifika housing needs. Family resiliency was found to be a resource within many Pasifika families and individuals. Pasifika families were viewed as strong, social, self-empowering units, who were able to tap into natural supports, and by

integrating a strengths-based approach, participants were able to strengthen the family system, and thus encourage Pasifika family and individual problem-solving. For example, if a Pasifika individual or family was in urgent need of housing, other family members would attempt to accommodate their needs, until the individual or family were able to secure housing of their own.

A lot of the positives is that these families do really well with what they've got... they're really resilient, they're strong families and they have ups and downs like everyone else... they're clever people, and they learn to live off resources that most of us couldn't live off... and we've got a lot to learn from them. (Frank)

What happens is when people are desperate, friends and family take them in. (Lisa)

Most families take in people they know and house them... culturally, a lot of our Pasifika people know whānau and end up getting taken in by them. (Maria)

Pasifika peoples tend to draw their sense of health and well-being from the quality of their relationships within their collective contexts, including extended family and community networks (Counties Manukau District Health Board, 2006). Involving housing support services can also assist individuals and families with moving from difficult and deteriorating situations, to a more positive and empowering situation with increased options (Mills et al., 2015).

In summary, participants' practice narratives reveal how collective and holistic approaches have worked well to address Pasifika housing needs in their contexts. The themes of: wrap-around support services, collaboration, advocacy, and empowerment of Pasifika families as a collective whole offer a Pasifika-focused framework approach to Pasifika housing work. The next section outlines what needs to change as identified by the participants.

Approaches to Pasifika housing – What needs to change?

Participants were asked to share their views on what needs to change to better support Pasifika housing needs in the Wellington region. Responses were categorised under the following themes: housing quality and quantity, affordability, and racism and discrimination.

Quality of housing

The quality of current rental and social housing in the Wellington region was highlighted by participants as a major issue for many lower-income Pasifika families. The lack of housing options meant that many Pasifika families have no choice but to live in sub-standard housing. According to one participant, due to higher volumes of applicants on the HNZ waiting list, clients facing impending homelessness who are most at risk had no choice but to accept the type of housing offered.

The organisation owns old HNZ homes. They're like those units, so there's twenty-three units....So those homes we've got are insulated...fully furnished. The idea is these whānau can move straight in, but they're coming off the street. (Frank)

When you're homeless with your children it's not a nice place to be. They're just desperate ... what's working well is that there's homes available, families are getting roofs over their heads, so that in itself is a success. I mean the idea is that a few of them are transitional, so they're with us for twelve weeks, and the idea is that they're working with HNZ together for somewhere to go permanently... it's just to keep them, and give them a roof till they find a HNZ rental, because the HNZ list is so long. (Frank)

Poor quality of rental housing was found to be a significant challenge faced by many Pasifika families in the Wellington region.

Many families had no choice but to accept sub-standard housing, and at times felt unable to complain for fear of eviction. For housing which was available, marked differences in quality were evident. One participant spoke of the negative transition families experienced when moving from housing offered by her organisation, into a HNZ property – referring to the difference in housing quality as “a step down”. Unemployment was also identified as a contributing factor, forcing many Pasifika families with limited financial resources into “doubled-up” living situations with extended family members, or renting make-shift housing.

These families are desperate, they're going to be homeless otherwise, you know in one person's eyes it's a mansion, in another person's eyes it's a dump you know... personally myself I'd find it hard pressed to go live in them. (Frank)

Because of this increased pressure on housing, people are less likely than ever to say, “there's a big leak here, or there's a problem with my plumbing”... And so, they live with the mushrooms growing out of the corner of the bedroom because they don't want to get into a situation where either the rent's going to be put up even more, or they might [be given] notice and then what? And so, you've got a situation where people aren't dealing with stuff landlords don't have to. (Lisa)

There are a few places where, like say, somebody's got a Skyline garage out the back of their property, they might have built a wall up the middle of it and put a sort of flat in the back of it. So there might be a kitchen, bathroom, living area, but it's not a proper flat, it's a makeshift kind of arrangement. There's a few of those... or there's ones where somebody's carved off part of their home and sort of subdivided it... and somebody will come along and pay to live there. (Lisa)

The quality of private and social housing remained questionable, with many

rental properties suffering from overdue maintenance, lack of insulation, and disrepair. According to Mills et al. (2015), renters were three times more likely to live in sub-standard housing if they were single-parent families, or identified as Māori or Pasifika. Participants spoke of the need to implement nationwide housing standards in an attempt to standardise and provide a benchmark for good quality rental housing.

