



Roundtable Discussion on “The Heart of Poverty”

For the Sake of Our Children Trust received an invitation to participate in a roundtable meeting concerning the “Heart of Poverty” discussion paper coming out of Maxim Institute.

Trust Manager, Rachel Afeaki Taumoepeau attended the meeting in Auckland alongside with leaders from local NGOs, social service agencies and social community leaders currently working towards mitigating poverty in their respective line of work. A second meeting was also held in with leaders in Wellington.

Those in attendance at the Auckland meeting included representation from Tangata Te Whakaora, the Salvation Army, The Anglican Trust for Women and Children, The Village Trust, AUT, Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Venn Foundation and Maxim were in attendance.

In summary, the Paper addresses 4 areas to the discussion around Poverty: The **problem** of poverty and how best NZ society can **understand** poverty based on ideology: social vs political, moral vs justice, absolute vs relative ideologies which in turn raising the question of NZ as a Nation **defining Poverty** – and is it the role of government to provide this. The need for Poverty **to be measured** is examined with current measurements discussed and its validity of indicators and standards under two main traditional methods: poverty line studies and living standards.

Rachel presented the views of the Trust with poverty concerning children and their relative position within the family and society. Highlighted was the fact that the causes of poverty are very similar (if not the same) to that of child abuse and neglect as highlighted in the Trust’s Declaration for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect:

- i) The significant decline in marriage within society
- ii) The failure of society to accept that marriage is important for the protection of our children
- iii) Family relationship/structure breakdown
- iv) Welfare dependency of vulnerable families
- v) The culture of alcohol and drug abuse in NZ

Following the meeting For the Sake of Our Children Trust management sent through its recommendations to contribute to the discussion paper with a strong emphasis on causation of

poverty and what policy development is required to mitigate such causes without being too politically correct. The Trust highlighted the intergenerational aspect of poverty arising and that the need to change social policy today is vital for future generations to experience reformative change.