



Public Questions Network News

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Public Questions News

Election 2011

Prince Devanandan and the Pakaranga Parish hosted a Labour Party candidates meeting on September 10th. The Kapiti Uniting Parish Public questions group is planning a candidates meeting for early November. How is your parish or community planning to be involved in election issues? Do you want information or support? Poverty Action Waikato found that inviting candidates to answer ONE question is a very good way of staying focussed on a key issue.

The Centre for Public Theology has prepared a resource for the election –there are summary pages for this large resource. Topics are: Working for Families. Alcohol, Justice, NZ Identity... <

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/ctpi/resources/otago023959.html>>

Election resources will be available on the NZCCSS www.closetogether.org.nz website covering inequality issues.

Live Below the Line - Overseas support

'Poverty isn't just about - not having enough; it's about not having the opportunity to change your circumstances'



Davishini Devanandan braved the CWS ***Live Below the Line on \$2.25 per day*** to raise awareness of global poverty. **Davishini writes:** '1. 4 billion people across the world live on less than \$2.25 NZ dollars a day. As a young person in a great country like New Zealand, I spend more than that on a cup of coffee without a second thought. When I first heard about the Live Below the Line campaign I took on the challenge and so from 22-26 August I spent only NZ\$2.25 a day on food. But as this amount barely covered the cost of a cheeseburger, my meals for the week required meticulous planning. After much thought and walking back and forth through the aisles of Pak 'n Save armed with \$11.25, I decided to buy a loaf of bread, a packet of pasta, a tub of margarine, six eggs, a can of tomatoes, a can of baked beans, three apples, two carrots and a packet of cookies.'

It wasn't until the middle of the week, when all my friends were going out to celebrate the end of half semester that I realised how much I take my freedom for granted. I have always had the freedom to decide to go out for lunch, or decide what to eat for dinner. But during these five days, I had no choice; it was pasta with canned tomatoes and carrots for dinner. Many of us, especially young people, do not realise that poverty isn't just about - not having enough; it's about not having the opportunity to change your circumstances.



I hope, by giving up some of my first-world luxuries and falling asleep in my 8am lecture, that I raised the topic of global poverty among my friends and supporters. I have been overwhelmed by the support that I have received from my family, my friends, members of Trinity Methodist Pakuranga and others. I am honoured to raise money for the work of Christian World Service among young people in South Sudan.

Next year, I will encourage those interested in making a small difference in the world to take part in this amazing opportunity'.

- Devashini Devanandan

'Child Poverty is the most potent disease causing rheumatic fever' (Dr Lance O'Sullivan). Terry Wall (Remuera Parish) has been advocating for action to stop rheumatic fever. The rates of rheumatic fever are growing in Northland. Unlike meningococcal disease, which is indiscriminate across culture and socio-economic levels, rheumatic fever takes hold in Māori and Pasifika children in poor communities. It develops because of untreated sore throats. This is directly related to inequality, over-crowding and the lack of access to medical services.

Associate Health Minister Tariana Turia wrote to Terry recently to highlight the \$3million per year (for four years) as a budget provision to improve frontline community services for rheumatic fever. This is an example of contributing to work on a public issue and seeing positive results. For an update on meningococcal and rheumatic fever outbreaks go to: RadioLIVE

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/ninetonoon/audio/2498572/meningococcal-outbreak>

Swop fizzy drinks for water to reduce diabetes! Soana Muimuiheata, the Vahefonua representative on the PQ Convening Group, announces a new course on Nutrition and Dietetics, which she will teach. Brochure on the Public Question website and information at www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/nutrition-dietetics

Christchurch Methodist Mission *We can build a better city*



Christchurch
Methodist Mission

With a focus on the Christchurch rebuild Christchurch Methodist Mission is producing a series of discussion papers on some key social issues that could be addressed in the rebuild of Christchurch.

Papers are online: poverty, gambling, housing, alcohol, age-friendliness, and food security.

Papers to come: employment, community sector, social inequalities.

A quote from the housing paper:

Dealing with the issue of housing affordability is one crucial part of the wider story about building a great city. Everyone needs access to a decent home at a price they can afford.

Papers are available <http://www.mmsi.org.nz/our-views.html>

The Pacific Forum Auckland, 2-8 Sept.

Ban Ki Moon was here for the Pacific Forum meetings. En route to NZ he visited the Solomon islands and Kiribati where the Island State is being swamped by climate changes and seas rising - he said

"With waves rising ever higher in this neighbourhood, the oceans are also sending a signal that something is seriously wrong with our current model of economic development."

This very nicely brought the key issues of trade, economic development and climate change together and although all these topics were on the agenda, the question came to mind 'are these being well integrated? Do the economics of trade fit with climate responsibilities?

Some scene setting gave life to the Pacific context. A region that covers one third of the earth's surface with twenty two countries and 10 million people, projected to grow to 20 million by 2050. The region is marked by unequal distributions of resource wealth. About 40% of children do not finish secondary school. There was an alert to the exclusion of NGO's from the Pacific Forum meeting in contrast to the inclusion of Private Sector Investors – which speaks of the economic development focus. While most Pacific Island countries have a small land mass they have ocean territories as Exclusive Economic Zones which cover 35% of the region. Often there is not the governance capacity to manage these vast areas.