There's still a chronic shortage of insulation and basic maintenance, and a lot of them desperately need a paint job, it's beyond deferred maintenance... they're actually allowing them to completely decay to the point where it's going to actually require them to be knocked down and completely rebuilt because they haven't been kept weathertight. (Lisa)

Sub-standard housing quality also posed a risk to the health, safety and welfare of families and children. One participant highlighted their organisation's concerns around the paramount safety and welfare of clients with children moving into rental home properties, and then falling ill due to unknown previous drug activity inside the property. Existing health issues were further exacerbated when families and children had a history of respiratory diseases, placing them at risk of health complications.

The importance of healthy housing was outlined in a study by Keall, Baker, Howden-Chapman, Cunningham, and Ormandy (2010) which revealed that structural defects, inadequate insulation, dampness and mould, contributed to poor health outcomes. Butler, Williams, Tukuitonga, and Paterson (2003) state that Pasifika peoples face more significant housing problems than other ethnicities, with research revealing links between sub-standard housing quality and maternal depression and the incidence of asthma. This places children living in such households at a higher risk of poor health outcomes. For example, a study of 106 child admissions to Wellington Hospital in August 2012 identified a pattern of high

rates of respiratory admissions for Māori and Pasifika children, strongly associated with sub-standard housing conditions (Denning-Kemp et al., 2012). One third of the parents whose children participated in the study had noticed dampness and mould in their homes, 50% claimed their homes were much colder than they preferred, and 20% lived in uninsulated housing (Denning-Kemp et al., 2012).

Quantity of housing

Participants highlighted the need for an increased supply of housing, especially given the loss of a substantial number of HNZ properties across the Wellington region. As housing demand exceeds supply, the increased pressure on not only individuals and families, but also landlords and property managers, constrains an individual's likelihood of accessing housing.

We've lost in our region [470] HNZ places, and only [69] have been built. So there's massive net loss, and the ones that are still there are desperately in need of maintenance. (Lisa)

At the moment the demand for housing way exceeds the supply, and so if people have issues and challenges like they don't have ID, or they have bad credit, or they don't have good references because of you know, what happened at their last tenancy ...then it's very difficult to access housing. (Lisa)

The increased pressure in the housing market was seen to add a shift in who occupies available rental housing. Landlords and property managers were now able to select desirable tenants, whereas historically similar housing spaces were commonly known to house those most in need.

They used to take the people that would come... Because the pressure has increased, they can fill their place easily without having to house the people... in greatest need... Better off people [or] employed people, people who would be

considered more respectable, are now having to resort to the grotty boarding houses, and the people that traditionally occupied that space are now even more on the margins. (Lisa)

The housing shortage in the Wellington region has also placed increased pressure on Pasifika peoples to look for housing outside of their areas of preference and convenience.

Because it's become so difficult and so unaffordable in Wellington, there's a movement and pressure to go North. And so people in Wellington are being told, "Oh have you looked in Porirua or Kāpiti?", but there's nothing in Porirua or Kāpiti. It's just as difficult if not worse, in that there's very little available, what there is, is expensive and not very good quality. (Lisa)

The participants experiences reflect the well documented shortage of affordable housing in the Wellington region (Wellington City Council, 2017). Unfortunately, this is not an issue isolated to the Wellington region, nationwide the New Zealand housing market has failed to deliver both the quantity and quality of housing required, further compounded by historic low levels of building consents (Mills et al., 2015; Howden-Chapman, Baker, & Bierre, 2013; New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2012).

