

# Working Paper no. 14:

## Reducing Child Poverty in Māori Whānau

Expert Advisory Group on  
Solutions to Child Poverty

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### Purpose

1. This paper was prepared to inform the EAG's analysis and recommendations on actions to reduce child poverty in Māori whānau.
2. While Māori are to be found within all socioeconomic sectors of New Zealand society, Māori children are over-represented in child poverty statistics. If child poverty is to be reduced in New Zealand, the solutions will need to work for Māori. The social location of Māori in New Zealand means that there are particular issues in relation to Māori child poverty that pose distinctive policy challenges and responses.
3. This paper does not purport to be a comprehensive overview of Māori and poverty; rather five key issues are addressed. Māori child poverty and its measurement are examined first, followed by brief descriptions of how education, housing, health and justice are inter-related with Māori child poverty. The focus of this paper is on younger Māori children while it is acknowledged that many of the concerns highlighted impact on children and young people (0-17 years) and their wider whānau.
4. This paper has informed the direction and recommendations of the *EAG's Solutions to Child Poverty in New Zealand: Issues and Options Paper for Consultation*. These are preliminary findings, and a final report will be published in December 2012. The findings in this paper do not necessarily represent the individual views of all EAG members. The EAG acknowledge the work of Dr Tracey McIntosh, Dr Fiona Cram and Sharon Wilson-Davis in its preparation.
5. This paper needs to be read in conjunction with other EAG Working Papers especially *EAG Working Paper no. 12: Employment, Skills and Training Options to Reduce Child Poverty*; *EAG Working Paper no. 17: Health Policy and Effective Service Delivery to Mitigate the Effects of Child and Youth Poverty*; *EAG Working Paper no. 16: Education solutions to mitigate child poverty*; *EAG Working Paper no. 18 Housing policy recommendations to address child poverty*; and *EAG Working Paper no. 19: The Role of Local Strategies in Reducing Child Poverty*.

## Māori context

6. It is important to consider Māori poverty within the context of the impact of the experience of colonisation on Māori. The alienation of land and resources is not only the loss of a cultural and spiritual base but is also the loss of an economic base (Cram, 2011). There is an extensive literature that engages with this history (Walker, 1990, 2004; Greenland, 1991; Poata-Smith, 1996, 2004, Durie, 1998, 2000, 2007, 2011; Smith, 1999; Pihama, 2002, Cram, 2011). This is reinforced in a recent research report (*Te Pumautanga o te Whānau*) published by the Families Commission documenting the experiences of Māori whānau living in financial hardship. It notes that any analysis of the financial and material deprivation of whānau today is incomplete without understanding the role played by the colonial government in relation to the early growth of Māori economic development and the impact of its loss through confiscation and war (Baker, Williams & Tuuta, 2012).
7. It is also important to recognise that the influence of colonisation is not just a historical one. Its impact has been long-reaching and it continues to shape and inform attitudes towards Māori. The devastating effects of ongoing racism and discrimination in health and elsewhere have been well documented (Reid, 1999; Robson & Harris, 2007; Mills, Reid & Vaithianathan, 2012). Cram (2011, p.156) notes that the legacy of colonialism has been the ‘differential distribution of social, political, environmental and economic resources and wellbeing within this country with Māori bearing the brunt of disparities in many areas’.
8. Research suggests that Māori whānau (along with Pasifika families) have borne the brunt of economic restructuring during the 1980s – 2000s (Blaiklock et al., 2002). The current financial global crisis (GFC) has further worsened the situation. While the impact of the GFC has created widespread negative outcomes, it has particularly affected Māori. Māori workers have experienced disproportionate job losses, with Māori youth having been particularly affected. Māori youth employment declined by 21.5 percent between June 2008 and June 2010. Over the same period the fall in employment for all youth was 10.3 percent (DOL, 2010). This, coupled with the higher proportion of sole parent families, lower home ownership, lower education attainment and poorer health outcomes, means that Māori are much more likely to be living in a low-income situation.

## Māori children

9. One of the key characteristics of Māori demography is its relatively youthful age structure. In 2011 just over one-third of the Māori population were aged less than 15 years compared to the Pākehā/Others population where the proportion was just under one-fifth. At the older ages, less than one in 20 Māori were aged 65 years or older, compared with one in six for Pākehā/Others. The Māori population is therefore a

youthful population compared to the Pākehā/Other population. Of those under 18 years of age approximately one quarter are Māori (Kukutai, 2011).

10. Statistics New Zealand (2011) projects that by 2026 the Māori population will grow to over 800,000 increasing by 1.35 percent per annum (with Pasifika populations increasing at an annual rate of 2.4 percent). *The Social Report* (MSD, 2010) notes that within two decades two out of five New Zealand children will be Māori or Pasifika. This growth means that Māori and Pasifika children will play a significant role in shaping the future social and economic health of New Zealand (Henare, Puckey & Nicholson, 2011).

## Māori child poverty

### *Recommendation 1:*

*Targets should be set to reduce the rates of poverty experienced by children and eliminate the disparity in the poverty experienced by Māori children.*

### *Recommendation 2:*

*Māori-centric data should be generated that acknowledges and captures Māori concepts of poverty and wealth.*

### *Rationale*

11. Māori children are proportionally more likely than Pākehā children to be exposed to the impacts and effects of poverty than the average New Zealand child. The rates of severe and persistent poverty amongst Māori children are at least double the rates for Pākehā children (Imlach Gunasekara and Carter, 2012). In 2004-2005 13 percent of Māori children, compared to five percent of non-Māori children, were living in severe poverty (as measured by those living in households with less than 60 percent of the median gross income and also experiencing material deprivation, where the threshold is a lack of three or more items on the NZiDep scale). Just under one third of Māori children, compared to around 15 percent of other children, were living in persistent poverty (as measured by those in households with less than 60 percent of the median gross income for at least three of four years during 2005-06 to 2008-09).
12. Māori children are more likely to grow up in households in receipt of benefits or with low incomes than the average New Zealand child<sup>1</sup>. Around 42 percent of current Domestic Purposes Benefit recipients are Māori (Bryan Perry, 2011). Māori children are less likely

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<sup>1</sup>Working-age recipients of *all* main benefits (aged 18–64 years), at the end of March 2007 and March 2012 – Māori 31.1 percent (2007), 33.2 percent (2012) Unemployment Benefit recipients (aged 18–64 years), at the end of March 2007 and March 2012 – 34.3 percent (2007), 36.5 percent (2012), as compared with the unemployment rate for all people, (6.6 percent March 2012) (MSD, 2012).

to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills<sup>2</sup>, and less likely to attend university<sup>3</sup>. Māori youth are less likely to be engaged in education or employment<sup>4</sup>, and less likely to achieve NCEA level 2 or above<sup>5</sup>. Māori children are also more likely to live in crowded housing than Pākehā children. A Māori child growing up in poverty in New Zealand has two to three times poorer health than a non- Māori child.

