15 March 2012

**Ohomairangi Trust**

**Submission to the Maori Affairs Committee Inquiry into Social Determinates of Wellbeing for Maori Children**

We appreciate the opportunity to make a submission on Social Determinates of Wellbeing for Maori Children.

This submission has been prepared by Ohomairangi Trust Early Intervention Service.

Ohomairangi Trust offers the choice of Kaupapa Maori services to Whanau and children with special needs, across Tamaki Makaurau, in order to encourage and enable participation, by providing family centred programmes, early intervention services & supports, based on partnerships which foster positive parenting and resilient relationships through Whakapapa, Kaupapa, and Tino Rangatiratanga.

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Ohomairangi Trust supports a shift from focussing targets on the results of poverty, reducing dependency and vulnerability to one that ends child poverty and outlines clear determinants which improves life for Maori children which will in turn improve the life for all children living in New Zealand. It is important the determinants are based on a Maori world view and be Kaupapa Maori based to enhance relationships within whanau.

**Systematic issues that shape the life experiences of young Maori:**

We note that New Zealand’s spending on children is low, according to the OECD (2009) and agree that “New Zealand needs to take a stronger policy focus on child poverty and child health, especially during the early years when it is easier to make a long-term difference.” Under New Zealand’s commitments to UNCROC, the maximum resources should be allocated to children.

To ensure Maori whanau are safe in their whanau and communities a Coordinated cross sector (Health, Social Development, Housing, Employment, Business, ACC, corrections, Justice, government and NGO) management of the issues and difficulties challenging the daily living of high risk whanau.

All families need access to adequate resources to fulfil parental responsibilities. We must treat the underlying causes of neglect and abuse i.e. poverty and inequality. Growing up in poverty has a cumulative effect on a child and has strong links with neglect and abuse. One in three
Maori children live in relative poverty, with the majority of children experiencing poverty coming from two parent households (Perry 2011). New Zealand cannot afford to continue to marginalise these children by not acting on growing inequality. Consistent with obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi and UNCROC the government must set out a plan to reduce childhood poverty. Ohomairangi trust supports the Commissioner for Children in his recommendation act on child poverty and to set reduction targets (Office for the Commissioner for Children, 2011).

Develop a Maori Capabilities framework to support future planning and interventions. Ensure the Maori Capabilities’ framework which is continued with each successive government and won’t be at risk of being stopped after every election. The framework needs to support a coordinated approach to the following areas which have a huge impact on the wellbeing of whanau:

- Address generational welfare dependency and the affects of historical trauma
- Secure affordable Housing - Reduce family transience and child truancy to increase community cohesion
- Ensure access to education for lifespan - Early childhood, school, tertiary, parenting, adult education, special education. Supporting Parents - In order to promote the best possible conditions for child development we must create a context in which developing the ‘child – parent’ relationship and strong attachments, so that parents can respond to their children is easier than putting a focus on changing faulty parenting practices.
- Create employment opportunities – entrepreneur development, access to tertiary, recruitment, retention, and scholarship funding, and create opportunities and leadership in financial literacy
- Health – free coordinated access, Infant and maternal mental health, life span mental health, antenatal and post natal care, support for teenage pregnancy and parenting,
- Work force development – Evidence-based initiatives where research and evaluation capacity should be linked with all new funding. Therefore government should increase investment in evidence based targeted and progressive programmes. If the focus is to identify when and what support is required rather than statutory intervention (where there is no guarantee of the outcomes)
- Disability - Ohomairangi recognises that children growing up with disability and chronic ill-health are vulnerable because families experience “additional stress, costs, and restrictions on opportunities to work, of leisure time and lack of information about or access to support services.” (Auckland Draft Plan) Children with disabilities make up at least 10% of our population, it is unlikely that they have been considered in the figure of 15% of children considered vulnerable.
Summary

We need the determinates of Wellbeing to incorporate Kaupapa Maori and Maori world View so that we can improve the lives of our children.

There should be a high level coordination.

The total context and environment of the situations our whanau live amongst is important to be aware of when considering responses to needs of Maori Whanau.

Determinants should be supported by specific legislation.


OECD spend - The best interests of child within whanau must be most important consideration, not just economics.

The concepts of ‘Mauri’ in ‘Rethinking Human Wellbeing - be explored and utilised as determinants of ‘Oranga Whanau’

Bibliography


Whakatere T, Pohatu P, - Mauri Rethinking Human wellbeing, unpublished paper

Aroha Gray, Lyn Doherty, on behalf of Ohomairangi Trust