

# PHOTOVOICE

THIS IS HOW I SEE IT



PHOTOVOICE

## A POEM ABOUT POVERTY

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POVERTY IS JUST A WORD...  
BUT A WORD THAT MEANS A LOT.  
NOT WHEN SAID, BUT WHEN SEEN.

POVERTY IS JUST A CYCLE, BUT AN  
ONGOING CYCLE. NOT BEING ALTERED,  
BUT LEFT ASIDE.

POVERTY IS ON OUR CONSCIENCE,  
BUT AT THE BACK OF OUR MINDS.  
NOT ACTED ON... BUT WHY NOT?

SA'Ō, ŌTAHVUHU



# PHOTOVOICE

## THIS IS HOW I SEE IT

The **Photovoice** exhibition represents a collection of images, statements and poems that were created by children and young people based in eight different communities in Aotearoa, New Zealand. They were captured through an engagement between The Office of the Children's Commissioner and over one hundred children, young people and young parents, and community groups, for a specialised report on the experiences of poverty and economic hardship faced by these communities. The ensuing report, *This is How I See It: Children, young people and young adults' views and experiences of poverty*, comprises an in-depth examination of the impacts of poverty in New Zealand. More specifically, the report contributes to the wider discussions and understanding of the effects of poverty on children and young people. The images, statements and poems exhibited here form an integral part of the report, giving voice to the various ways in which children experience poverty and, further, providing a point of difference to the experiences of adults and more general or statistical-based reports on poverty in New Zealand.

Photovoice responds to a lack of insight into how children and young people view and experience poverty, opening up a participative discussion about reducing the effects of disadvantage. Existing records on children living in poverty are based on data that concerns statistical numbers, areas of concentration in New Zealand regions, and comparative data drawn through analyses of OECD reports that confirm that material conditions of these groups are "relatively poor," average family incomes "are low" and child poverty rates "are high."<sup>1</sup> In these reports, the views and voices of children and young people directly affected by poverty are often missing or subsumed into more generic experiences of households and families. The Photovoice project thus reflects a shift in sociological research on childhood that challenges the assumption that the experiences of poverty for children and young people are similar to those of adults.

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This collection of works would not be possible without the input of the children and young people from Otahuhu, Te Puru, Paeroa, Gisborne, Whanganui, Palmerston North, Porirua and Dunedin, who participated in two consultations carried out by Michelle Egan-Bitran, Senior Advisor at the Office of the Children's Commissioner. Thank you to all involved, and to Michelle for her invaluable contribution to the current display of works. Partnerships with community groups Otahuhu Raise Up n Represent, Creative Kidz Art Club Te Puru, Paeroa New Zealand Children's Art House, Te Aka Ora Charitable Trust, YMCA Whanganui, YMCA Palmerston North, Streets Ahead 237, Porirua Healthlinks and the Otago Youth Wellness Trust are also acknowledged for facilitating the process in which these valuable works were generated. The project was also supported through financial contributions by JR McKenzie Trust, support from Barnados, and a donation of disposable cameras from Kodak.

ELISHA MASEMANN, CURATOR OF DISPLAY

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<sup>1</sup> Michelle Egan-Bitran, *This is How I See It: Children, young people and young adults' views and experiences of poverty*, a report produced by the Office of the Children's Commissioner, January 2010. OECD 2009 report quoted. 7.



PHOTOVOICE

# PERCEPTIONS OF POVERTY

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Youth and spray cans.  
Anonymous



Do you see?  
Where the youth plays  
and the homeless  
sleep?  
They're in the same  
area?

"Do you see?"  
Male, Otahuhu





THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE MY PARENTS WERE KIDS. GROWING UP IN SOUTH AUCKLAND HAS MADE ME AS HARD AS STONE... I'VE DECIDED TO CUT UP PICTURES BECAUSE THIS IS WHAT PEOPLE SEE, THEY SEE A DISTORTED VIEW OF SOUTH AUCKLAND. POVERTY IS EVERYWHERE. LET'S MAKE A CHANGE NOW.