13. For many Māori children child poverty translates into poor educational performance, high offending rates, severe and on-going health problems, low income and high state dependency rates (Salmond, 2003). Poverty severely limits the opportunities and aspirations of children (St John et al, 2001, 2008; Blaiklock et al, 2002; Dale, M., O'Brien, M. & St John, S. 2011; Henare, Puckey & Nicholson, 2011). For Māori children the effects of poverty lead to their social exclusion and marginalisation from the broader society and may also limit their opportunities to fully participate in their whānau, hapu and iwi (Durie, 1998). Moreover, poor children largely grow up to be poor adults and so poverty has significant inter-generational aspects.
14. While recognising that the Māori child develops in whānau and community settings and the importance of situating the child in these larger contexts, it is also useful to consider the experience of poverty from the perspective of the Māori child. Policy that intends to produce positive outcomes for Māori must be mindful of whānau dynamics and also needs to be attentive to the specificity of the impact of the policy on the child. The way that Māori children experience poverty is multi-faceted and the outcomes of growing up in conditions of material scarcity and deprivation are varied. However, we do know that for too many children their health, education and life-course outcomes are likely to be poorer than for other children. Early engagement with the criminal justice system, for example, maps on to poverty statistics. An investment strategy that ensures that Māori achieve positive outcomes in health, education, housing, employment and justice will make a huge contribution to the nation's future economic, cultural and social prosperity.
15. The need for a holistic measure of Māori well-being is a common theme in the literature. One of the key messages in the report He Ara Hou: The Path Forward is to note that current measurements of well-being are inadequate and that there is a need to develop

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<sup>2</sup>Year 11 Māori students meeting the reading literacy and numeracy criteria for NCEA level 1 (2010) – 65.7 percent (80.1 percent non-Māori).

<sup>3</sup>Percentage of qualified Māori school leavers who attend university (2010) – 23.1 percent (50.1 percent non-Māori); Percentage of Māori school leavers entering tertiary education at level 4 or above within 2 years of leaving school (2006) – 27 percent (non- Māori 42.9 percent) (MoE, 2012).

<sup>4</sup>The NEET rate is a key measure of youth disengagement. Among 15-24 year olds, in the year to March 2012, 17.6 percent of Māori males and 27.5 percent of Māori females were NEET, compared with 11.5 percent of all males and 14.6 percent of females in this age group (DOL, 2012).

<sup>5</sup>Māori school leavers with NCEA level 2 or above (2010) – 53.9 percent (77 percent non- Māori).

new measures and indices that reflect Māori (and Pasifika) values, spirituality and capabilities (Henare, Puckey & Nicholson, 2011). Māori and whānau-centred solutions need data that is relevant to Māori and draws on their own experience. Māori notions of child and whānau poverty and wealth need to inform data collection that enhances and adds nuance to the current disparity analysis of child poverty (Henare, Puckey & Nicholson, 2011). Such data will be useful for iwi as iwi leaders plan to serve their rohe and for the more effective targeting of government and non-government services and support. For example, the Māori terms pōhara (poverty, the condition of being poor or cut off from opportunity); tōnui (prosperous, particularly in regard to the collective good and the acts of seeking a good life and kōkiri (coming together as a collective fuelled with a common purpose or goal) are useful in informing the development of Māori centred measures.

16. **The EAG recommends** that the Government, working with iwi and Māori organisations, develop appropriate measures and indicators that include Māori concepts of poverty and wealth, to allow for a more mindful understanding of how Māori whānau and children experience poverty. Data on Māori whānau also needs to be better disaggregated to allow for a more nuanced understanding of the diversity of experiences of whānau. The development of such measures and data sets that capture Māori understandings of well-being, prosperity and poverty will inform evidence-based Māori-centred adaptive solutions.

## Education

### **Recommendation 3:**

*The EAG endorses the Government's Better Public Services Targets to increase the proportion of Māori children participating in early childhood education; increase of Māori learners with NCEA Level 2 or an equivalent qualification and increasing the proportion of Māori in the 25 to 34 year old bracket who have a qualification of Level 4 or above. The EAG recognises the centrality of te reo Māori to Māori culture and mana. It acknowledges the importance of te reo Māori and the benefits to the individual and to the community.*

### **Recommendation 4:**

*The Ministry of Education scale up successful Māori education initiatives by supporting the gathering of evaluative evidence that will inform education policy.*

### **Recommendation 5:**

*The EAG recommends that the Government ensures continued investment in research that supports evidence-based practice that increases levels of achievement for Māori children.*