The mineral and natural resources wealth of PNG was a feature of discussions with reference to China's significant investment in fisheries and minerals industries in PNG and the region as a whole. A few points on industry in the Pacific:

- New Caledonia has 25% of the world's nickel.
- Seabed mining is being actively developed in the Cook Islands.
- Forestry in the Solomon Islands is proceeding at 6 times the sustainable rate (of renewable capacity) and it is expected forests supplies will be exhausted in 5 years.
- Fiji's logging industry includes processing of logs which results in four times the value of unprocessed logs.
- Two thirds of fish processing goes out of the region.
- The export of logs and coconut oil is offset by the cost of importing crude oil.

Examples were given of policy frameworks which could be viewed as prioritising sustainability – in the context of going with an economic development model. One is from PNG, another on Cruising. Investment in Human Development is a theme for this model.

1. The Misima Gold Mine in PNG. The points of interest are that the community was involved in decisions about mining development; the company have undertaken to train nurses and teachers, to build schools and to support local businesses to increase local standards of living. Misima has established a fund for the future.
2. The Cruising industry illustrated ways of bringing economic opportunities to local communities, supporting local crafts and food products and by offering employment on cruise ships. There were questions of equity as to which communities get to be partners with the shipping companies and the impact of the massive cruise liners on small island coastal communities.

Questions that were raised at a pre-Forum conference were:

- How are we to be remembered by future generations?
- Can we be the think-tank that leads to policy frameworks and planning that demonstrate our responsibilities in the future?
- What is the purpose of education in the region? Is it education for economic development?
- How can good governance incorporate traditional management with modern values?
- How can the benefits of economic development be shared with women?

Many challenges were raised – as implied in these questions. The impact of trade agreements was a high priority and the impacts of climate change with rising sea levels, ocean surges and ocean acidification, another. Surges erode the resources of coastal livelihoods. Ocean acidification kills coral reefs and destroys fisheries and these raise overwhelming concerns, with few solutions at hand given that these effects are caused outside the Pacific region. Barry Coats of Oxfam noted that across the discussions on trade and natural resource industries there was no mention of poverty in Pacific countries.

More on trade, and questions of how to distribute the gains from economic development now and into the future in another edition!

Events

Social Finance Workshop 31st October. Auckland.

The New Zealand Community Economic Development Network, with Philanthropy New Zealand, is hosting a workshop with Clara Miller, a leading international expert in the area of social finance. The workshop will include discussion of the benefits and challenges of accessing social finance within the NZ context.

Details: 10:00am - 2:30pm Monday 31 October. BNZ, Level 8, 80 Queen Street, Auckland. RSVP to info@socialdevelopment.org.nz to register. No cost.

Clara Miller, the speaker is President of a grant making foundation in New York dedicated to building wealth in low income communities.

Response to Poverty in Wellington. Monday 17th October. 6-7.30 pm. St Peters, Willis St.

Speakers: Stephanie McIntyre, Brian Easton. Chaired by Bp Richard Randerson. www.stpeterwillis.org.nz

Climate tour with Dr. Jim Salinger, Prof. Caroline Saunders and Rod Oram: Nationwide, August - November

Three of New Zealand's leading climate experts are on a regional speaking series. Climate scientist Jim Salinger, Professor Caroline Saunders from Lincoln University (carbon foot printing of agricultural exports) and business commentator Rod Oram present a session on "Maintaining farm productivity and profits in an uncertain climate". The dates and places and local contacts are listed here for brevity. Visit website for details. <http://www.oxfam.org.nz/what-you-can-do/events#Salinger>

28 September: Whakatāne 1:00 - 3:30pm. Contact Ben.Banks@envbop.govt.nz

30 September: Palmerston North 10:30am-1:00pm. Contact Ally.Koehler@horizons.govt.nz

10 October: Oamaru: 12:00 - 2:00pm. Contact rmabon@waitaki.govt.nz

10 October: Palmerston: 6:30 - 9:00pm. Contact dugald@es.co.nz

11 October: Dunedin: 10:30am - 12:30pm. Climate Change and Opportunities for the Agricultural Economy. Contact: chris.rosin@otago.ac.nz

A second seminar will look at ethics and intergenerational issues at the Centre for Theology and Public Issues, University of Otago. Contact. Andrew Bradstock andrew.bradstock@otago.ac.nz

27 October: Invercargill: 1:30pm - 3:30pm. Contact michele.poole@es.govt.nz

November 1: Wellington: 4.30 - 6.30 pm. Climate Change and Opportunities for the Economy. Contact liz.thomas@vuw.ac.nz

7 November: Blenheim: 3:00 - 5:00pm. Contact Rob.Agnew@plantandfood.co.nz

A FREE computing programme for your congregation

The Skills Update Training Institute and Open Polytechnic offer an A Level 2 Business Administration and Computing course FREE! The programme is geared towards a National Certificate in Business Administration and Computing Level 2 and is based on Open Polytechnic structure. It teaches use of Microsoft Word, Excel and Access. For questions and enrolment information, please contact Lincoln Phillips on 022 043 8855.

