

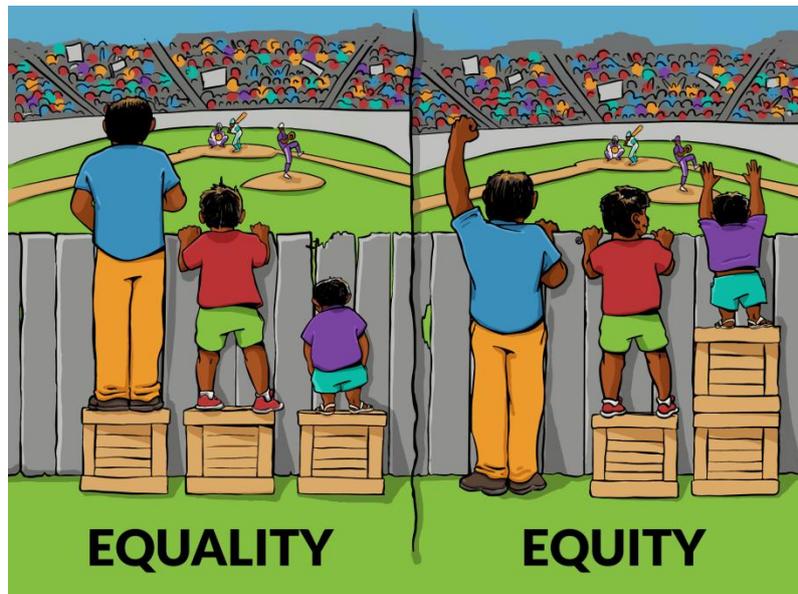


Breaking the Chains, Making the Links

Connection – Transition - Regeneration.

Tuesday 22nd March 2016

Forum Notes



SEWN would like to thank all those who contributed to this forum, especially facilitator Lucy Daeth and speakers Richard Tankersley, John Peet, Paul Dalziel, Tony Simpson and Jono Campbell.

Opening address: Allen Gibbs, SEWN Chair

Just as Greater Christchurch has needed to respond to the new environment we've found ourselves living in, so too has SEWN been making this a priority over the past year or two. SEWN has been reviewing its purpose and direction, to make sure we continue to be relevant to today's environment. As a result we've rewritten our purpose and developed a new strategic plan.

This work hasn't led to any major change in direction. What it's done instead is bring us greater clarity and focus about what's important to us. We have a vision of "a world based on social equity, justice and wellbeing", which we will work towards by "actively promoting and supporting social equity, justice, and wellbeing through collaboration to identify, understand, and advocate on issues that impact on the marginalised". We've agreed that marginalisation is where individuals or groups of people are excluded from meaningful participation in society and our community.

In this climate of transition and regeneration, what is important is the social wellbeing of our communities and *everyone* in them. We want all people to have lives that they have reason to value.

I'm a gardener and I know that if a flower fails to bloom, then we usually need to fix the environment in which it's growing, not the flower. Is the soil too poor or the wrong PH? Is it in too cold or hot a spot? Does it need protection from the wind or better drainage? Are there too many bugs living on it? SEWN is taking the same approach for people's wellbeing. What is happening in the social, economic and physical environments that lead people to fail to bloom, and how can we fix those environments? In other words, how can we remove those barriers that exclude people from meaningful participation?

Of course SEWN can't do this by itself. So today we're looking for where we can best direct our energies. We can find this out by listening to the speakers and discussing with you all here about what the best approach is and where we can work collaboratively. We hope that by the end of this morning we will all have new insights about how we can break the chains and that we will build some links to bring this about.

Te Runaka ki Otautahi o Kai Tahu: Richard Tankersley

The approach that SEWN is taking to marginalisation reflects the principles of whanaukataka in its deepest meaning – acknowledging that people, spirit and the land are all interconnected and must all be nurtured equally. The take of Te Runaka ki Otautahi o Kai Tahu is 'aroha ki te takata', or 'love for all people'.