## *Rationale*

17. Education is integral to the development of human potential. Poor educational achievement has long lasting effects and close correlations to the earnings of adults over their lifetimes. Educational achievement and poverty are closely aligned.
18. Māori educational achievement needs to be understood within the context that New Zealand by international standards produces high educational achievement for some at the same time that it produces low educational achievement for others. In short, New Zealand has a high quality, low equity education system. A poor educational outcome for New Zealand children breaks down into specific social and cultural groups largely from low socioeconomic Māori and Pasifika backgrounds (McKinley & Hoskins, 2011).
19. University qualifications yield a 62 percent privilege in life-long earnings over all other post-secondary qualifications (Salmond, 2003). However too many Māori children leave school without formal education. In 2008, 43 percent of all male students and 34 percent of all female students who left school in year 10 were Māori. Māori make up the lowest proportion of students (47.8 percent) who leave school attaining at least NCEA Level 2. Māori also make up the smallest proportion (20 percent) of New Zealand school students who attain University Entrance. While Māori (and Pasifika) school leavers have seen significant proportional increases in gaining University Entrance standard qualifications since 2004, the disparities between Māori and other ethnic groups have not reduced over this time (Ministry of Education, 2011a, 2011b, OCC, 2011).
20. The EAG acknowledges that the achievement of Māori students is a priority for the current Government. Educational achievement for Māori students features in three of the Better Public Service Targets, set by the Prime Minister. Government agencies have been tasked with significantly increasing Māori participation in early childhood education, increasing the numbers of Māori learners with NCEA Level 2 or an equivalent qualification and increasing the proportion of Māori in the 25 to 34 year old bracket who have an NCEA qualification of Level 4 or above. The EAG endorses this work and strategies implemented that will achieve such targets. There is reason for optimism; for example, early childhood education participation rates are improving for Māori. At the same time there is much that needs to be done to move beyond incremental change toward positive transformative change. Quality early childhood education through to tertiary level participation is key to wealth creation in the broadest sense of creating the conditions for Māori to lead rich productive individual and collective lives
21. Robson, Cormack and Cram (2007) note the significant contribution that Māori communities have made to education in New Zealand. The development of kohanga reo, kura kaupapa, wharekura and wananga has led to increased Māori participation at all educational levels. In Māori medium education the principal language of instruction is Māori and education is based on Māori culture and values. Māori medium education

settings cater for pre-schoolers and school students from Years 1 to 8, with a small number of settings providing education for students up to Year 13. This establishment of Māori medium education has been aligned with an improvement in educational outcomes for their Māori students (Irwin et al., 2011). Māori medium schools have been referred to internationally as effective models for strengthening social cohesion and engaging indigenous people in educational opportunities. The UNESCO Report, Education for All (2010) stated *“New Zealand’s kohanga reo movement has demonstrated what a powerful force indigenous language revitalisation can be, not only for education but also for social cohesion”* (p. 206).

22. While most schools teach in English, some teach in the Māori language. **The EAG recommends** that students should have the option of choosing Māori medium schools when they so desire. In order for this to be possible, these opportunities would need to be extended to additional communities. New funding models are needed to support Māori medium education, especially at the secondary level where small pupil numbers dictate a narrow range of subject choices. Workforce development is also required.
23. The majority of Māori children attend mainstream English-medium schools. While the last 40 years have seen a significant shift in attitudes around the incorporation of Māori dimensions into the existing curriculum, achievement gains for Māori children have been modest. Increased levels of achievement for Māori children depends upon:
  - school and community leadership
  - teacher quality
  - whānau engagement
  - a responsive and accessible curriculum
  - the guidance of Māori children onto academic pathways that encourage higher education and prioritising student retention (McKinley & Hoskins, 2011).
24. Leadership is also crucial to enhancing Māori student achievement. Leadership must go beyond the school gates and demonstrate a commitment to Māori communities to fully address inequities in Māori student achievement (Johnson, 2002; Bishop, 2006, 2008; McKinley and Hoskins, 2011; MOE, 2012a, 2012b).
25. To enhance Māori educational achievement it is necessary that educational decision-making is informed by good data. It is critical that schools develop the knowledge and skills to collect and interpret data on student achievement, particularly data that informs schools about educational disparities so that they can develop strategies to help ensure equitable student outcomes. Mobility of Māori whānau living in conditions of poverty is significant. The production of quality data that is accessible and effectively used will go some way in revealing how schools are performing. Quality data must be coupled with a sense of responsibility to improve Māori achievement rates that go beyond compliance and encourage the mobilisation of efforts in schools to achieve sustainable change and a

shift in the educational sector to produce high quality, high equity education (McKinley & Hoskins, 2011).

26. Schooling must enable Māori to live as Māori and allow them to fully participate and to contribute to Māori communities and the broader society as Māori (Durie, 2001; McKinley & Hoskins, 2011). This does not entail a limiting of the curriculum; rather, it means the provision and access to a full range of contemporary global knowledge so that Māori can also fully contribute as global citizens (Bishop, 2006; Bishop & Berryman, 2012).
27. **The EAG recommends** that the Ministry of Education implement educational initiatives that facilitate Māori student success by supporting evaluation of 'successful' educational innovation and drawing upon evidence-based research.
28. As noted in *the EAG Working Paper no. 16: Education solutions to mitigate child poverty*, schools have a vital role to play not only in lifting educational achievement for those living in conditions of material deprivation but also mitigating some of the broader effects of child poverty. Educational achievements directly contribute to improved health, higher standards of living and greater participation in all aspects of social life.

## Housing

### **Recommendation 6:**

*Immediate actions should be taken to ensure the security of housing tenure in quality housing stock (whether owned or rented by Māori) for Māori families with children*

### **Recommendation 7:**

*The government should develop a range of additional practical measures to increase the ability for Māori low-income households with children to purchase their own home.*

### **Recommendation 8:**

*A co-ordinated strategy (government, Iwi, NGO sector) should be developed to ameliorate Māori homelessness.*

### **Recommendation 9:**

*To address the serious undersupply of social and iwi housing, the government should take immediate actions to increase the number of affordable houses to meet the needs of whānau with children.*

### **Recommendation 10:**

*The Government, NGO sector and iwi should recognise homelessness as a significant issue.*

### **Recommendation 11:**

*Working in partnership, the Government, NGO sector and iwi should develop a specific strategy to prevent Māori homelessness; a strategy that aligns with the principles of the treaty of Waitangi.*