Welfare Reform

There have been four or five major reports on Welfare in the past few months. We have given a summary of the Government *Green Paper* and the Every Child Counts '**1000 Days to Get it Right**'.

Two further reports give more profile to child poverty.

Te Ara Hou The Pathway Forward was also commissioned by Every Child Counts to explore the factors contributing to Māori and Pasifika child poverty. An important dimension of this report is the idea that the goals for Māori and Pasifika children and families should not be framed in terms of achieving the same levels as that of other groups. Rather the aspirations and goals for change need to be in accordance with what is valued by Māori communities and reflect the unified world view of te ao mārama – the world of light. This opens up the scope of setting targets in accordance with wellbeing of spirituality, environment, whanau and kinship, and economic security. Mauri, as the binding force between the spiritual and physical realms, is a dimension of Māori philosophy which can be seen as akin to the pathway to sustainability.

A Mauri model created on what is a 'good life' works with a 'capabilities approach.' This comes from ideas of people centred policies rather than economic measures of development. The Mauri model incorporates strength and wellbeing, mahi (work), a place to live and care in sickness and death. A discussion on wisdom highlights the ethical qualities woven into respect for people, reconciliation, and the importance of guidance from those with expertise in formulating goals and policies.

Some of the facts: Just over half of the 200,000 (23%) children living in poverty in Aotearoa NZ are Māori and Pasifika. They are more likely to live in over-crowded houses and to have two or three times the rate of illness than other children. Unemployment rates are much higher.

General unemployment is around 6.5% and Māori unemployment is around 14% as is Pasifika unemployment. Māori also have a 14% lower wage rate than Europeans. Educational success is a key to turning these figures around – but poor outcomes persist.

The philosophy to direct aspirations in *Te Ara Hou* embraces prosperity in terms of the common or shared good, and the quest for a good life for all peoples of Aotearoa.

<http://img.scoop.co.nz/media/pdfs/1109/He Ara Hou Report 2011 FINAL.pdf>

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) has released a new report 'Left Further Behind': how policies fail the poorest children in New Zealand. The report says 'the intensification of work-based philosophy, with proposed welfare reforms promising further impact on the wellbeing of poor children and their families, has been accompanied by fewer jobs available in far less favourable economic times'. CPAG points to our shared responsibility in ensuring children are given the support they need to grow into healthy adults equipped to contribute to the wellbeing of society. *Left Further Behind* notes that economic inequality has a major effect on population health (p.11). Recommendations to highlight as practical recommendations for changes that will stop child poverty – in summary:

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- Remove work-based rules for child financial assistance and pay the equivalent of the In-Work-Tax-Credit to all low income families.
- Acknowledge the vital social and economic contribution made by good parenting: ensuring childcare and early childhood education, including kohanga reo and play centres, is available for all children; and ensure that training allowances for sole parents education
- Government funds for a national housing plan to address the emerging housing shortages identified by the Department of Building. Meanwhile, ensure that housing is affordable and appropriate (e.g. address overcrowding, dampness, cold);
- Funding for low decile schools to ensure that all children have access to high quality education.

For your interest: CPAG is continuing their legal case against the government with the claim that the Working Form Families tax credit system discriminates against the children of non-working families. *Left Further Behind*:

<<http://www.cpag.org.nz/assets/sm/upload/jq/66/v2/dv/WEB%20VERSION%20OF%20LFB.pdf>>

Further information on Welfare reform will be on the Public Questions website.

Resources



Caritas – Level with Me.

On a Caritas blog all countries playing in the Rugby World Cup are ranked on inequality, gender inequality, happy Planet, Military spending, Transparency and Aid. Can you find out which is the fairest country?
<http://socialjusticeweek.org.nz/>

Caritas Social Justice Resource 'On a Level Playing Field. Fair play and the Common Good' is available from the Caritas website.

http://www.caritas.org.nz/sites/default/files/On%20a%20level%20playing%20field%20-%20Social%20Justice%20Week%20booklet%202011_1.pdf>

NZCCSS Vulnerability Report

This three monthly report is of the best of the regular documentations of vulnerability in new Zealand. June marked a two year anniversary the compilation of material on unemployment, housing, food and petrol prices, food bank use and cost of living.

Food bank use has gone up in all centres, as at **Wesley Porirua** foodbanks community garden.

People who use the foodbank tend the garden and the produce is included in food parcels.

Cooking and nutrition classes are planned. In the first four months of this year, 614 people had applied for food parcels compared to 400 in the same period last year, and 273 in 2008.

Donations of food have also reduced (Kena Duignan, Cannons Creek Community Pantry Project).

The new Vulnerability Report is due out this week at:

<http://www.nzccss.org.nz/uploads/publications/VRissue10.pdf>

PQ News Clipping for Parish Bulletins

Several Parish Superintendents and Ministers have requested a short item that can be published in Parish bulletins. This item is a story by Davashini Devanandan, Prince's daughter, living below the poverty line.

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