The recovery process in Canterbury has fragmented and polarised the Maori community. There has been no attempt to re-create an overarching pan-Maori forum that would reinstate the connections that existed in te ao Maori pre-quakes. The focus of the recovery has been

on Te Runanga O Ngai Tahu and Ngai Tuahuriri. This has led to inadequate representation in the recovery and more disconnection and fragmentation. No agency anywhere is doing anything to bring all Maori together. Te Runaka ki Otautahi o Kai Tahu invites SEWN to assist in rebuilding that united voice.

The links between society, economy and environment: taking a ‘whole system’ approach: John Peet

Let me start with a metaphor, which some of you may recognise. **Large organisations are more like frogs than bicycles.** Why? Well, you can take a bike apart, clean the parts, put them back together again and your bike is as good as before. You can't do that with a frog! Or with a worm or a bacterium. They are all vastly more complex, in ways we do not yet understand properly.

With a real, living system, no matter how large or small, we know that everything is connected to everything else. And the frog is not going to last long outside its home wetland either!

The same applies to all of the social, economic and environmental systems of which we are a part. People, and the way they use money, food, clothing, housing, cars, roads, aircraft and so on are all part of the whole, complex world system in which we live.

ALL depend, directly or indirectly, on the very basic ecological systems of Life on Earth, which since the beginning has provided all that humanity needed, and largely regenerated itself until late last century.

Then, after millennia of living on the earth, humanity as a whole reached the stage of growing at such a rate, consuming resources at such a rate, polluting at such a rate and destroying the life support system of the earth at such a rate, that the whole system became unsustainable. We were collectively using up earth's resources and damaging its life support system at a rate faster than it can regenerate.

Much of the wealthy, developed world hardly knows this is happening, but many of the rest already do, although not all understand why. Droughts, storms and crop failures are rapidly increasing, and will continue to increase under current policies. When countries such as New Zealand are doing the least they can about reducing greenhouse gas emissions, many poor Pacific island nations are already suffering badly – and they know why! So are large areas of the Middle East, Asia and Africa. That's marginalisation on a world scale!

At the NZ national scale, some economists and Statistics NZ have been pointing out for 20 years or so, that a small group of the wealthy have absorbed virtually all of the benefits of economic growth over these years, leaving the rest of us marginalised.

Let me be blunt. The Earth contains enough resources, if carefully husbanded, to satisfy everyone's needs, but not everyone's greeds. The currently-dominant world economic system, however, encourages the pursuit of greeds of the few, above the needs of the many. The result is, and continues to be, the mad pursuit of more for a few instead of the careful pursuit of enough for all.

As an engineer and scientist, I believe this mad pursuit of growth is the primary driver of policy that is leading us towards ecological, social and financial collapse if we don't change

our ways. (The much-maligned Limits to Growth report of 1972 had just that sort of scenario, and its main scenario has recently been shown to be pretty much spot on!)

What to do about it? We badly need a major change of the ethic that drives us, towards something like the one developed by Katherine Peet and others in several workshops at the WEA, around 20 years ago, as follows:

All people have their basic needs satisfied, so they can live in dignity, in healthy communities, while having the minimum adverse impact on natural systems, now and in the future.

What has this to do with marginalisation?

Well, human societies throughout history have, as far as we know, always had a small group living within it that, usually via violence, taken more than its fair share of the benefits of human social and economic production. For a while, this was not too big, but in most cases those who had plenty soon gained the power to have even more, and this process has now reached obscene levels of wealth for the very few, and widespread deprivation for the many.

In olden days, violence was the main means of attaining power and resources, but over the last couple of centuries, this has steadily morphed into those in power creating social systems, especially in politics and economics, that need less naked violence but more social control through some pretty unpleasant means, especially those giving control of the economic system to a smaller and smaller number of very powerful actors such as banks and finance houses, in turn enabled by some rather dodgy political and economic mechanisms (within capitalism especially, but also within some aspects of socialism) that preserve the position of those in power.

In 2008, some of the extreme aspects of the financial system crashed, whereupon in the USA and UK especially, the taxpayer was required to bail out the banks, whereupon they soon returned to most of the same ways as before, and are again building up to another crash. Next time, quantitative easing (printing money) may not be so helpful!