### **Context**

29. Māori views on housing and land are diverse. They can range from conceptions that associate housing and land strongly with whakapapa and tribal areas to those that view houses and land as being important in meeting financial, security, social and economic status and need. There is a strong indication however, that housing policies that do not value the social, spiritual and cultural aspects of housing as well as the economic and social status aspects are unlikely to be adequate when addressing the housing expectations and aspirations of Māori (Waldegrave et al., 2006).
30. Māori are largely an urban people and have been for five decades. While prior to WWII the majority of Māori lived in rural areas, within two decades of the end of the war Māori had made major shifts to urban areas. Today 85 percent of Māori live in statistically defined urban areas. However, it is important to recognise that the term 'urban' comprises a range of population densities including minor urban areas with as few as 1,000 residents to metropolitan cities with a minimum of 30,000 residences. The Māori urban experience can be diverse with more Māori likely to live in minor urban areas than the national distribution (Kukutai, 2011). This means that Māori are less likely to live in main urban areas where essential services and jobs are concentrated.
31. It is also noted that for some, iwi affiliation and ties to a rohe, may make Māori less mobile and hence more vulnerable to regional labour market conditions (Henare, Puckey & Nicholson, 2011). For those Māori who remain or return to ancestral land there is often significant housing pressure. Easing of financial and regulatory barriers that would help Māori obtain finance on multiple-owned Māori land would assist housing sovereignty and bring benefits to the collective (Gravitas Research, 2005). Māori housing needs are complex and need multi-faceted adaptive solutions (The New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2012).

### **Social and iwi housing**

32. Over-crowding and sub-standard housing causing health risks and inadequate heating have been identified as issues that warrant critical attention for Māori (Waldegrave et al., 2006). Māori children are more likely to live in crowded housing. Even though rates of

crowding have declined for Māori and Pasifika peoples since 1986 they are still higher than for people with NZ European ethnicity. The proportions of people living in crowded conditions has stayed relatively stable at five percent for people with NZ European ethnicity, 23 percent for Māori, and 43 percent for people with Pacific ethnicity (Statistics NZ, 2012a).

33. In 2006, about 12 percent of the Māori population resided in Housing New Zealand Corporation housing. This compares to two percent of the NZ European population and 26 percent of the Pasifika population (Flynn, Carne & Soa-Lafoa'i, 2010).
34. Access to warm, stable, safe and high quality housing is an important determinant of good health (Howden-Chapman & Carroll, 2004). The impact of poor housing during childhood has significant social and financial costs that seriously damage life chances. These issues are addressed in length in *EAG Working Paper no. 18: Housing policy recommendations to address child poverty*. That many Māori whānau with children are not able to access a standard of housing that will ensure their children grow up healthy is a critical issue. Social housing is an important part of the solution to this.
35. Social housing is of critical importance for many low-income families and expansion of the stock of such housing should be a high priority. A high portion of New Zealand's most disadvantaged families, many of whom are Māori whānau, live in social housing. When compared to the New Zealand population, social housing tenants are disproportionately Māori (44 percent). By social housing, we are referring to housing provided on the basis of assessed financial and social need; at subsidised rates; with active tenancy management. This term would include all iwi owned and managed housing stock. There is growing evidence that social housing is a very effective way of protecting children in poverty. For example, in the United States, a large sample of children of low-income renter families who receive public housing subsidies, found that children in these families are less likely to have anthropometric indications of under-nutrition than those of comparable families not receiving housing subsidies, especially if the family is not only low income but also food insecure.
36. At less than five percent of the total housing stock, New Zealand has a comparatively small social housing sector, and the overwhelming proportion of this is owned and managed by Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC). On current policy settings, while the stock of social housing is likely to remain relatively stable, it will continue to fall as a proportion of the total housing stock.
37. Demand for social housing significantly exceeds supply. While there is reason to question the HNZC waiting lists as a reliable indication of demand, it is fair to assume they are under-estimates of actual demand, and a portion of those in private rentals would be better served in social housing. With historically relatively high levels of unemployment, the excess demand for social housing can be expected to continue, if not increase, over

the medium-to-long-term.

38. Expanding the stock of social housing should be a long-term commitment and will require a considerable capital investment over an extended period of time. There should be adequate support for, and incentives to encourage, the expansion of the community housing sector, including on-going capital and operational support, although it remains to be seen whether the community housing sector can provide the economies of scale available to HNZN.
39. Current policy settings do not assist the development of community and iwi housing. In particular, those renting from community housing providers are not eligible for income-related rental subsidies. Thus, they are at a disadvantage relative to those who are housed by HNZN. Moreover, if community housing providers supply houses at below market rentals, this will reduce the level of assistance available to renters via the Accommodation Supplement, with no offsetting subsidy to the provider.
40. Given the importance of social and iwi housing to ensure Māori whānau can access affordable and quality housing, **the EAG recommends** that the government should take immediate actions to increase the number of affordable houses to meet the needs of whānau with children.

### **Māori home ownership**

41. Māori home ownership rates are lower than for the general population and have been falling since the 1950s. In 2006, Māori children under the age of 10 were more likely to live in rented homes while Māori adults were also more likely to live in rented homes when under the age of 40 years (Flynn, Carne & Soa-Lafoa'i, 2010).
42. Māori aspirations to own their home align strongly with the aspirations of other New Zealanders. Barriers to Māori achieving home ownership include: lower average earnings; high and rising housing costs; difficulties in obtaining finance; lack of knowledge about home ownership; difficulty in assessing services and information; low motivation; discrimination; high regulatory and bureaucratic costs in both urban and rural environments and high development costs particularly in rural areas (Waldegrave et al., 2006). Housing costs exacerbate the poverty experienced by low-income households and particularly those households with children. Households that rent are generally younger and poorer than owner-occupier households (Henare, Puckey & Nicholson, 2011). There are a range of measures that could support more low income Māori families become home owners:
  - Welcome Home Loans and a possibly enhanced KiwiSaver first-home deposit subsidy programme

