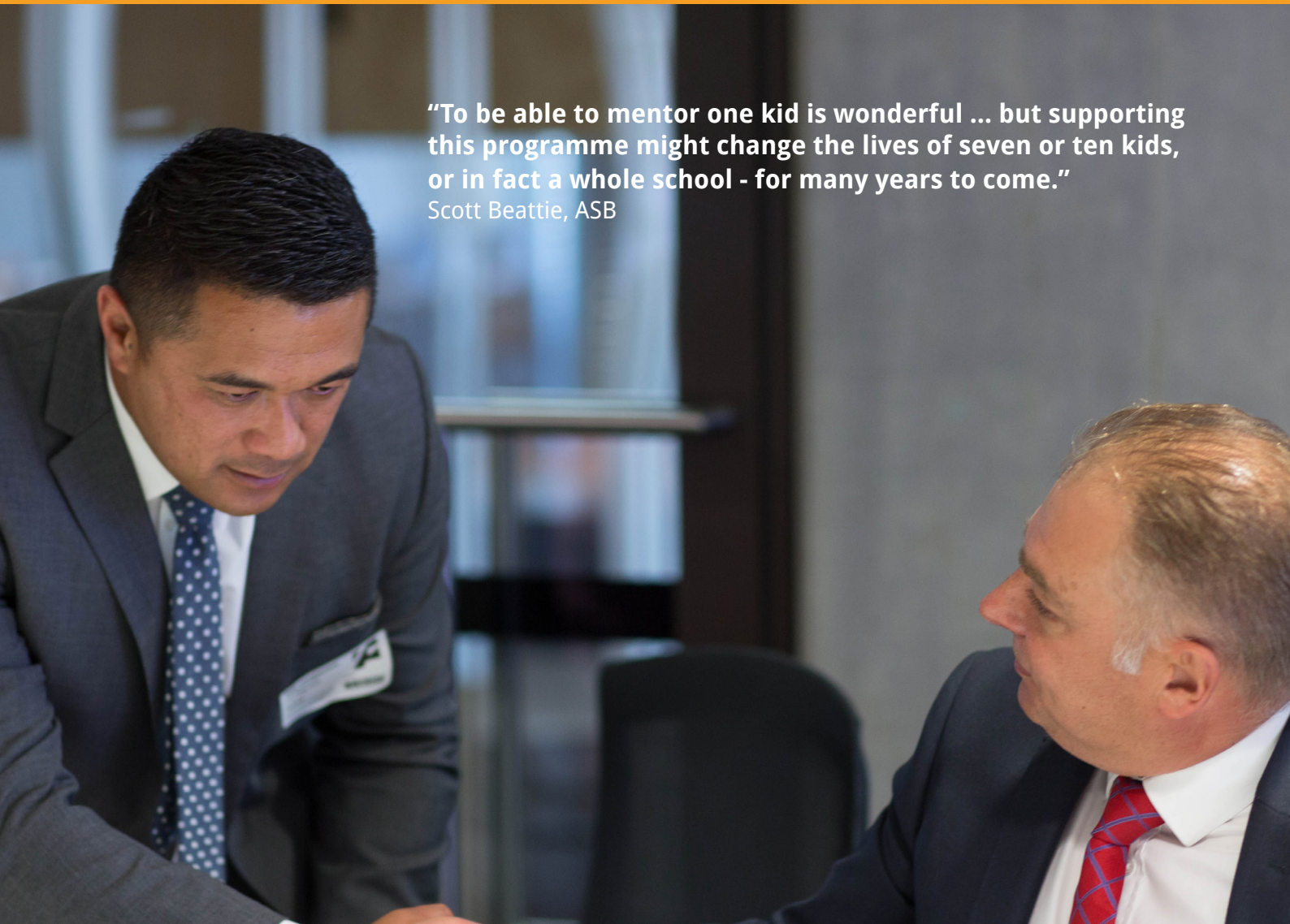




Cross Sector Capacity Building Case Study

A New Level in Leadership

“To be able to mentor one kid is wonderful ... but supporting this programme might change the lives of seven or ten kids, or in fact a whole school - for many years to come.”
Scott Beattie, ASB



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With a passion for strategy and mentoring, Scott Beattie of ASB has found a professional development opportunity that “pushes all his buttons” in his pro bono work with SpringboardTrust’s Strategic Leadership Programme for Principals.

Scott is in his third year as a Capacity Partner with the SpringboardTrust, which aims to dramatically improve the life skills of young New Zealanders by growing the capacity of the people who lead them: school principals.



“I like mentoring and do a lot of it in the workplace”, says Scott an international banker at ASB at North Wharf in Auckland. “So that’s one of my selfish reasons for volunteering as a Capacity Partner with SpringboardTrust.”

A TANGIBLE DIFFERENCE

Pelu Leaupepetele of Wymondley Road School in Otara can confirm the ongoing, measurable difference Scott’s voluntary work with SLPP is making for his school, and therefore, the young people in his community. Scott was Pelu’s Capacity Partner when he attended the Strategic Leadership Programme for Principals (SLPP) as a relatively new principal in 2014.