Overall, change is needed primarily at the top, to remove roadblocks for change.

At the resource level, we have to move towards stewardship and renewability, and not consuming more resources and making more pollution than Life on Earth can sustain, now and in the future. Tools to achieve that are well-known and ready to apply. They are not rocket science either!

At the economic level, control over growth in debt must be a key element of that policy change. At the larger scale, game-playing by bankers and speculators must be brought under control, world-wide. People at the individual level, too, must no longer be so easily seduced into debt, because the only ones who really win are the bankers who are benefitting from the trickle-up from the poor. That, too, is well-known, but much more difficult to apply, unless people get angry enough and learn to organise together effectively.

The policy logjam has to be broken by structural changes in policy which redistribute resources on the basis of need rather than greed. That applies just as much to the needs of individuals, to families and to communities as it does to the needs of all the other areas of the whole complex system of Life on Earth.

Over the last 40 or 50 years, a vast amount of work on these issues has been done in the sciences, societies, economies and politics. The directions for the future are clear, especially through the efforts of the pioneers of ecological and biophysical economics. Only the combined powers of finance and politics are getting in the way of regeneration of the systems within which we live and work. It is time these powers were brought to heel, to work for us all in addressing marginalisation and regeneration of all areas of life.

This applies just as much to the current stage of putting in place regeneration policies for Christchurch, as it does to the nation and to the rest of the world.

Wellbeing Economics: Paul Dalziel

This presentation is based on research in the AERU (the Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit) by Caroline Saunders and me since 2002.

The AERU’s research on “wellbeing economics” is based on Amartya Sen’s ‘capabilities approach’, which is outlined in his book ‘Development as Freedom’. He introduces the book by saying “The analysis of development presented in this book treats the freedoms of individuals as the basic building blocks. Attention is thus paid particularly to the expansion of the ‘capabilities’ of persons to lead the kinds of lives they value – and have reason to value.”

Sen emphasises the personal initiatives of individuals as they go about their daily business of leading lives *they themselves* value. People’s choices may be limited by social or other factors, but this does not mean outsiders should presume to either make choices on their behalf or impose their own external values; this would not be authentic development.

Sen argues it is not enough for each citizen to value the kind of life he or she is living; citizens should have *reason* for their values. This is especially true for public policy affecting large numbers of people. The reasoning itself should be a public and participatory process, reflecting in part a community’s cultural vitality.

The SEWN definition of marginalisation is consistent with the capabilities approach:

SEWN Definition	Capabilities Approach
An exclusion from...	The capability to...
meaningful participation...	lead a life they value...
in society.	and have reason to value.

Let’s look at some examples of marginalisation:

In 2013, the Treasury were asked to advise on what groups in New Zealand do not earn the “Living Wage”, which at that time was assessed at \$18.40 per hour. Treasury analysed Household Economic Survey data using their Taxwell model, which revealed the following answers:

- Over half of the sole parents with dependents who were working had wage rates below the Living Wage and most of these earned less than \$15 per hour.
- In 25% of households with two adults and dependents, the principal earner was on a wage rate below the Living Wage.

(Analysis of the Proposed \$18.40 Living Wage, Treasury Report released November 2013, p 8)

In short, large numbers of New Zealand parents are in jobs that provide such low income (i.e., they earn less than the Living Wage), they have **no capability** for them and their children to enjoy **meaningful participation in society**.

The inability of so many people to earn the Living Wage must give rise to **child poverty**, and must cause **marginalisation** of these families.

How can social services respond to this marginalisation and lost capabilities on such a large scale?

The current Public Policy answer is that:

1. Economic growth is the primary mechanism through which people will be empowered to lead lives they have reason to value.
2. Social investment is the mechanism through which we will make a measurable difference to the lives of families with difficult, complex problems.

A couple of quotes illustrate this approach:

- “The driving goal of the new Government will be to grow the New Zealand economy in order to deliver greater prosperity, security and opportunities to all New Zealanders. It will be going for growth because it believes in the power of economic growth to deliver higher incomes, better living conditions and, ultimately, a stronger society for New Zealanders.”