- subsidised and guaranteed 5-10 year low mortgage interest rates for first time home owners
  - shared equity models
  - deposit assistance schemes.
43. Affordable housing developments could be more viable with support from local councils planning. For example, surplus government and Council land could be sold on preferential terms to community housing and affordable housing suppliers. The community benefit could be captured through a betterment tax, created by rezoning land for residential developments.
  44. Because of their rating base and their capacity to raise local government bonds, councils have a number of financial policy instruments that they could use to increase affordable home-ownership. For example, councils could offer Affordable Housing Bonds. Despite political pressure not to raise rates, councils have financial flexibility to enable Development Impact Levies to be amortised over the life-cycle of development. Resource and building consent processes streamlined with efficiency gains. Entrepreneurial councils could also support public/private/community partnerships or the growth of third party social enterprises that concentrate on increasing the supply of affordable housing.
  45. The challenges of building homes on Māori land must be addressed. For many Māori communities, housing is valued more for keeping whānau connected to land, tradition, tūpuna, and whanaunga, than as a financial investment. This is not to say that Māori are never interested in housing for financial reasons, but housing solutions for Māori will sometimes need to be different, particularly in areas of traditional settlement. The government can assist with Māori housing development by providing advice to Māori landowners, with aspirations to build housing on their whenua, to guide them through consent processes as well as providing advice on options for management structures for their Māori land.
  46. The government and councils could both play a role in developing plans for the use of Māori land for housing by developing options to adapt existing lending policies and precedents for private finance institutes to lend for building homes on Māori land. Both central and local government need to work with iwi and other Māori leaders to develop a private-public partnership model to increase the stock of housing for Māori and increase Māori involvement in community housing provision.
  47. **The EAG recommends** the government should develop a range of additional practical measures to increase the ability for Māori low-income households with children to purchase their own home.

### **Māori homelessness**

48. Homelessness in New Zealand does not have the profile that it should. Māori are over-represented as part of New Zealand's homeless. Homelessness affects women, families

with children, youth and the elderly as well as the commonly-held stereotypes of homeless single men. It is an extreme form of marginalisation and means the exclusion from family, labour markets and social networks. Living without a home excludes people from fundamental rights including access to shelter, security and benefit entitlement (Gravitas Research, 2005; New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness, 2009). However, the extent of homelessness in New Zealand and the impact it has on many lives is not acknowledged. The EAG recommends the Government, NGO sector and iwi should recognise homelessness as a significant issue.

49. Pathways for Māori into homelessness are multiple. The causes of homelessness are linked to a wider structural issues and support systems failure (Johnson et al, 2008). Vulnerability to poverty and socio-exclusion alongside a combination of traumatic life events such as abuse, relationship breakdowns, death, mental illness, addictions and job loss are the most common pathways (New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness, 2009). Research strongly suggests that Māori who are homeless are most likely to have had their first experience of homelessness as young teenagers, though many would have experienced home insecurity well before that (Groot, Hodgetts, Nikora & Rua, 2010, 2011). A homeless 'career' is most likely to develop amongst those who have their first experience of homelessness at a young age (Gravitas Research, 2005). Family dysfunction, histories of abuse, experience of child protection institutions or youth facilities are familiar characteristics for homeless youth. The lack of emergency or supported housing catering specifically for young people who for a range of reasons are unable to live with family puts them at an elevated risk of street homelessness (New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness, 2009).
50. Service delivery for the homeless is often fragmented, lacks cultural context for Māori, co-ordination and a unified funding framework for housing support services. The low profile of the issue (outside of the community sector) means that there has been little political engagement with the lack of a strategic overview to identify gaps and inadequate resourcing. The development of a comprehensive preventative strategy is vital (Gravitas Research, 2005). Given this, **the EAG recommends** that the Government, NGO sector and iwi working in partnership should develop a specific strategy to prevent Māori homelessness.
51. Inter-agency collaboration to address the issue of Māori who are homeless is important (Gravitas Research, 2005). To make best use of existing emergency housing, government, private and community sector agencies can provide a housing stocktake, implement effective referral systems and client assessment and establish a common resource database. Working together to support Māori to exit homelessness requires inter-agency collaboration that establishes an integrated referral system for support services to help, locate and maintain tenancies as well as prevent individuals and families falling through the cracks (New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness, 2009). Research also shows what

works for Māori who are homeless:

- working closely with iwi and Māori communities
  - ensuring cultural competence of front-line staff
  - collecting ethnicity data and evaluating outcomes for Māori
  - ensuring that resources are accessed by Māori providers and for services to be developed with Kaupapa Māori frameworks
  - recognising the importance of connecting Māori who are homeless with their cultural and spiritual dimensions
  - supporting the connection with whānau, hapu and iwi (New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness, 2009; Groot, Hodgetts, Nikora & Rua).
52. *Project Margin*, run by the Downtown Community Ministry (DCM) in Wellington, is an example of a programme that works well for Māori who are homeless. DCM employs outreach workers to help homeless people find homes or make their living arrangements more secure. *Project Margin* works closely alongside other services to provide wrap-around support for clients, including budgeting, drug and alcohol, mental health and other support services. Project staff participate and liaise with the Wellington City Council, City Housing, Housing New Zealand, the Police and other local community groups. Its approach to clients is holistic rather than just addressing a single aspect of a client's needs which is seen as important to Māori clients. As a best practice model it has noted the value of the client database which provides a consistent source of information for effective enumeration and analysis allowing better defining of the problem as well as enabling the monitoring of the impact of the programme. (New Zealand Coalition to End Homelessness, 2009). Internationally the collection and evaluation of data of homelessness data is seen as a priority. The UK, USA, Sweden, Denmark and Australia have enacted statutory obligations for central or local government to collect and evaluate data on homelessness.

## Health

### **Recommendation 12.**

*The Ministry of Health should set a specific target to make timely progress toward 100 percent coverage for the current national initiative to establish free primary care visits for all children from 0-6; 24 hours/7days a week.*

### **Recommendation 13:**

*Health providers prioritise integrated service delivery in the design of health services for Māori children.*

### **Recommendation 14:**

*The EAG supports sustainable funding for Whānau Ora and recommends that a specific*

*focus on alleviating Māori child poverty be developed within this service framework.*

