

Case Study Analysis:

The 20 Degree Vision

Aotearoa New Zealand

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DISCLAIMER: The HTR Task is an Annex of the Technology Collaboration Programme on User-Centred Energy Systems (Users TCP), which provides evidence on the design, social acceptance and usability of clean energy technologies to inform policy making for clean, efficient and secure energy transitions. The Users TCP is established under the auspices of the International Energy Agency (IEA) as a functionally and legally autonomous body. Further information on the Users TCP is available from: www.userstcp.org



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Case Study: From Warm Homes to Warm Hearts

Changing the Culture of Housing in Aotearoa: The 20 Degrees Programme as a Blueprint for Systemic Change

Prepared for: Sustainability Options and HTR Task

Date: March 2026

Author: Based on the Midpoint 20 Degrees Evaluation Report by Dr Sea Rotmann, SEA Ltd

Executive Summary: The Hypothesis

What if the ultimate outcome of a housing intervention programme wasn't just warmer homes, but a fundamental culture shift in how Aotearoa New Zealand thinks about housing, health, and human dignity?

The Sustainability Options (SO) 20 Degrees (20C) Programme has already demonstrated transformational impact (based on survey): 85% reduction in winter hospitalisations, \$5.29 social return per \$1 invested, and 64% of whānau (families) progressing to Mauri Ora / Tau (a state of thriving). Yet these metrics, while powerful, capture only part of the story.

SO's central hypothesis for Years 7–10 is that:

*The most sustainable, scalable, and transformative outcome of the 20 Degrees Programme is not the number of homes upgraded, but the measurable shift in **housing culture**, where warm, dry, mould-free homes become the expected norm, not the exception, across Aotearoa New Zealand.*

This case study argues that by intentionally measuring and nurturing this "hearts and minds" shift, Sustainability Options can:

1. **Deepen impact** for the whānau they serve.
2. **Broaden influence** to inspire national policy change.
3. **Build a replicable blueprint** for international energy wellbeing programmes.

This case study is based on a mid-programme evaluation by Hard-to-Reach (HTR) Task Leader Dr. Sea Rotmann. The evaluation used mixed methods research, combining a landscape assessment of SO reports (including a Phase 1 evaluation report), and kaupapa partner¹ analysis using interviews (three SO leadership, one research staff, and five funders) and focus groups (3 focus groups with ten SO frontline staff).

¹ We will use "kaupapa partners" from now on in this Task, as "stakeholder" is a colonial term that literally came from new settlers putting stakes in the ground and dispossessing Indigenous peoples.



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Glossary of Māori Terms and Abbreviations

BOP = Bay of Plenty
CEN = [Community Energy Network](#)
EA = [Electricity Authority](#)
EDA = [Eco Design Advisors](#)
EDB = Electricity Distribution Business
EECA = [Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority](#)
ERGANZ = [Electricity Retailers' & Generators' Association of NZ](#)
EWN = Energy Wellbeing Network
HHI = [Healthy Homes Initiative](#) (Te Whatu Ora)
HPA = [Home Performance Advisor Certification](#)
HTR Task = [Hard-to-Reach Energy Users Task](#) by Users TCP by IEA
IDI = [Integrated Data Infrastructure](#) (Stats NZ)
LI = Low income
MBIE = [Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment](#)
MSD = [Ministry of Social Development](#)
R&M = Repairs & Maintenance
SEA = [SEA - Sustainable Energy Advice Ltd](#)
SEEC = [Support for Energy Education in Communities](#) (EECA)
SO = Sustainability Options
SOM = States of Mauri
SROI = Social Return of Investment
WKH = [Warmer Kiwi Homes](#) (EECA)

Iwi = Māori tribe, extended kinship group

Kaupapa = topic, policy, principle, purpose

Kaupapa partner = stakeholder

Mahi = work

Mauri = the essential quality and vitality of a being or entity

Mauri Moe (State 2) = asleep, potential is as yet unrealised

Mauri Oho (State 3) = awakening, getting engaged, making connections

Mauri Ora (State 5) = wellness, realising potential

Mauri Rere (State 1) = anxiety and stress, not ready to engage

Mauri Tau (State 6) = leadership, settled and ready to help others

Mauri Tū (State 4) = standing up, developing leadership and skills

Te Tiriti o Waitangi = The Treaty of Waitangi, founding document between the Crown and Māori