At the time, Pelu was one year into his leadership role at the school and while he’d completed some professional development for first time principals, he wanted more: to get insights from business, to be exposed to different leadership styles, and to learn how to deal with the difficult issues that so often seem to cloud a leader’s vision.

He also wanted help with developing a strategic plan for his school. The Ministry of Education provides a template and framework for how to put together School Charters, and Pelu had already done some very thorough consultation with the school community, putting together a Vision and Purpose. But with so many other distractions, he could not fully attend to the work of strategic leadership, which is what he really wanted to do.

Enter SpringboardTrust, Scott and the SLPP. Over 12 months, Pelu attended a series of strategic leadership workshops with five other Auckland-based principals, while Scott walked alongside Pelu, providing additional support on a one-to-one basis.

UNEARTHING STRATEGIC ABILITY

Scott says he went into the partnership with Pelu with no preconceived ideas of how exactly he might help to build capacity, but rather spent a lot of time listening, and trying to understand Pelu as a person. “His strategic ability was there,” says Scott. “It was just a matter of unearthing it and helping him with that.”

Scott says an a-ha moment came when he realised that the same issues that were keeping Pelu awake at night, were probably the ones clouding his strategic thought. He first needed to help Pelu resolve these, before they would be able to gain more impetus with the strategic planning.

CONFIDENCE, COLLABORATION AND FOCUS

Pelu reflects that as a result of his year with Scott and the SLPP his practice as a principal has changed in three obvious ways: (1) he is now strategic in his leadership, (2) he is more confident in his leadership, and (3) he has facilitated the creation of a [strategic plan] document that “genuinely serves the purpose of the school community.” He says he can go home with a smile feeling assured that things are on the right track.

He gives a specific example: a review of school meetings revealed that they were just a checklist with no real substance. With some consultative changes, the meeting template now allows for the focus to be given to the key areas of pastoral care and student achievement.

“The SLPP has provided me with essential professional development as a leader. If I had done it in my first year, life would have been a lot easier.”

Pelu Leaupepetele, Principal, Wymondley Road School, Otara, Auckland

The teachers also now have the confidence to challenge Pelu as a leader. “We work alongside each other; they’ve seen me grow in confidence,” he says. “Now we talk about growing leadership from the ground up, not from the principal down. They feel confident and welcome to share their ideas, there’s confidence in their delivery in the classrooms; everyone knows what their role is. Everyone knows where they sit in the waka and where it is going.”

Staying with that imagery, Scott contrasts the before and after: “Pelu was in the waka, and he knew where he was going, he just didn’t have the paddlers with him. He realised that it can’t just be him sitting at the back of the waka, paddling like crazy, but going around in circles. Great vision, great mission, great goals, but he needed a crew. During the year he got everyone into a team, and said ‘Right team I need your help. You need to buy into my ideas, or you need to tell me they are wrong and you need to come with your own ideas, let’s put them in and prioritise them’. He started a revolution.”

A NEW LEVEL IN LEADERSHIP

Scott notes that when he first met Pelu, he had good ideas, but now he can actually articulate and execute them, and do so strategically. The good intentions he has for the children in his school are far more likely to be realised. He knows that Pelu will experience challenges along the way, but is certain he will be able to handle them, as his confidence has grown, and will continue to do so.

“I always had an awareness of the layers and complexity of leadership,” says Pelu, “but being on the SLPP pulled back the layers to see what else is there. Each time Scott and I spoke and I took on his ideas, I have gone to a new level in my leadership.”

JOIN US

SpringboardTrust exists to improve the life skills – and lives – of young New Zealanders.

Our flagship programme, SLPP, partners senior business leaders or “Capacity Partners” with school principals to build their leadership and planning skills, and in doing so, contribute to improved educational outcomes for schools and their students.

Over 12 months, each Capacity Partner acts as a sounding board for one principal as they step through the curriculum (written by our Chairman Ian Narev, CEO of Commonwealth Bank of Australia) and develop new one and three-year strategic plans for their school using the SLPP framework.

Capacity Partners find the role hugely rewarding. They bring a fresh lens to the leadership challenges faced by principals and provide invaluable skills, knowledge and experience. In return, they receive a great refresher for their own strategic skill set, learn about the role that business can play in education, and get to make a meaningful difference for young New Zealanders.

SCAFFOLD LEARNING, CHALLENGE THINKING

The SLPP curriculum is delivered in eight 3-hour workshops over 12 months and requires an annual Capacity Partner time commitment of approximately 20-40 hours, including:

- An initial meeting with the principal at their school
- The opportunity to attend several workshops over the year
- Participation in a teleconference debrief after each workshop
- A minimum of two contacts each month with the principal to scaffold their learning and challenge thinking
- Participation in graduation at the end of the programme year

HOW TO APPLY

SpringboardTrust is always looking for experienced business leaders to train as Capacity Partners.

If you are interested in finding out more about this rewarding voluntary role, please complete an expression of interest (EOI) form available online at www.springboardtrust.org.nz

All Capacity Partners receive full training and support materials. Capacity Partners are also eligible to attend our ongoing programme of alumni leadership workshops and events, and our annual leadership Forum. Experienced Capacity Partners can progress to the role of Facilitator and lead SLPP workshops.