Male youth, Otahuhu



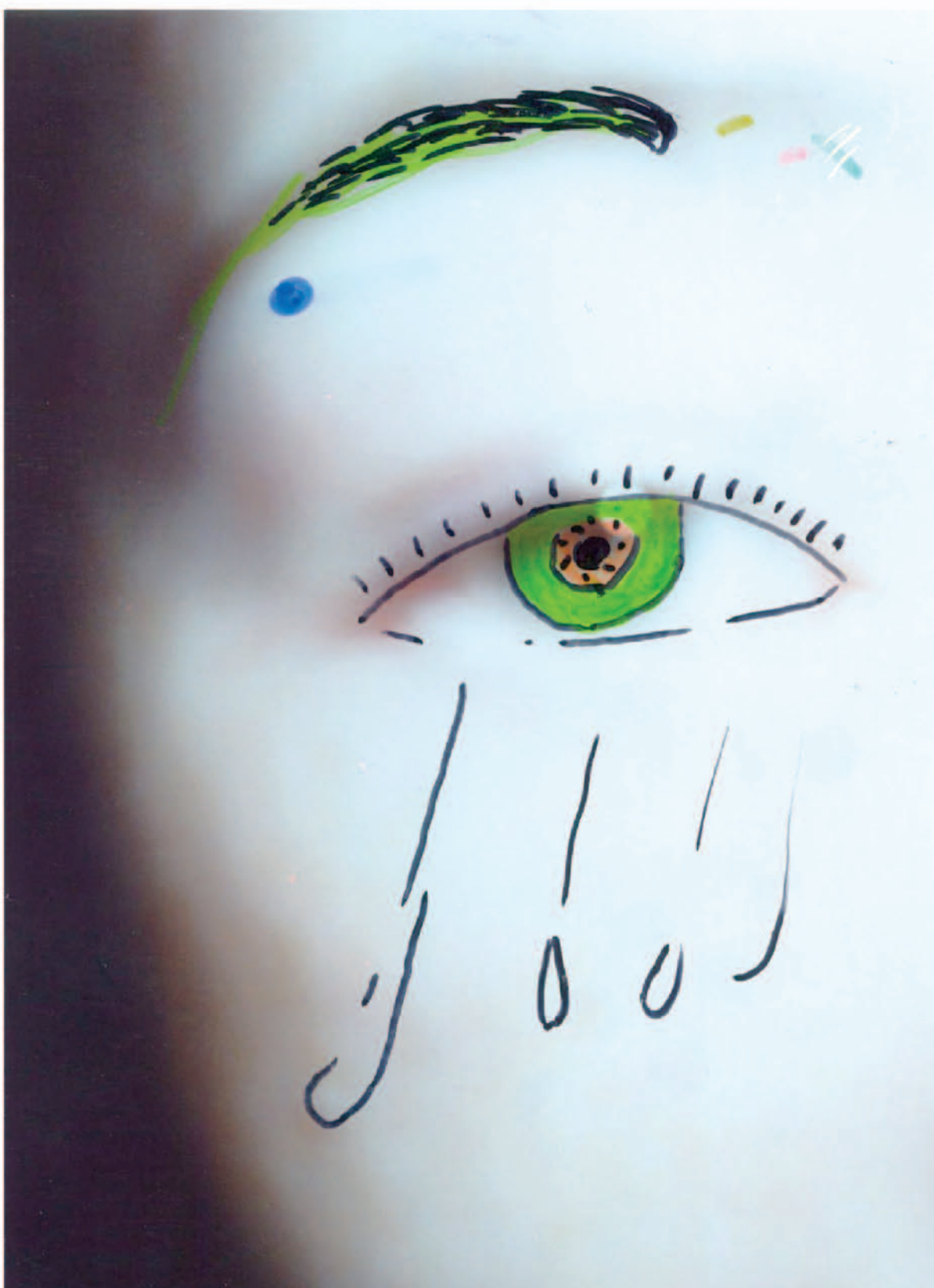
POVERTY IS THE LACK OF SOMETHING TO MAKE YOUR LIFE BETTER.