Vā-centred relationships = the sacred space between people (Pasifika)

Waka = vehicle, boat

Whakamā = shame, embarrassment

Whānau = family, SO's clientele



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Part 1: The Foundation – What Six Years of Mahi (Work) Has Taught Us

Strengths to Build Upon

Strength	Evidence	Strategic Value
Relational, journey-based model	96% of whānau (families) report SO <i>"delivered everything promised"</i> ; 8 whānau describe service as <i>"priceless due to compassion"</i>	Creates trust, enables sustained behaviour change, differentiates from transactional programmes
States of Mauri (SOM) framework	Validated progression: 5% → 64% Mauri Ora / Tau; now used diagnostically by assessors	Culturally-grounded, dynamic measure of engagement that honours whānau autonomy
Tight-Loose-Tight delivery approach	Clear KPIs (tight) + adaptive whānau-centred delivery (loose) + exceptional reporting (tight)	Balances accountability with flexibility; proven successful in complex environments
Triangulated evidence base	Quantitative (health), economic (SROI), and qualitative (whānau voice) data converging	Builds compelling, multi-dimensional case for investment and scale
Kaupapa Māori and Pasifika-centred practice	Invitation-first engagement; vā-centred relationships (Pasifika); Te Tiriti (The Treaty of Waitangi) operationalised	Ensures equity, cultural safety, and relevance for priority populations

Critical Tensions to Navigate

Tension	Risk if Unaddressed	Opportunity if Managed Well
Project-based funding vs. multi-year journeys	Premature case closure; staff burnout; whānau disillusionment	Advocate for core, collaborative funding models that honour relational timelines
Homeowner focus vs. tenants exclusion	Replicates structural inequity; limits population-level impact	Position 20C as advocacy leader; pilot landlord engagement pathways
Community equity disparities	Perpetuates spatial inequity; undermines equity commitments	Develop "community equity indicators"; advocate for hard-to-engage higher level community funding
Measuring behaviour vs. measuring culture change	Misses the deeper, systemic outcome; limits policy influence	Pioneer new metrics for cultural shift; position 20 Degrees as culture-change catalyst



Part 2: The Hypothesis – Why "Changing Hearts and Minds" Is the Ultimate Outcome

The Logic of Culture Change

Current housing and energy programmes in Aotearoa, and internationally, often operate on a *deficit model*: identify a problem (cold, damp homes), deliver an intervention (insulation, heating), and measure outputs (homes upgraded). While essential, this approach has limits:

- It treats symptoms, not **systems**.
- It creates dependency, not **capability**.
- It struggles to scale because it is **resource-intensive** per household.

The 20 Degrees Programme has evolved beyond this model. Its unique contribution is the journey-based, capacity-building approach that:

- Works by **doing things with** whānau, not *to* them.
- Builds housing **literacy and self-efficacy** of whānau.
- Honours whānau **readiness and autonomy** (via States of Mauri - SOM).
- Creates **ripple effects**: whānau sharing knowledge with neighbours, becoming referrers and champions.

Therefore, we hypothesise:

If we intentionally measure and nurture the shift from "housing as a charitable intervention" to "housing as a foundation of health and wellbeing that everyone expects and works towards," we will unlock sustainable, systemic change that outlasts any single programme.