**Recommendation 15:**

*Government should develop and evaluate a national child nutrition strategy.*

**Rationale**

53. The World Health Organisation's constitution declares that it is one of the fundamental rights of every human being to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health. Enjoyment of good health should be the birthright of every child in New Zealand. Children growing up in poverty, particularly in the early years of childhood increase the risk of on-going health problems throughout their lives. A Māori or Pasifika child growing up in poverty in New Zealand has two to three times poorer health than the non-Māori, non-Pasifika child (Henare, Puckey & Nicholson, 2011). Children growing up in low-income families and beneficiary families as well as children of prisoners have worse health outcomes than other children (National Health Committee, 2008; Public Health Advisory Committee, 2010).
54. Māori children are also proportionally more exposed to the impacts of poverty as evidenced by rates of admissions to hospital for infectious and non-infectious diseases often associated with poverty (Craig et al, 2007). Inequalities in health for Māori appear very early in life and can be seen for most common causes of death, injury, and hospitalisation. Outcomes for infants and young children are especially disturbing (Craig et al, 2011, Craig et al, 2012). Data on admissions for infectious diseases (between 2006-2010) show significantly higher rates for Māori than non-Māori for pertussis, meningococcal disease, acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease and serious skin infections (Craig et al, 2007; Craig et al., 2012).
  - Māori babies are five times more likely to die of Sudden Unexplained Death in Infancy (SUDI).
  - Māori mothers are more likely to have stillbirths and neonatal deaths compared with NZ European and non-Indian Asian mothers.
  - During 2006-2010, preterm birth rates were significantly higher for Māori.
  - Possibly avoidable hospitalisation (e.g. respiratory, gastroenteritis, serious skin infections) rates are higher for Māori than for European children. Rates for Māori children increased while non-Māori rates remained the same or declined. Rates were also higher during cooler months.

**Access to primary health care**

54. Ensuring that Māori children have free and easy access to primary health care is essential. Disparities in poor health outcomes have widened in New Zealand in recent decades. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child 2011) recommends that inequalities

in access to healthcare be addressed by a two-pronged approach: co-ordination across government departments and the co-ordination between policies for health and policies that are focused on reducing income inequality and poverty. Within New Zealand, it is anticipated that emergency room visits and hospitalisations of young children for infectious diseases could be reduced and serious health problems (e.g. skin infections and respiratory problems) ameliorated if children were able to receive free primary care services and after hours services at any time of day or night.

55. Because government recognises the value of utilising primary care to prevent and ameliorate child health problems before they become costly to treat, New Zealand implemented the 'Free Child Health Care Scheme' in 1996 for children 0 to 6 years. In 2007, the Government invested an additional \$8.25 million for primary care practices that committed to providing free care to children under six years. To date, approximately 80 percent of practices provide free visits during regular hours. However, some families on low incomes owe their primary care provider for unpaid co-payments. It is believed that unpaid bills deter families from using their primary care provider even when their young children are ill. The EAG emphasises that the health of children, of any age, should not be compromised by the family's inability to pay. In July 2012 government implemented free after hours primary care visits for children 0 to age 6. All DHBs are required to have a minimum of 60 percent coverage, with 100 percent coverage to be achieved 'as soon as practicable'. The EAG urges the government to adopt a specific target to achieving 100 percent coverage. The current policy is not directive enough to ensure timely achievement of the goal.

## Whānau Ora

56. It is recognised that Whānau Ora and other integrated approaches to service delivery are likely to benefit Māori. Whānau Ora presents a significant opportunity to increase the capacity of communities to address child poverty. As co-ordinators of wrap-around health and social services for whānau, Whānau Ora providers are well-placed to co-ordinate initiatives designed to reduce child poverty, particularly in Māori communities that have traditionally faced barriers in accessing services. Whānau Ora focuses on strengthening the capabilities of the whānau as a collective. It provides a platform for enhancing intergenerational and future whānau well-being, a factor recognised by the Taskforce for Whānau Centred Initiatives in their April 2010 report for the Minister for Community and Voluntary Sector on a policy and administrative framework for Whānau Ora:

*"Because they have intergenerational reach, whānau can act as conduits between the past and the future. The Taskforce is swayed by hui participants' views that Whānau Ora has the potential to provide a sound platform for future generations, not only through the endeavours of whānau themselves but also through the types of relationships that whānau can construct with key societal institutions such as schools. In building those*

*relationships there is room for active advocacy by and on behalf of whānau, and for greater accountabilities to whānau”.*

57. In addition to service co-ordination and integration, the Whānau Ora framework provides a mechanism for whānau and Whānau Ora service providers to initiate activities designed to enhance whānau capabilities, via the Whānau Integration, Innovation and Engagement Fund (WIIE Fund). Such integrated initiatives are most likely to benefit Māori children and work to improve Māori child and whānau health outcomes. As such, the EAG recommends the continued investment and development of such approaches.

## **Food security and nutrition**

58. Access to food and adequate nutrition is a human right and is essential for survival. Access to healthy food is a primary health issue. In a country where food is in abundance it is sobering to realise that many children are going hungry (Wynd, 2005; McNeil, 2011; Carne & Mancini, 2012). The research is clear that lack of access to enough food and nutritional food during pregnancy and childhood is linked to poor health outcomes. These include more frequent illness, including stomach problems, headaches and colds. In addition, lack of healthy food is also associated with higher cholesterol intake and obesity, which is a significant problem in New Zealand (Qigley, et. al., 2005). In 2003, a Ministry of Health survey found that around 20 percent of households with school-age children experienced food insecurity, with rates significantly higher among Pasifika, Māori, large families, and families from the lowest socioeconomic groups (Parnell, et. al., 2003).
59. Over 100,000 New Zealand households experience low food security. In a study on foodbank use in Auckland it was noted that amongst the clients of the foodbanks the percentage of households with children was 50 percent or greater and the majority of the clients were women (Wynd, 2005). In the final *Poverty Indicator Report* it was noted that Māori were over-represented at every foodbank participating in the survey (cited in Wynd, 2005).
60. In recent studies on food insecurity in Hamilton (McNeil, 2011) and food poverty in Whangarei (Carne & Mancini, 2012) it was noted that the main reasons clients gave for not having sufficient food was low income, hardship, job loss, sickness and other emergency situations. McNeil (2011) noted that the issue of food insecurity has been hard to politicise in New Zealand. She posits that one reason is that the demand for food aid is usually reported by individual organisations rather than across the entire food support sector. Her findings suggest that there is unwillingness by the state to fully realise its role in affirming the right of citizens to be free from hunger.
61. To date, the government has never had a child nutrition strategy. **The EAG urges Government** to make the development of a child nutrition strategy a high priority. The

government has the tools in place to proceed with the development of a child nutrition strategy, such as the recently published evidence-based Food and Nutrition Guidelines (2012) for use by health practitioners for all stages of the life cycle and accompanying health education resources for parents and caregivers. A national strategy would integrate all of the efforts to improve the nutrition of pregnant women and children and establish a plan of action that can be evaluated.