Definition of poverty created by young people. Streets Ahead 237, Porirua





Broken glass.  
Anonymous, Te Puru



PLEEEEEEZE  
TO THE PEOPLE IN POWER AND THE  
GOVERNMENT - DON'T TUCK US AWAY AS  
A STATISTIC ... IT'S REALLY HAPPENING,  
WHO DO WE CALL FOR HELP???

Pleeeeeeze  
Female, Te Puru



PHOTOVOICE

# LACK OF ESSENTIALS



"Wonder if there's any money in here – no money, no clothes, desperate".  
Anonymous



"Got no money for for new clothes... can't afford new things".  
Anonymous, Paeroa.

POVERTY IS...GOING TO SCHOOL BUT SCHOOLS NOT UNDERSTANDING DIFFICULTIES FAMILIES ARE HAVING – SHAME AND EMBARRASSMENT FOR KIDS. KIDS PLAYING UP AT SCHOOL AND GET IN TROUBLE BECAUSE OF FAMILY ISSUES. SCHOOLS REACTING TO KIDS' BEHAVIOUR AND NOT WHY THEY ARE ACTING THAT WAY AND MAYBE KICKED OUT OF SCHOOL.

From young people's group definition of poverty, Palmerston North



"Will tomorrow be better than this?".  
Porirua

SCHOOL FEES, UNIFORMS AND SCHOOL BOOKS WHICH THE CHILD WILL NEED FOR SCHOOL AND BECAUSE HIS/HER MOTHER OR FATHER CAN NOT AFFORD THE RIGHT GEAR, WILL CAUSE THE CHILD TO GET IN TROUBLE OR NOT WELCOME IN SCHOOL.

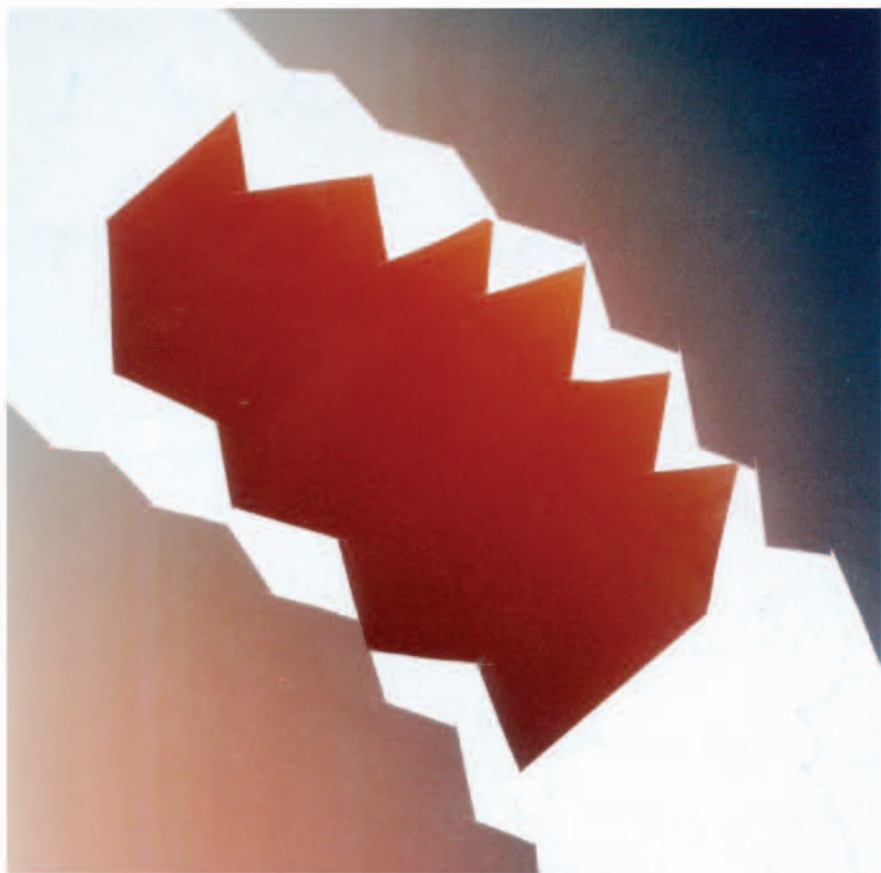
Lisa G, Teen parent, Wanganui



# POVERTY

PEOPLE THESE DAYS ARE FINDING IT HARD FEEDING THEIR KIDS AND PAYING THEIR FINANCES. THEY HAVE NO MONEY TO SPEND ON THEIR KIDS OR EVEN GETTING THEM TO SCHOOL AND GETTING THEIR UNIFORM.