What "Culture Change" Looks Like in Practice

Level	Indicator of Shift	Example from 20 Degrees
Individual / Whānau	From " <i>I need help</i> " to " <i>I can maintain my home</i> "	Whānau who progress to Mauri Tau (leadership) start teaching neighbours; report sustained behaviour changes years later
Community	From whakamā (shame) to pride in healthy homes	Word-of-mouth referrals increase; community workshops led by local organisations
Professional / Service Systems	From siloed interventions to integrated wellbeing and wrap-around services	Assessors trained in motivational interviewing; referrals between HHI, SEEC etc. and 20C become seamless
Policy / Government	From project funding to core infrastructure investment	MBIE / Te Whatu Ora cite 20C evidence in housing strategy; cornerstone funding shifts from philanthropy to government core funding (keeping collaborative funding models)
National Narrative	From " <i>Cold homes are normal</i> " to " <i>20 Degrees is an essential societal responsibility</i> "	Media stories shift from crisis to solution; political parties adopt warm homes as policy priority



Part 3: The Path Forward – Strategic Priorities for Years 7–10

Priority 1: Embed Culture-Change Metrics into the Evaluation Framework

Move beyond measuring *what* whānau do, to measuring *how they think* about housing.

Recommended Measure	Method	Frequency	Why It Matters
Housing Culture Index	Short survey: " <i>How important is maintaining 20°C on a cold winter's night for you?</i> " (0–10); " <i>Would you recommend these behaviours to whānau/friends?</i> "; " <i>Do you now notice mould / dampness in other homes?</i> "	Baseline + 12-month + 24-month follow-up	Captures attitudinal shift, social diffusion, internalised literacy
Behavioural Spillover Tracking	Count referrals from previous whānau; track unprompted sharing of knowledge (via CRM notes)	Ongoing	Measures whether change is being sustained and spread organically
SOM + Motivation Mapping	Add drop-down fields in CRM: extrinsic / intrinsic factors; voluntary / involuntary disengagement; add "Mauri Rere" (anxiety / stress state)	At every touchpoint	Deepens understanding of <i>why</i> engagement shifts; informs tailored support
Narrative Collection	Regular "story capture" prompts for assessors: " <i>When did you see a whānau shift from 'fix this for me' to 'teach me how'?</i> "	Quarterly synthesis	Provides rich, qualitative evidence of culture change for advocacy and learning

Priority 2: Strengthen the Evidence Base for Systemic Investment

Translate relational impact into policy-ready evidence.

Action	Lead	Timeline	Expected Outcome
Publish evaluative (not forecast) SROI	SO + SEA	Year 7	Robust, peer-reviewed economic case for government investment
Partner for health data linkage	SO + Te Whatu Ora / IDI researchers	Yrs 7–8	Independent validation of hospitalisation / GP visit reductions
Disaggregate outcomes by cohort	SO Evaluation Team	Year 7	Clear evidence of differential impact: repairs + education vs. education-only; owners vs. renters; geographic regions
Develop "Culture Change" case studies	SO Comms + SEA	Yrs 8–9	Compelling narratives for government, funders, international audiences

Priority 3: Pilot Pathways to Address Structural Inequities and Hidden Energy Users

Demonstrate leadership on the most complex issues that limit scale: How to help renters and whānau-owned home occupiers, isolated whānau, and the "squeezed middle" (the



“working poor”, the “willing but ineligible”, and those getting newly-stressed with cost of living increases), who are not currently eligible for support. The HTR Task is proposing a tier typology aimed to help characterise and measure the size and needs of different energy users living in hidden hardship. The proposed tiers will further be co-developed based on field insights from SO assessments:

1. **Tier 1 = extremely isolated** (marginalised, stigmatised and/or illegalised), who are often also **vulnerable renters** (which could become a separate ‘**Tier 1a**’), **medically-dependent customers** (MDCs, ‘**Tier 1b**’), and/or on **prepay connections** (‘**Tier 1c**’) with compounding and intersecting vulnerabilities that mean they are either ineligible, (voluntarily or involuntarily) hidden, or need other frontline support services (e.g., mental health, violence prevention, landlord advocacy) before they can start meaningfully engaging in the programme.
2. **Tier 2 = low-income home owners** who are eligible for other government programmes like WKH (continue with BAU). Add a ‘**Tier 2a**’ specifically addressing **whānau-owned home occupants** (this may need a separate pilot / funding).
3. **Tier 3 = ‘squeezed middle’** not eligible due to income and/or tenancy. These are often in a higher SOM, have lower repair & maintenance (R&M) needs, and are not (yet) in energy hardship. They can often be helped with education and behaviour change initiatives and by connecting them with their retailer customer care staff (see “Triage Support Pilot” with ERGANZ) or budget and financial mentoring services.

