



Neglect and Nurture

Dr Anna Casey Cox and Dr Rose Black

Window on Waikato Poverty – Issue 6 – May 2016



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Poverty Action Waikato

- ▶ Regional Research and Advocacy Project
- ▶ Began in 2010. Three years funding from Trust Waikato. Primarily voluntary for last 3 years.
- ▶ Influencing and describing the structural determinants of poverty through Window reports, submissions and advocacy events
- ▶ Poverty Action Working Group formed in March 2016:

Associate Professor Polly Atatoa Carr, Professor Martin Thrupp, Robert Moore, Holly Snape, Dr Kyro Selket, Dr Anna Casey Cox and Dr Rose Black



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Acknowledgements

- ▶ Thank you to:
- ▶ All the people from community, health and social service agencies who shared their stories about the day to day realities of poverty, hardship and nurturing that occur in our community.
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- ▶ Professor Martin Thrupp and Associate Professor Polly Atatoa Carr for their recommendations.



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Research: the whats, whys and hows

- ▶ Community focused data gathering with snowball sampling
- ▶ Narrative or story led
- ▶ Group and individual interviews
 - ▶ 15 social service organisations, including: Catholic Social Services; Hamilton Combined Christian Foodbank; Hamilton Homeless Trust; Hamilton Christian Nightshelter Manager; Salvation Army Hamilton; Family Works; English Language Partners New Zealand; Anglican Action and 7 others.
- ▶ Structural lens and analysis
- ▶ Statistics and related research used to develop themes
- ▶ Limitations of research – the report provides a window
- ▶ Themes identified
 - ▶ Barriers and Conditions;
 - ▶ The Neglectful State;
 - ▶ Debt and the Dominance of Market Structures;
 - ▶ Community Serving Community &
 - ▶ Common Good Culture

Barriers and Conditions

- Increasing conditions
- A lack of affordable, accessible transport
- Above the threshold with no support

Social Worker in Schools 3: They [Work and Income] say that people have to go to budgeting, but you can wait up to 3 months for this service. So we have these expectations that they will go to WINZ and then they are told to do this and that...and by the time they have done all that WINZ wants them to do they are starving, they can't afford rent and they don't have power on...

Salvation Army 2: Wages are quite low. I have worked with quite a few families where the Dads are earning just over the income threshold for WINZ support - they can't get food when they need it or get support with the bond payment - they are cut off from the additional supports yet they earn just over the threshold.

Barriers and Conditions

- *Recommendations*

- ▶ Support advocacy services for people with limited resources so that they are able to navigate State welfare services and access all the income and service benefits they require.
- ▶ Work with the Regional Council to ensure that public transport is affordable, or free, for people with limited resources.
- ▶ Work with the New Zealand Transport Agency to ensure that licensing programmes are accessible and available to all people (including young people) with limited resources living in Hamilton.
- ▶ Support access to budgeting services and debt elimination and reduction services.
- ▶ Facilitate a forum with Work and Income to discuss experiences and provide evaluative feedback regarding structural reforms

The Neglectful State

- Blaming and Shaming
- Failing the most vulnerable
- Vulnerable histories
- Outcomes reporting
- Failing our New - New Zealanders

Health Worker: Then somebody said go to Work and Income and see if they can help...I went there and I gave him all I had, my folder and stuff and I begged them for help cause it was 2 months into living here and I felt for my husband. And you know what they said to me – “I am sorry I cannot help you because...” whatever ... that was really, really sad.

Hamilton Christian Nightshelter Manager: Many of the people who do come and stay in the shelter have been in foster care in the past and they have been let go from foster care at 17 years of age...Being left on your own at 17, without a home to go to, is one of the precursors to homelessness.



The Neglectful State

- *Recommendations*

- ▶ Collaboration and Forums
 - ▶ Lead opportunities between central /local government, health, and social service sectors to enhance collaborative work with our most vulnerable people.
 - ▶ Facilitate regular forums where sectors can come together (at grassroots level) to discuss policy, care and nurture issues
- ▶ Policies and Services to support the most vulnerable
 - ▶ Reform foster care
 - ▶ Ensure achievable contractual outcomes for the most vulnerable
 - ▶ Provide opportunities for participation for people with criminal records
 - ▶ Provide adequate support, care and housing for people with mental health problems and addictions
 - ▶ Limit the number of alcohol and gambling outlets in Hamilton
- ▶ Manaakitanga for new New Zealanders
 - ▶ Develop a Pasifika Peoples Resource Centre in Hamilton to support people migrating from the Pacific Islands to make their way in Aotearoa New Zealand.
 - ▶ Extend support beyond the 3 month period with Red Cross for people with refugee backgrounds to enable more time to strengthen community connections.

Debt and the dominance of market structures

- The broken promises of markets
- Predatory markets
- Vulnerable people unable to compete in housing markets
- Sleeping in cars
- Unaffordable housing
- Poor quality housing
- Wrap around services

Community Whānau Support Worker: The trucks might as well live out here [Nawton].

Social Worker in Schools 1: Over the last couple of years I have seen a real change in housing. ...a family that has ended up living out of their car with their children. And another family with five children has had to send two children to a friend's house, two to another home and one to another. The parents are living in the car.



Debt and the dominance of market structures

– *Recommendations*

- Create a by-law to ban mobile retail trucks.
- Create a local warrant of fitness (WOF) for all houses or dwelling that people live in throughout Hamilton.
- Support an initiative to retrofit all rental accommodation in Hamilton so that it meets a WOF standard.
- Ensure affordable rental accommodation is available.
- Provide Emergency accommodation

Community serving community

- Responding with unconditional support
- Food provision
- Creating whakawhānaungatanga
- Advocates

Salvation Army 9: There are so many layers of service that they have to try and work their way through and some people do not have the capacity to work their way through that. The Government does not help people to make their way through it - they hide benefit access from people, so it comes down to agencies like ourselves who try and put it in the context of what is available and advocate on their behalf.

Community Service Administrator: It cost us \$15 in pizza and trophies. The boy turned from a menace to being really helpful - he comes into the centre now and vacuums. He got money from something and bought everyone fish and chips. He is just 9 years old. He has turned from a hassle to the most helpful little guy and all we did was give him some tools. It cost us almost nothing. For \$30 we saved society \$50,000. We turned it around with an invitation to participate.

Community serving community

- *Recommendations*

- Invest in community houses and centres as places of connection and support.
- Eliminate contestable funding.
- Reinststate a solid and generous funding base for each community house and centre.
- Support consistent and ongoing local (suburb level) community events so that relationships can be restored and developed within local communities.

Common good culture

- Relationship and solidarity
 - with the vulnerable, and
 - between services
- Threads of common good society

Manager – Social Service: When we think about gangs, there is sense of belonging – we could all think of something positive about being in a gang. Our cultures are in that negative space and we need to think about how we shift those...creating a new culture because they are caught up in this other culture. We need to create a new culture that fills needs and meets needs.

Salvation Army 6: I think that potentially what we need to do is start building neighbourhood connections. We don't often have neighbourhood connections within our own families, because we are splintered so we need to build those families in our communities – this could be a huge step in reducing the neglect because there are more eyes on people.



Common Good Culture

- *Recommendations*

- Reclaim social justice values of sector
- Work to restore Mana
- Build common good culture

Questions and Discussion

- What are your reflections and questions?



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