Young mother, Palmerston North



"This is what my stomach looks like with nothing in it! This is what I look like when I haven't eaten! Fading away slowly!"  
Eyez, Paeroa.



Empty Fridge.  
Anonymous, Wanganui.

FIXED EXPENSES ALONE CAN BE A STRUGGLE FOR LOW INCOME EARNERS.

Anonymous teen parent, Wanganui

MONDAY



TUESDAY



WEDNESDAY



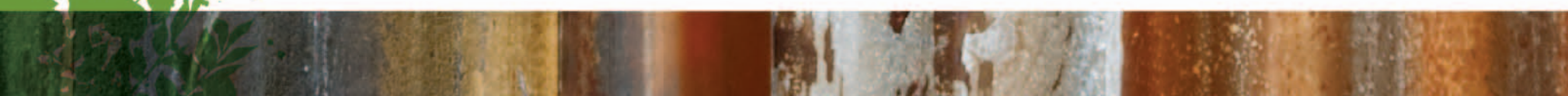
THURSDAY



FRIDAY



Poverty to me means the children missing out!  
A child's lunchbox Monday to Friday.





PHOTOVOICE

# HEALTH & HOUSING

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"Stuck in an old house  
can make you sick."  
Male, Dunedin

STATE HOUSING SHOULD BE KEPT IN A LIVEABLE CONDITION. THERE IS SUCH A SHORTAGE OF HOUSING THAT GOVERNMENT-OWNED HOUSING SHOULD BE HABITABLE AT ALL TIMES. NOT LEFT ABANDONED FOR MONTHS ON END. WHY SHOULD THERE BE HOUSES LIKE THIS WHEN HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE ARE WAITING FOR HOUSING?

Anonymous teen  
parent, Wanganui



POVERTY IS MOVING HOUSES, ALWAYS  
MOVING - STRESSFUL. HAVING TO  
MOVE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT -  
UNABLE TO PAY RENT, SCARY.

From young people's group  
definition of poverty, Paeroa



"People shouldn't have  
to sleep on the streets."  
Otauhuhu



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# NEGLECT & VIOLENCE



## POVERTY DOES EXIST IN NZ

It's a really hard nights  
Sleep. It's normal it's  
better than listening to my parents  
fighting and drinking all the time  
One of my mums drinking mates  
took my bed.  
I'm hungry, I'm cold and i  
don't want to go home.  
No use going home to no food  
in the cupboards  
I'm alright here!!

Now  
life seems as  
tricky as holding  
a hedgehogs with  
your barehands



I'm too young  
to learn lifes  
hard lessons.



We've always  
had baseball bats  
at my house, and  
it's not for sport

Anonymous, Paeroa.



MY MIND ON POVERTY, POVERTY ON MY MIND

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, WE THINK 'BOUT IT DAILY.

NO MATTER HOW BAD, DISTINCT OR CRAZY  
IT'S WHERE WE LIVE, HERE IN OUR SOCIETY.

OUR YOUTH GANGS TAKIN' OVER OUR PRIORITIES.

PUBLIC FACILITIES LEFT UNHYGIENIC.

THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE GOVERNMENT  
LEAVIN' IT?

WHO STEPS UP 2 MAKE A DIFFERENCE?  
NO-ONE YET, SO WE FORGET.

BUT IT REMAINZ LIKE A STAIN THAT NEEDZ  
BLEACH TO MASK AWAY A MARK THAT HINDERS  
OUR GROWTH TODAY.

BY SA'O, OTAHUVU



"I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE - IF I LEAVE  
THE GANG, I LEAVE MY FAMILY."