Pilot	Focus	Partners	Success Metric
Renter Advocacy Pathway	Work with Tenancy Services, landlord associations, and MBIE to test mechanisms for improving rental conditions and relationships without displacing tenants (especially for Tiers 1a, 2b); build tenant capacity	Tenancy Services, Property Managers NZ, MBIE	% of pilot renters achieving Healthy Homes Standards; tenant retention; landlord engagement; landlord-tenant relationships
Community Equity & Resilience	Piloted "travelling assessor" model + tradie / rangatahi development fund to address remote service gaps already, now it is about refining community partnerships and self-efficacy	Toi Ohomai, local iwi, kaupapa Māori partners, funders	Reduction in travel time per visit; increase in capacity building depth for high-need whānau; build community resilience
Tier 1, 1a-c & 2a	Wrap-around service model with frontline delivery agents	MSD, Police, Te Whatu Ora, iwi, churches, local services	↑ in hidden & isolated whānau, incl. renters with long journeys & major repair needs
Tier 3 Triage Support Pilot	Partner with retailers (via ERGANZ) to identify and support households at risk of falling into hardship	ERGANZ, budgeting services, retailers	% of Tier 3 households avoiding escalation into energy hardship; customer satisfaction; retailer engagement



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Priority 4: Build the Infrastructure for National Scale-Up

Prepare the blueprint, the people, and the partnerships for wider impact.

Initiative	Description	Key Partners
Energy Wellbeing Network (EWN)	Establish a regional hub model (starting with BOP) with dedicated regional navigator role	CEN, EWN, local government, EDB
Assessor Collective & Train-the-Trainer Model	Create regional peer supervision circles; formalise pathway for experienced assessors to become mentors	HPA, EDA, Toi Tū Toi Ora (for supervision model), EWN
National Blueprint Documentation	Codify the "tight-loose-tight" approach, SOM framework, and culture-change metrics into a replicable toolkit	SEA (HTR Task), IEA Users TCP, MBIE, EA



Part 4: Recommended Outcome Measures – Testing the Hypothesis

To challenge and refine our culture-change hypothesis, we propose a multidimensional measurement framework that balances rigour with relational practice:

Dimension 1: Core Programme Outcomes (Continue & Strengthen)

- **Health:** Winter hospitalisations per whānau; GP visits; school attendance
- **Economic:** Evaluative SROI (updated annually); leverage ratio (cash + in-kind)
- **Engagement:** % whānau progressing to Mauri Ora / Tau; completion rates; voluntary vs. involuntary disengagement

Dimension 2: Culture-Change Indicators (New & Innovative)

Indicator	Measurement Approach	Target (Year 10)
Housing Culture Index Score	Average score on 3-question attitudinal survey (see Priority 1)	Increase from baseline by 30%
Behavioural Spillover Rate	% of new referrals coming from past participants	10-15% of new engagements
Policy Influence Metric	Number of government / policy documents citing 20 Degrees evidence; invitations to advise on national strategy	3+ major policy references; 2+ advisory roles
Narrative Shift	Media analysis: tone of coverage (crisis vs. solution); social media sentiment	70% of coverage framed as "solution" or "model"

Dimension 3: Systemic Change Markers (Long-Term & Advocacy-Focused)

- **Funding Transition:** % of programme funding from core government / industry (vs. philanthropy)
- **Community Equity:** Intervention depth per deprivation percentile (not just homes served per region)
- **Tenure Equity:** Parallel pathways developed for all tenants; advocacy outcomes on Healthy Homes Standards enforcement; a growing appreciation of good landlord-tenant relationships; changing tenant cultures on what they can do to run a healthy home.