(Speech from the Throne, 9 December, 2008)

- “Social investment is a toolkit that will help us understand all of our customers – but we can choose to focus on groups that are a high priority at any particular time. ...

“Supporting families with difficult, complex problems will require interventions to be tailored to their particular needs, and sustained over long periods. ...

“The more complex the need, the more important it is that decisions on specific interventions be made locally – whether by service providers or by customers themselves.

“Interventions that aren’t delivering measurable improvements will trigger a ‘please explain’. But that won’t be allowed to override the judgment of those tasked with delivering better results.”

(Hon Bill English, 17 September 2015)

This is a very seductive ideology, which can be summarised as: ...

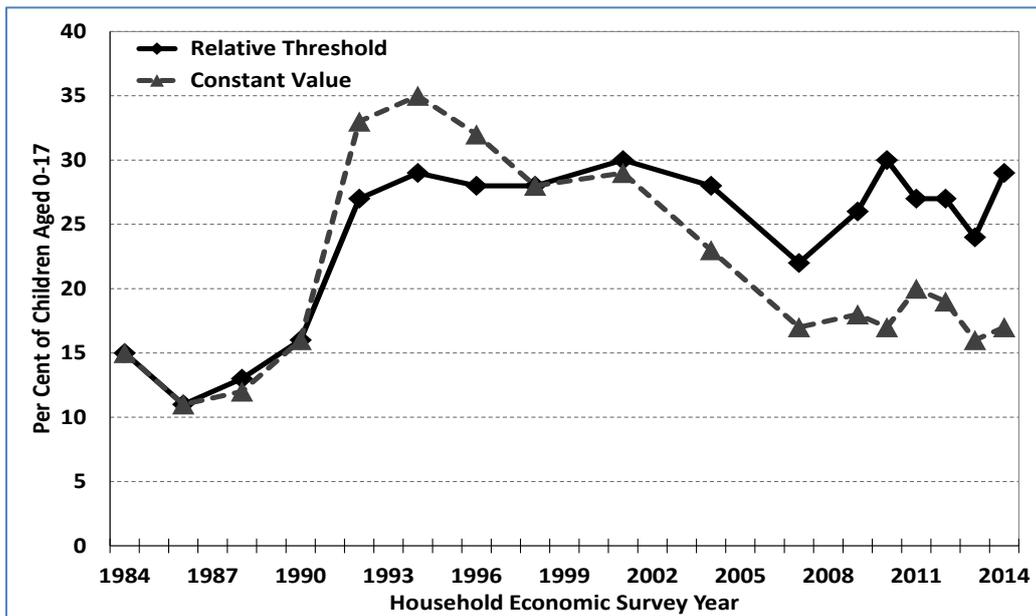
1. Economic growth is the primary mechanism through which people will be empowered to lead lives they have reason to value.

- Social investment is the mechanism through which we will make a measurable difference to the lives of families with difficult, complex problems.