Anonymous  
Paeroa

"WHEN YOU ARE POOR  
YOU CAN GET ANGRY.  
FRUSTRATION CAN GET  
WORSE THEN COMES  
VIOLENCE."

Anonymous, Paeroa



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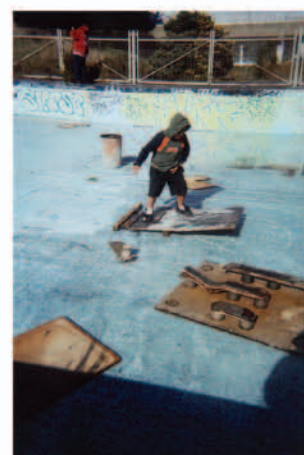
# PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

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WE ALL LIVE THE SAME, EAT THE SAME,  
AND LOOK THE SAME AND GET IN TROUBLE  
THE SAME... WHY?

ANONYMOUS



BRING IT BACK TO THE WAY IT WAS...  
WE NEED WATER FOR OUR POOL.

ANONYMOUS





LOCKED  
UP IN  
POVERTY.

ANONYMOUS

STOP DRINKING IN MY PARK.

ANONYMOUS



PARKS ARE PUBS. BUS STOPS  
ARE BEDS AND HOME SUCKS.

ANONYMOUS



PHOTOVOICE

## MENTAL & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

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### MY SELF - MY POVERTY STORY

I COME FROM A BIG FAMILY OF TEN.

OUR LIFE REVOLVED AROUND DRUGS,  
ALCOHOL, MONEY, GANGS, VIOLENCE  
AND ABUSE.

THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES ALL WE  
COULD DEPEND ON WAS EACH OTHER.

MUM WAS AN ALCOHOLIC AND WAS  
RARELY HOME, AND THEN ONLY  
TO RECOVER FROM A NIGHTS DRINK.

IF DAD WASN'T AT HOME HE WAS  
EITHER IN JAIL, AT WORK OR DOWN  
AT THE MONGREL MOB PAD.

I RECKON YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE  
POOR TO LIVE THE LIFE OF POVERTY.

WE WERE IMPOVERISHED BY A  
LACK OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT,  
LOVE AND SECURITY.

ANONYMOUS



NO LIFE FOR THOSE AFFECTED  
BY POVERTY





"DIS LIKE MY SPIRIT LIVING HERE"

ANONYMOUS



WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR MY FUTURE, EH?

ANONYMOUS



WHAT NOW ? I don't care anymore





PHOTOVOICE

## HOPE, COMMUNITY, COURAGE

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EVERYTHING ABOUT POVERTY IS NEGATIVE!  
LET US GET RID OF POVERTY!

ANONYMOUS

“From the gutter  
to the  
Heavens...”  
*Sally*



THIS IS WHAT POVERTY  
SHOULD BE ABOUT  
LAUGHTER AND HAVING FUN





What have you learnt, think about it what now can you do!!!"



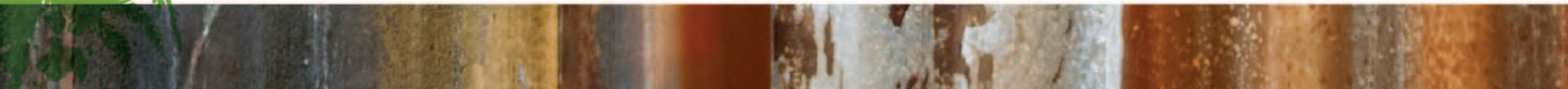
## WHAT'S OUT THERE FOR US?

