# Child Poverty Action Group Wellington
# Summary of Education discussion meeting 3 July 2014

*Points drawn from group discussions and speakers, collated by Anne Else.*

**The aim can be summed up as:**
**Anger – hope – action! AHA!**

## How can we build networks for action on education and child poverty?

(1) By using every opportunity to gather and then to spread the facts about education and child poverty to others, either as
(a) individuals or
(b) members of existing groups and networks.

"CHILDREN ARE AT THE HEART OF EDUCATION - WALK WITH US"

Remember that ECE centres/schools/communities are already networks!
It's important to seeking the right tools/people and build up the whole picture of how families are struggling and how it impacts on children's education and on ECE centres and schools.

Example given: the idea of "education debt" (Ladson-Billings) – e.g. families not getting 20 free hours ECE because of how centres operate (and often have to operate)

**Countering the message about relying on charity, as opposed to societal change.**

Need to grow engagement at the:
-   political level
-   community level
-   via information spreading
-   youth engagement and involvement

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(a) As individuals:

- Telling our friends and lobbying in our own way in relation to the election – putting the FACTS on the table
- Seeking connections and support, and connecting people to each other – setting up the possibility for action for later
- Via social media – Facebook, Twitter, websites
- Via election meetings, at school and ECE gatherings, other community forums
- Writing to newspapers and magazines

(b) As members of wider groups and networks:
- Sharing information and stories among our existing networks (as we were doing on 3 July at the CPAG seminar, with varied speakers and by talking in groups)
- Drawing in the wider school community, e.g. parents and teachers, grandparents and extended whanau, other local organisations
- Building a clear picture of how poverty is affecting the ECE/school community
- Setting up events with speakers, e.g. from CPAG
- Expert forums
- Getting or providing sponsorship to encourage participation by parents and wider community
- Via posters, photographs, films, books, other publications

**Often the message IS already out there - seek opportunities to reiterate it.**

Building networks can be  helped by:
- Sharing information, contacts, connections
- Clear advocacy, strong articulate advocates
- Ensuring time and space to meet, e.g. CPAG seminars like this one
- Connecting existing networks
- Overcoming the schooling system which fosters competition

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- Creating a community discourse that values education
- Asking politicians the hard questions
- Encouraging people to vote

**What is one action we can take as a network or as an individual relating to alleviating the impact of child poverty on children's education?**

Chatting followed by doing – being proactive
Something small – e.g. planting ideas
Working towards a "who" approach – who can help with this issue?

Understanding early childhood centres and schools as hubs for understanding and action on child poverty (Karori West Normal is clearly an outstanding example)
and
Seeing what the needs are and working out how to meet them in non-stigmatising, co-operative ways - food, clothing, money for activities, before and after school places

Being responsive to needs with the resources you've got:
- organic
- collaborative efforts
- starting small
- it takes time

Drawing in Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour, Special Education Services – supporting them because they provide external links to resources

Connecting with other established networks, e.g. local businesses, organisations

Working with (rather than for) families/whanau

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Working on principle of universalism – e.g. providing food for all children who want it, not singling out the "poor" children as a separate group (again, Karori West Normal is an outstanding example):

- no "peer" stigma
- trust from Day 1
- the importance of relationships

Developing the power of the collective
Lobbying for assistance and support
Pooling resources
Sponsorship
Getting wider community involved in schools

More broadly working for:

- Genuinely free 20 hours ECE
- Reduced inequality – income matters
- Higher benefits - Low benefits destroy people's souls – need to be at a liveable level
- Schools as community centres – not making up for social deficits
- Adult education at primary schools with kids, and ESOL for parents

**AND: Get people out to vote!**

**CPAG's Wellington Network is building a network for action on education and child poverty - please contact <u>wgtn@cpag.org.nz</u> if you'd like to be involved.**