



Submission from Community Waitakere Charitable Trust

To: Solutions to Child Poverty Working Paper No. 19: The role of local strategies in reducing Child Poverty, August 2012

Dated: 11 October 2012

Introduction:

Community Waitakere is a Charitable Trust, dedicated to achieving our vision of a sustainable Waitakere with strong, connected communities.

We have **thirty years** of history in Waitakere, working collaboratively with communities and local/central government to achieve positive social outcomes for our citizens, neighbourhoods and local community organisations. We have been a strong, respected **community leader** and **advocate** for social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing for our communities.

We live, breathe and practice the seven core principles for **community-led development**, but unfortunately have received little funding at all from Central Government in recognition of this role.

However our long-standing partnering agreement with Waitakere City Council clearly acknowledged it and consequently together we achieved many **creative and inspiring outcomes**. This phenomenon, known historically as the “Waitakere Way” is struggling to find its space in the new more complex layers of local governance.

We are recognised locally, regionally and nationally as a **key linkage** between communities and central and local government at all levels. We work across the three Western Local Board areas, and have established positive relationships with them individually and as a “cluster”, particularly in our roles of **advocacy, leadership and connection**.

Community Waitakere commends the expert advisory group on your dedication to this massively complex issue and congratulates you on your summary of proposed options and short and long term action plans. We also acknowledge the contribution made by John Hancock from the Office of the Children’s Commissioner.

We wish to make the following comments in general and in relation to **Working Paper #19** in particular.

1. We agree that economic inequality and the alarming rate of growth of the income gap between rich and poor is at the heart of the issue and we need to find multi-layered collaborative strategies to address this issue.
2. We fully support the concept of strong social networks and this is reflected in this organisation’s vision for “thriving connected communities”.
3. Our work involves strengthening local communities through building capacity based on their individual and collective strengths and assets.
4. We work with other community development organisations, such as Inspiring Communities to uphold the view that it is the interconnection of local, physical, cultural, environmental and people assets which builds strong social networks.

5. Our role is one of capacity building and community development brokerage, ie the “glue” which supports and holds local community initiatives and networks.
6. Unfortunately this role is fairly invisible and cannot easily be quantified and therefore is unattractive to funders including government.
7. Organisations similar to ours experience this same frustration and we know how vulnerable we are in the current environment.
8. We support the implementation of a scoping exercise which identifies key contributors to the development of community level child poverty strategies and mechanisms for their implementation. Community Waitakere already holds much of this knowledge. Partnerships which already exist in Waitakere could easily be tapped into to swiftly deliver on this intent. It is sensible that this work is driven from within the community, based in the community.
9. We concur with the papers concluding observations and will be a willing player in any cross sector partnership to develop, implement and sustain local child poverty reduction strategies.
10. Community Waitakere supports the call for cross-party government policies as inspired by the work of “Every Child Counts”.

Finally we submit that:

- **Community Waitakere is funded to undertake the scoping exercise described in Clause 23.**

and

- **As a lead community development organisation, Community Waitakere is funded by central and/or local government to undertake the project described in Clause 24.**

**Pat Watson
Chief Executive
Community Waitakere**