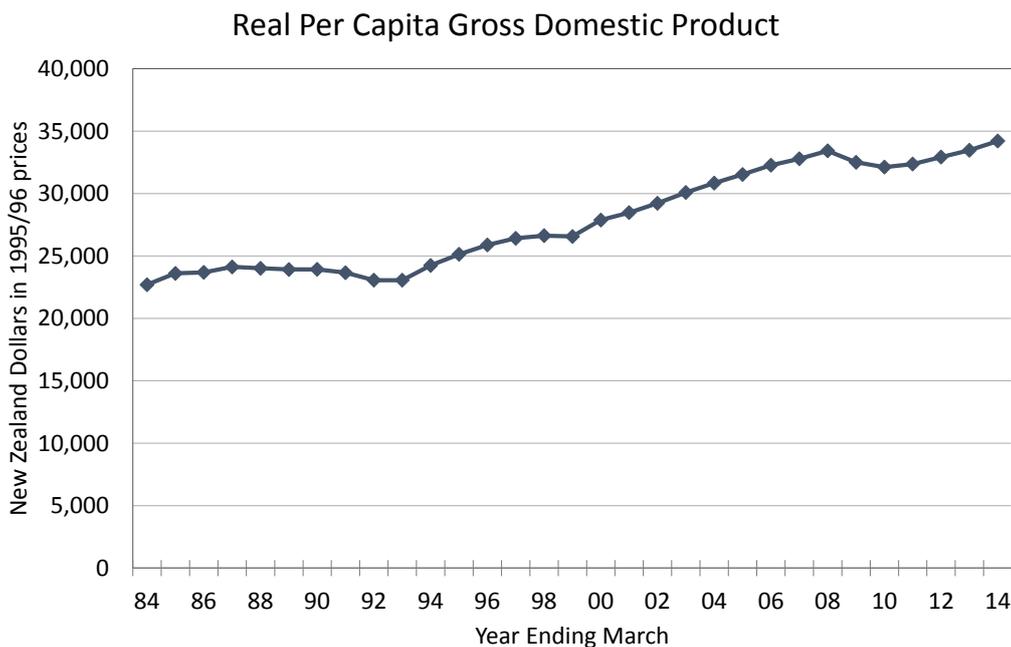
Just over thirty years ago in 1984, at the start of New Zealand’s economic reforms, the newly elected Government convened an Economic Summit of leaders to debate the country’s economic and social problems.

My first academic publication was an article in *NZEP* 1986 that analysed the topics discussed at the conference: “The 1984 Economic Summit Conference: A Search for Policy Objectives”. My article used the published proceedings to record 477 points made by the speakers. **Child poverty** was NOT one of those 477 points. This wouldn’t be the case today...

Child poverty has increased since 1984



... but economic growth was not the answer.



My key message is to not be seduced! Even as you do all you can to help marginalised individuals, families and communities within the social investment framework, do not lose sight of the big picture, which is that it is the way we have structured our economy that is *causing* the marginalisation.

Wellbeing economics argues that poverty and other issues are not something the government on its own has to solve *on behalf of citizens*.

We all have to think about how we can create better systems where people can expand their capabilities through their own work to enjoy meaningful participation in society and create the kinds of lives they have reason to value.

Community of identity: Youth Sector. Jono Campbell

Jono opened by making the point that marginalisation is a social justice issue. We need leadership / mahi tika – (doing things right).

Not long ago we had strong processes to put around young people. Those pathways have disappeared.

The school cohort that has most truancy is Year 1. Primary schools do a great job of caring for young people, but kids truanting puts them behind the 8-ball.

Jono made the point that kids have a fear of failing. They have learnt that it's not ok to take the risk, fail and learn from that failure.

Young people unable to continue at mainstream schools go into the alternative education system. An examination of what works has shown that even when they don't deliver on what they're funded for, kids can usually identify someone who inspired and helped them.

He stressed that young people need a sense of belonging. Educational services shouldn't worry about narrowly defined educational outcomes, but instead help them to be good 'whole' young people. Everything else will follow.

Jono works with young people aged 12/13 and up. Many young people are not connected to their communities, decisions are taken away from them, and they are stereotyped. The service aims to get young people work-ready: able to drive, pass a drug test by staying clean, and get up in the morning – but when they can achieve that there are no jobs out there. There is a complex system of barriers for young people.

'Invisible youth' are 16 year olds who don't have to be at school, can't find work and aren't in training. They are sitting in no-man's-land, often isolated at home.

Community of Place: Tony Simpson

Tony started by giving an example of how Phillipstown School worked – he was concerned about how well a young girl was doing, and organised a health check. That identified a lack of hearing that hadn't been picked up by the government testing system, and they were able to get support. This was an example of how the school had staff that would go the extra mile

to care for the kids and provide wraparound care. The school then ensured it was supporting the staff.

The school needed more funding than the government would provide. It networked and built up partnerships with agencies and organisations, and called in connections. This led to resources being provided. Because the government doesn't give us what we need, we need to find and deliver our own solutions.