THREE YOUTHS



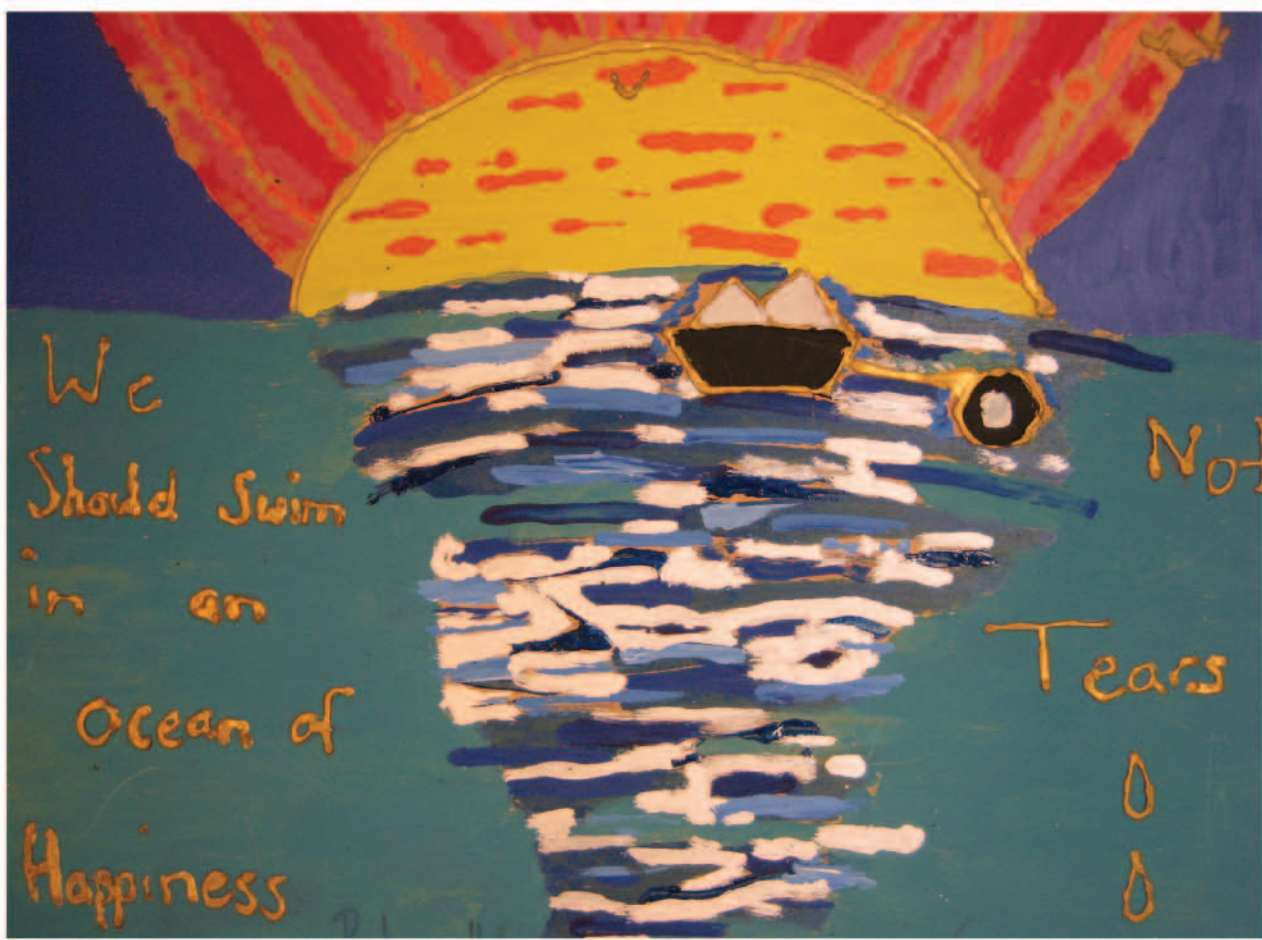
THIS IS WHAT POVERTY IS ABOUT, HAVING FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY HELPING TO STOP POVERTY.

ANONYMOUS, OTAHUHU



I dream of a  
beautiful society...

*Signature*



"We should swim in an ocean of happiness not tears."  
Anonymous

A new  
beginning...

*Signature*



WHAT'S CHANGED?  
WHEN'S IT GOING  
TO CHANGE?  
WHO IS GOING TO  
START THE CHANGE?  
POSITIVE OR  
NEGATIVE?

SAO, OTAHVHU