Affordability of housing

Rising housing and rental costs is another issue in need of change, according to the participants in this study. Due to the shortage of affordable housing, people on HNZ waiting lists were required to find short-term or emergency accommodation until suitable housing became available. Social housing homes with three or more bedrooms are limited, therefore when they do become available, larger sized families have no choice but to accept, even if the housing is located outside their area of preference. For those who can afford to rent privately, higher rental prices are a barrier, often becoming unsustainable for individuals and families on lower incomes. Issues around

housing affordability were also challenged by other factors such as: unemployment, or previous issues such as bad credit, making it difficult for people to access housing.

High rentals, people unable to sustain private rental because their incomes are low, this is a huge one for Pasifika, unrealistic expectations. (Maria)

Availability, and with that come the sizes, they need to be the right size... Location, because ours are in [censored location] and a lot of these families, their children are coming to school out this way, so now they have to find transport or relocate their children, cause a lot...don't have transport...HNZ waiting list that's certainly an issue. (Frank)

Racism and discrimination

Experiences of racism and discrimination were challenges many minority groups faced when attempting to access housing. COPs discussed the ways in which those offering housing discriminated against other non-white cultures, based on ethnicity, family size, and colour.

So they'll look at Māori families and think, more likely to be overcrowding, less likely to care for the place, more likely to punch a hole in the wall, may not be able to afford to pay the rent... Who's the person who looks like they do meth? And I probably don't want little kids 'cause you know they're cute, but... I really don't want the mess... So you end up with a situation where people discriminate ... You could argue that they're just trying to manage risk and reduce the cost of operating the asset. All those judgements amount to discrimination which discriminates against people who are mentally ill, discriminates against people of colour... It doesn't matter whether [you're] Nigerian or Pasifika, it discriminates against people on low incomes, and it's really tough... Its impacting all different

kinds of people now... All housing is difficult to access, and I do think that racism is a thing. (Lisa)

Discrimination in the form of lack of housing for smaller or individual households, more specifically housing for single males, both young and old, was reported as significantly lacking in the Wellington region. COPs mentioned that women and children were given priority (in the context of emergency and safe housing) over single men regardless of age, or if the male was a member of the household.

There is a desperate need for accommodation for single men. The current housing stock for single males are mainly for older single men – long-term residents. They don't put males in with females. They can put two families in a house, and if the family has a grown-up son, [organisation name censored] cannot house them in the same house – this is more for protection. Therefore, the young man in this situation would have to find his own place – [organisation censored] turn away quite a few single men, however, they never turn away single women. (Maria)

There's no purpose built one-bedroom places... there's a couple of converted motels, which are not actually really great for long-term living. (Lisa)

The closure of significant social housing areas in the Wellington region, typically renowned for housing many lower-income Pasifika families, was a major loss which impacted many Pasifika families across the Wellington region.

We went along to some of the public meetings leading up to that closure, and one of the things that was striking to me was the number of Pasifika people and families that were there... At that time it was some of the lowest priced accommodation available... there was a staggering number of Pasifika that were impacted by that. (Lisa)

Participants identified the need for structural, social, and political change, to create a more level playing field, viewing housing as a fundamental right for all people, regardless of socio-economic status.

It just gives a bigger social picture, because I think this all happens in a larger context. And personally, I'd like to see New Zealand more like it was in the 1970s when we had a much more egalitarian society... Things needed to improve for Māori, and needed to improve for Pasifika... What I would like to see is actual recognition that housing is a fundamental need and a right, and that there [is a way in] which everybody becomes homeowners. (Lisa)

Rankine (2005) found consistent evidence of discrimination in private and state rental housing, noting several reasons why tenants were reluctant to take action: shortage of housing, fear of eviction, and a lack of knowledge regarding consumer rights and how to complain. Challenges such as stigma, discrimination and racism are widely experienced by Pasifika peoples, and are a barrier to accessing housing, particularly individuals with mental health problems (Koloto & Associates Ltd, 2007; Peace & Kell, 2001).