The school recognised that identity and heritage was important for wellbeing, and built pride in being in Phillipstown. It restored artefacts, as they symbolised the history and heritage. There was minimal vandalism because the community was supportive.

Losing the school was a big blow to the community, but the concepts that the school embodied have lived on in the community hub.

Forum discussion:

The presentations were followed by the participants discussing several questions.

What have you heard from today's speakers that has struck you about marginalisation?

Resistance to the new model of being separated from the people we're working with

Revolution

Think with the heart, not just the head. Create positive change by caring for ourselves as well as others

We see the system going against what we believe and value, but we have been inspired by the thought that we can all do something to make change. Best way to grow is by helping others. We can make the change. We have nothing to lose and so much to gain.

The school system is meant to assist parents in their role.

People need to be accepted and supported holistically

The importance of people having meaning to value living

Economic growth is increasing marginalisation

Child poverty is actually family poverty caused by the failure of our economy to provide liveable incomes

The Market fails repeatedly and relies on "the community" to help clean up the mess but this is not acknowledged

CERA had the task of assisting recovery but instead chose to dominate it

Do-ables?

- Increase renewed interest in community development (the peoples priorities are the basis for inclusiveness)
- Turn social investment upside down? Blow up erroneous assumptions and paradigms at the high levels (Treasury)

Thinking about the environment of regeneration and transition that our region is in, what do you see happening that is or has the potential to increase or decrease marginalisation? How does it do that?

We don't yet know what the local environment is going to look like – who has responsibility for what in the transitional arrangements. We need systems that reduce stress, need to renew the existing systems so that they don't create barriers

Regional Council has been disconnected from community by the structure that was imposed on it. Situation with transition is that we potentially facing a more threatening situation now than we have in the past. This is the right time for us to ensure that we have more say. Marginalisation affects us all in many different ways.

The market fails repeatedly and it's not acknowledged that the community rescues it.

Sharing controls, turning the tide of who assisted recovery or who drove it.

Increased interest in community development, this is the basis for creating inclusive societies

Who's going to get turned over in the revolution?

There's an issue with the system, how do we change it without causing harm to others? How do we change a frog? We want smaller, we want people to listen more

Lucy noted how tired we all are. We understand the issues. Economics are at the core of the system, but many economists are very disillusioned with the particular economic model that drives the world now. We need to find the original model and restore it.

Self-reliance and self-management – who is marginalised and from what? We don't need to be marginalised from each other and our own communities. Community-building processes help us build strength in ourselves and come together to work cooperatively to resist the structures. If we just try to change the world we will disempower ourselves. Need to build alternatives in our own hearts and minds, draw a line and hold it. Take inspiration from tangata whenua, who have drawn the line.

Heartlands model has much to offer. Phillipstown model is being used in Hornby too. Difficulty having security on door because of govt dept on same premises – creates barrier to people coming in.

What actions does your organisation do / could it do to decrease marginalisation?

Small projects are where it all starts and what it's all about.

Decisions about how we manage our organisations and what impact these have on marginalisation

Small groups can focus on the place in which they are and how important place is. Can reach marginalisation through place.

Increase understanding of the Treaty and that it has advantages for all, not just Maori.

Take services to people, not expect them to come to us. It's a long haul sometimes, takes a lot of work to change social climate and have people think differently.

Programmes for children 5 – 13.

Bringing back the church, raising an army and empowering people, bringing back to simple values. Getting it right within our own families. Raising men and supporting them to take responsibility.

Stop thinking of ourselves as providing services, start thinking of ourselves as providing hospitality and relationships. 'Providing services' is part of the problem.

What could SEWN keep doing that addresses marginalisation or supports other initiatives to decrease marginalisation?

Profile the message of the need to address marginalisation at this place and in this time, noting that small is beautiful.

Beware of creating new marginalisations – check side effects

Inputs provide the support and not stress and resistance

Personal change with attitudes of manaakitanga comes first.

Something has to be done to blow up assumptions and paradigms that exist at high levels.

We need opportunities to feed our minds and our souls, speakers today have done that.

Thanks to SEWN