Part 5: Risk Mitigation – Staying Grounded While Reaching High

Risk	Mitigation Strategy	Owner
Organisational stress; assessor burnout	Peer mentoring & supervision circles; improve automation / efficient processes; protect 4-day week; build resilience	SO Leadership
Funder fatigue or shifting priorities	Co-create (beyond annual) reporting that honours journey timelines; share "culture change" narratives early; diversify funding base; collaborate across kaupapa partners (philanthropy, whānau, community, business & government)	SO + Funders
Over-claiming impact	Transparently report limitations (sample sizes, self-reporting; qualitative and subjective measures); triangulate data; acknowledge structural constraints	Evaluation Team
Dilution of relational model at scale	Embed "invitation-first" and SOM training in any scale-up; maintain tight-loose-tight approach; invest in mentor infrastructure	SO + EWN Partners
Policy shifting	Build relationships across political parties; frame evidence in terms of cross-party priorities (health, child wellbeing, climate, productivity, job creation, literacy)	SO + EWN Advocacy



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Part 6: The Investment Case – Why Fund This Vision?

For Current Funders: Deepen Your Legacy

Philanthropic funders of the 20 Degree Vision have helped prove that a relational, kaupapa-centred approach *works*. Now, it's time to invest in the next phase: proving that it can change the system. Your continued partnership will:

- Secure the gains already made for Bay of Plenty whānau.
- Generate evidence that attracts government and industry co-investment.
- Position your trust as a leader in innovative, equity-centred philanthropy.
- Deepen your legacy and help bring in new funders and partnerships.

For New Funders: Join a Proven, Scalable Model

The 20 Degrees Programme is not a pilot - it is a mature, evidence-rich blueprint ready for strategic investment. Your support will:

- Leverage existing infrastructure (no start-up costs).
- Contribute to a national culture-change agenda with measurable SROI.
- Align with ESG, health equity, education, and climate adaptation priorities.

For Government Agencies: Fund Infrastructure & System Transition, Not Just Interventions

Housing is health infrastructure. The 20 Degrees evidence shows:

- \$5.29 social return driven largely by health system savings.
- 85% reduction in hospitalisations - far exceeding national HHI averages.
- A model that builds community capability and resilience, not dependency.

Investing in core funding for Years 7–10 is not charity, it is preventative health spending with documented, high-impact returns.

For the International Community: A Blueprint for Energy Wellbeing

Via the HTR Task (Users TCP by IEA), this case study offers:

- A culturally-grounded framework (SOM) adaptable to other Indigenous / minority community contexts.
- A "tight-loose-tight" delivery model balancing accountability and flexibility.
- Evidence that relational, journey-based approaches can achieve both depth and scale - and improve national energy wellbeing.
- A better way to approach energy hardship systematically, focusing on the underlying causes, not just the symptoms.



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Conclusion: He Waka Eke Noa – We Are All in This Waka Together

Six years into a 10-year vision, the 20 Degrees Programme stands at a pivotal moment. It has proven its model transforms lives. Now, it has the opportunity to transform systems.

The hypothesis is bold but grounded: *If we measure and nurture the shift in housing culture - where warm, dry, mould-free homes become the expected cultural norm - we will unlock sustainable, systemic change that outlasts any single programme.*

This is not a departure from the programme's kaupapa. It is its fullest expression. As one assessor shared: *"The real great thing is that it gives us the ability to keep going back into the house, to keep reinforcing behaviours. You can't educate in one go. No one is learning everything you need in one 90-minute visit. No one."*

Culture change is not a one-off intervention. It is a journey, taken alongside whānau, with compassion, with cultural competence, with evidence, and with courage. The question is no longer *can Sustainability Options scale?* The question is: *Will we, as a country, demand that housing be treated as health infrastructure, not a charitable afterthought?*

The blueprint is ready. The evidence is compelling. The time is now.

He waka eke noa tātau - We are all in this waka together.

Prepared for publication on the Hard-to-Reach Energy Users Task website (UsersTCP.org) and for engagement with New Zealand government agencies and funding partners.