Implications

COPs' perspectives on what works and what needs to change for Pasifika housing issues in the Wellington area have practice and policy implications. The findings show the importance of holistic, linked-up and collaborative practice approaches (Crawford, 2012; Weinstein, Whittington, & Leiba, 2003) to practice. Collaboration – including between government, city planners, construction companies, and Pasifika communities – could result in more innovative programme design and implementation. For example, the Matanikolo Project, a collaboration between government and a Pacific church to build houses in Auckland (Tanielu & Johnson,

2014), could be replicated elsewhere. Such collaborations could also work to ensure culturally informed home design (Gray & McIntosh, 2011) suitable for larger families.

Practice must be able to address the root causes of Pasifika housing issues located within the broader social, political, and economic context. Advocacy (Wilks, 2012) is a practice implication. COPs acknowledged constraints when attempting to perform systematic advocacy, given external and contractual obligations, or changing contract requirements, or at times lack of inter-agency communication. COPs advocating on a political spectrum address the socio-economic housing disadvantages faced by many Pasifika families. In advocating to influence a shift in political ideology underpinning housing policies and to address the presence of racism and discrimination (Dominelli, 2018), social work practice operates more within a social change discourse, and moves beyond practice within a social order and empowerment orientation (Payne, 2014). Effective practice responding at individual and family levels, the findings suggest, is just one aspect of what is needed. Policy and macro level changes are also needed, to tackle structural impediments to housing well-being, including racism and poverty, and to create more equitable conditions overall in Aotearoa New Zealand. Social work analysis and action in the Pasifika housing field of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand must take cognisance of the context of coloniality (Mignalo, 2011) which manifests in the overrepresentation of Pasifika in poor housing conditions. Critical and anti-oppressive social work approaches, which address the intersectionality of race, gender and class (Mattsson, 2014), are therefore called for.

Conclusion

This small-scale, qualitative study explored what works and what needs to change to address Pasifika housing issues in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand, through an analysis of practice reflections of three

COPs working in the area. Themes generated from the semi-structured interviews in relation to what worked included wrap-around services, collaboration, advocacy and empowering family strengths. Themes for what needed to change included quality, quantity and affordability of housing and racism and discrimination.

The COPs' insights portray the complexity of housing issues for Pasifika communities. Wrap-around services were promoted, including spiritual support, given that housing issues were interconnected with a range of other issues. A lack of good-quality, affordable housing was seen as a major barrier for many low-income Pasifika families in the Wellington region. Participants highlighted a significant lack in the *right supply* of housing that could cater to varying accommodation needs, such as larger sized families, or accommodation for single males. The lack of suitable housing placed further pressure on people to look for alternative housing from other sources, and outside the Wellington region. Community housing areas, such as boarding houses which once housed those most in need were now able to use the shortage and demand for housing to their advantage, and in a sense, pre-select preferred tenants. Racism and discrimination were quite marked issues disadvantaging Pasifika peoples. Participants promoted the idea of shelter as a fundamental right for all peoples, regardless of socio-economic status, and the creation of a more egalitarian society. The findings suggest the importance of collaboration, advocacy and critical, anti-oppressive practice to address structural, policy and macro-level change.

Future research could explore strategies and programmes which would support Pasifika peoples through the housing continuum, moving from long-term renting into home-ownership. A longitudinal study tracking health and social outcomes following housing programme implementation could provide quantitative evidence of what works to address Pasifika peoples' housing.

While this study was too small scale for conclusions to be generalisable, the findings do give insight into the practice reality in community organisations. It is an important perspective, nuancing the statistical data which reveal disproportionate housing disadvantage for Pasifika individuals and families in Aotearoa New Zealand (Johnson et al., 2018). While COPs are working with innovation in this space, overall practice, programme, policy and research on Pasifika housing needs to be stepped up for better outcomes to be realised by Pasifika individuals and families.

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