62. The nutrition strategy could include relevant components of a 'food in schools' programme, as recommended in the education working paper, to ensure all children have the proper nutrition to participate fully in their education. Currently, there are examples of the B4SC assessments identifying child nutrition problems with no proper referral or follow-up system to address the issues. The strategy could also address the need for additional resources at the local level to assist communities to provide food where it is most needed.

## **Employment**

### ***Recommendation 16:***

*Support initiatives that improve the qualification base of Māori.*

### ***Recommendation 17:***

*Support and promote extension of the Modern Apprentice Scheme to boost the numbers of apprentices in training with a specific focus on Māori.*

### ***Recommendation 18:***

*Incentivise uptake of quality training with training allowances and incentives to employees to take on Māori youth.*

### ***Recommendation 19:***

*Support innovation to enhance economic growth by extending micro-financing support from governmental, non-governmental and private sectors.*

### ***Recommendation 20:***

*Through policy initiative and action create a pro-work environment that supports parents into appropriate work through the provision of quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR).*

### ***Rationale***

63. Paid employment is clearly identified as one of the most important paths out of poverty. While work generates income it also allows higher levels of social engagement and life satisfaction. For Māori, work that is secure, sustainable and available greatly contributes

to individual and collective well-being.

64. Māori make up a relatively young and fast-growing share of the New Zealand working-age population. They have weaker labour market outcomes, on average, than the broader population. In an ageing New Zealand population Māori are an asset yet they have been particularly affected by the global financial crisis. This is partly because Māori on the whole have lower educational attainment and are over-represented in lower skilled industries and occupations and are thus more vulnerable in an economic downturn (Department of Labour (DOL), 2011).
65. High levels of unemployment are a major contributor to poor outcomes for children (Henare, Puckey & Nicholson, 2011). Even during times of considerable economic growth (e.g. the mid-1990s-mid 2000s) Māori unemployment figures have remained high, but since 2008 Māori and Pasifika have experienced disproportionate job loss. Māori employment fell at a faster rate across a wide range of industries: utilities and construction, wholesale and retail, hospitality and storage and health and community services. Collectively these industries account for 42 percent of Māori employment. Growth has been stronger in agriculture and mining and in finance and insurance however these industries only account for 11 percent of Māori employment (DOL, 2011).
66. Youth (15-24) have been particularly affected and Māori and Pasifika youth have borne the brunt of this with significant increases in unemployment more than twice the size of all other youth and with the unemployment rate for young Māori doubling since 2008 to over 30 percent (DOL, 2011). In some rural and small towns the Māori youth unemployment rate is likely to be even higher.
67. Early labour market participation (as youth) is seen as key to alleviating poverty and reducing state dependency (Kiro, 2010). The significance of the demographic importance of Māori needs to be underscored. Māori and the nation would benefit from a specific work creation strategy for Māori youth. There are demographic dividends to be had (Kiro, 2010). Attention needs to be paid to supporting young Māori as the transition from school to further education, training or work. Ensuring that there is good training in place (and jobs to go into) is important. Training allowances and incentives for employees to take on youth is important. Trade training through modern apprenticeships are important.
68. Given the constraints in the labour market there is also the need for innovation to ensure early labour market engagement. Micro-financing has been found to be useful, particularly with targeted groups where there may be labour market entry barriers. It is noted that there is a low level of delivery and what access there is to micro-finance is dominated by non-governmental organisations and membership networks. There is little current activity by the private sector or the government. However, research suggests that micro-finance can be effective in empowering poor communities and supports the

alleviation of poverty (Massey & Lewis, 2003). Employment strategies need to be mindful of gender considerations, family responsibilities and the rural/urban context.

69. As noted in the *EAG Working Paper no. 12: Employment, Skills and Training Options to Reduce Child Poverty* and *EAG Working Paper no. 16: Education solutions to mitigate child poverty*, for high level labour participation it is important that the social environment is pro-work with quality ECE and OSCAR in place.

## Justice

### ***Recommendation 21:***

*Government evaluate youth justice initiatives and support alternatives to confinement that better prepare young people for living and working in the wider community.*

### ***Recommendation 22:***

*Government support parenting programmes that work with the wider whānau to address multiple issues (including alcohol and drug programmes and family violence intervention programmes).*

### ***Recommendation 23:***

*The EAG recommends that the Government, working with iwi and communities support the integrated, effective delivery of government agency services, through hubs, and promote the importance of trusted workers.*

### ***Rationale***

70. The majority of Māori contribute strongly to their whānau and communities even under conditions of considerable constraint. A small but over-represented sector of Māori has an early and ongoing interface with the criminal justice system. While the majority of people living in poverty lead law-abiding lives poverty does create the conditions that are conducive to becoming involved with criminality. Poverty statistics map onto crime statistics. For there to be a change in this area will require that all areas of child poverty will need to be addressed. Early intervention strategies that support children in education, health, housing and employment opportunities are all part of the solution to this complex issue.
71. The alleviation of poverty would go some way to reducing criminal offending and reducing the current high incarceration rates in New Zealand. The impact of incarceration is not purely limited to the individual that is imprisoned. There is also a negative impact on imprisonment on families and especially children (Kingi, 1999, 2008; Quince, 2007, 2008). In recent years there has been increasing attention given to the children and families of prisoners with much of the literature framing them as the collateral or forgotten victims of crime (National Health Committee, 2008, 2010; Roguski & Chauvel,

2009; McIntosh, 2011).

