

John Minto:

Moving ideas into action: Lessons from our history

- 450,000 people in New Zealand are working and earning less than \$15 per hour
- 8 learnings from activism
 - Rational argument only gets you so far (and disruption can work). "Broken record" is important and effective eg CPAG
 - Politicians can't be expected to lead. They are there for other motives
 - Economic growth is not the answer. Productivity growth is not the answer - benefits of both are captured by the wealthy
 - We need to be honest and admit that inequality in NZ is increasing
 - We will never get change without conflict. The bigger the change we want, the bigger the fight we will need to be prepared for
 - Struggle is important. It produces clarity, and forward movement
 - Anger is undervalued. It is energy
 - We are all optimists in this room. We believe work can produce positive change
- Issues and resources:
 - Wilkinson and Pickett: The Spirit Level 2009 provides clear sociological explanation of the links between inequality and violence and social problems.
 - Need to change the nature of the debate in NZ eg citizens referendum; should minimum wage be raised and pegged to average wage?
 - Pokie machines: 80% of problem gamblers use community pokies so: referendum in local body elections for removal of pokies (see global peace and justice newsletter)
 - Loan sharks: Feeding off low-income, vulnerable families. Some measures but are they sufficient?

- How to sustain energy to be an activist:
 - Anger. Sometimes with the media it goes well and sometimes it doesn't, so you have to keep your average up.
 - Sue Bradford says: stick to your kaupapa; know what side you are on; be part of a group or create one; the knowledge that you are working for a better future is nourishing.