72. Māori are four-to-five times more likely to be apprehended, prosecuted and convicted than their non-Māori counterparts. Māori are seven and a half times more likely to be given a custodial sentence. Māori women are five and a half times more likely to be apprehended and ten times more likely to receive a custodial sentence than Pākehā women (Morrison, 2009; Webb, 2011). The incarceration of 16-18 year olds in our prisons is largely a Māori issue (though also increasingly a Pasifika issue as well) (McIntosh, 2011).
73. Given that incarceration is disproportionately concentrated among certain groups in society Foster and Hagan (2007) argue that prison serves as a mechanism of social exclusion. Patterns of ethnic and social class disparities are likely to be further reproduced by the inter-generational exclusion of children of incarcerated parents from other major public institutions such as health, housing, education and political participation. As commentators have noted 'getting tough on crime' has often meant getting tough on children (Phillips & Bloom, 1998).
74. Māori children living in poverty are more likely to have an early engagement with the criminal justice system (McIntosh, 2011). Māori children's apprehension rate (10-13 years old) is more than five times that of Pacific or NZ European children while the Māori youth (14-16 years old) apprehension rate is more than three times that of Pacific or NZ European youth. (Ministry of Justice (MOJ), 2010). In 2008 the estimated population of NZ European 14-16 year olds was 3.3 times greater than their Māori cohort, while Pasifika youth 14-16 year olds estimated population was about half that of Māori. In this context it is sobering to note that the number of young Māori who appeared in the Youth, District or High Court in 2008 (2,174) was 1.6 times greater than the number of NZ European (1,349) and 4.9 times greater than the number of young Pasifika (MOJ, 2010).
75. The relatively recent introduction of the rangatahi (and Pasifika) courts is a step in the right direction to address Māori youth justice issues. Marae based Rangatahi Courts are a judicially-led initiative. The Rangatahi Courts arose from profound concern with the disproportionate involvement of young Māori in the Youth Justice system. 22 percent of the 14-16 year old population is Māori. However, Māori make up 51 percent of apprehensions of 14-16 year olds and 55 percent of Youth Court appearances. Māori youth offenders are given 64 percent of Supervision with Residence Orders (the highest Youth Court order before conviction and transfer to the District Court). In some Youth Courts, Māori youth make up 90 percent of the young offenders appearing before the Court (Becroft, 2012). Te Kooti Rangatahi/The Rangatahi Court had their first sitting in May 2008 In Gisborne. Since then a further nine courts have been launched. Two Pasifika Youth Courts have also been launched. Their purpose is to better link Māori young offenders with their culture and the local Māori community with an emphasis on developing partnerships with iwi and local marae.

76. **The EAG recommends** that this and other youth justice initiatives be evaluated and increased support given to initiatives that offer alternatives to confinement and integrate young people with their wider community.
77. Research indicates that a lack of family support, problems with schooling (including suspension and exclusion from the compulsory education sector) drug and alcohol misuse, whānau violence and a lack of skills and employment prospects means that many Māori youth become involved in activities that ultimately lead to prison (Owen, 2001). Structural inequality, institutional racism, poor health, lack of education, training and employment opportunities and persistent poverty may also culminate in early engagement with the criminal justice system (National Health Committee, 2008, 2010; McIntosh, 2011). Underscoring the notion of cumulative disadvantage is the fact that having convictions and/or a prison record confers a persistent stigmatised status that can significantly alter life trajectories.
78. This complex mix of factors points to the need to better support parents and whānau to, in turn, well support their young people. Parenting programmes that work with the wider whānau to address these multiple issues can be successful, however such programmes need to be carefully designed and delivered. The Families Commission undertook a comprehensive review of existing parenting programmes in 2005. The authors expressed concern about the extent to which parenting programmes that had been seen to be effective in one country could be translated into different societal and cultural contexts in other countries (Hendriks & Balakrishnan, 2005).
79. Averil Herbert's research suggests that parenting programmes must be clearly oriented to both the needs and strengths of Māori families and communities in the following strategic areas: culturally informed programmes; relevant outcomes for these communities and community indicators of risk and resilience (Herbert, 2011). Research centred on good outcomes for Māori has demonstrated that parenting-training programmes should be embedded within broader health and social service delivery contracts to enable a holistic approach as well as strengthening whānau resilience (Gifford & Pirikahu, 2008; Herbert, 2001, 2011).
80. Reaching Māori children and their whānau in hard-to-reach communities is critical. These whānau are likely to have a higher risk of inter-generational transfer of social inequalities. Building relationships and trust are critical strategies that will require sufficient resourcing and a highly skilled and culturally competent workforce in all areas of service delivery. Having people who become trusted workers and role models on the street and in the home is likely to be significant. Hubs (marae, community or school-based for example) are useful sites of integrated service delivery.
81. Accessing government funding to deliver services that meet the needs of iwi, hapu and whānau can be an issue. Providers, who are committed to mitigating the impacts of

poverty on children and whānau, report that successful service delivery to Māori is based on whanaungatanga and developing a trusting relationship with whānau members. Services and interventions cannot easily be limited by a set number of sessions or visits. Contract for service funding models are frequently insufficiently flexible to recognise this way of working. Good providers need flexibility and freedom to develop and deliver services to meet the needs of their community. Government funders need to have a high level of trust in these providers.

82. Many providers work hard to create packages of services that they can wrap-around whānau. They undertake many more services than they are paid for. For example, whānau may need basic life-skills (how to create a shopping list, sew buttons on, basic household DIY, how to cook on a budget) but a provider is paid to deliver family violence interventions. While delivering the family violence interventions, workers will use the opportunity to share wider knowledge and expertise and pass on necessary life and parenting skills.
83. Flexibility about where services are delivered is crucial. Providers must be able to deliver through a variety of sites and delivery services where their communities and whānau gather. Providers should be encouraged to clusters of services delivery to best meet the needs of whānau. Marae provide important infrastructure for service delivery, as do kohanga reo, community halls, and sports clubs. Recognising that there are hard to reach groups in some Māori communities means that other strategies to engage whānau will be needed. Service delivery to these whānau will involve direct door-to-door delivery or working at the neighbourhood level – taking services to where whānau, live, shop or play.
84. **The EAG recommends** that the Government, working with iwi and communities support the integrated, effective delivery of services, through hubs and promote the importance of trusted workers.

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